

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 21st December, 1893.

Mr. Dillon Bell: how employed—Erection of Bunbury-Boyanup Junction Telephone Line—Surveys between Southern Cross and Coolgardie—Construction of Tanks between Southern Cross and Coolgardie—Purchase of Steam Scoop Machinery from South Australia—Standard Drawings and Cost of Wyndham Cattle Yards—Terms of appointment of Mr. O'Connor, Engineer-in-Chief—Receipt of Information and Complaints at Police Courts—"Hansard": when likely to be issued—Inspection of proposed works at Robb's Jetty—Erection of yards for Trucking Cattle at Fremantle—Selection of Lands under the Homesteads Act—Establishment of Agricultural Bureau—Suspension of Standing Orders re Public Bills—Precedence of Government Business—Address-in-Reply: adjourned debate—Electoral Rolls Bill: second reading; in committee—Legislation for Prevention of Fires caused by Engine Sparks—Purchase of Perth Water Works and creation of a Water Works Board—Enforcement of Clause 39 of Midland Railway Company's Contract—Delay in Appointment of Secretary to Agricultural Bureau—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 2 p.m.

PRAYERS.

MANNER OF EMPLOYMENT OF MR. DILLON BELL.

MR. DEHAMEL, in accordance with notice, asked the Commissioner of Railways upon what duty Mr. Dillon Bell was now engaged.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) replied that Mr. Bell was now engaged in the duties of Inspecting Engineer, inspecting the proposed sites of tanks between Yilgarn and Coolgardie.

ERECTION OF BUNBURY-BOYANUP JUNCTION TELEPHONE LINE.

MR. DEHAMEL, in accordance with notice, asked the Commissioner of Railways whether the erection of the telephone line between Bunbury and the Boyanup Junction had been effected by contract or day labour; if by day labour, how many men had been employed, and for how long, and at what total cost to the country, exclusive of the cost of wire and fittings.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn):—Yes, by day labour; three men for about six weeks; cost, £27 18s. 6d.

SURVEYS BETWEEN SOUTHERN CROSS AND COOLGARDIE.

MR. DEHAMEL, in accordance with notice, asked the Director of Public

Works: (1) Was Mr. Pratt surveying the telegraph line between Southern Cross and Coolgardie; (2) and, if so, at how much per mile? (3) Was the main road from Southern Cross to Coolgardie surveyed by Mr. Brazier some 12 months since; and, (4) if so, at what cost?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn) replied, as follows:—1. Yes. 2. £23s. 10d. 3. To some extent—not finally. 4. Not known separately—included in land surveys.

CONSTRUCTION OF TANKS BETWEEN SOUTHERN CROSS AND COOLGARDIE.

MR. DEHAMEL, in accordance with notice, asked the Director of Public Works whether the tanks between Southern Cross and Coolgardie were being formed or excavated by contract or day labour, and if the latter, why tenders were not called?

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn) replied that no tanks between Southern Cross and Coolgardie were as yet commenced, but they would be commenced immediately by day labour.

PURCHASE OF STEAM SCOOP MACHINERY FROM SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

MR. DEHAMEL, in accordance with notice, asked the Director of Public Works whether the Government were about to purchase a steam scoop from South Australia; also whether the Director was aware that within the last two years the South Australian Government had abandoned the use of scoops and called tenders for excavating tanks by private contract without the use of steam scoops.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn) replied: The Government are in treaty with the S. A. Government for the purchase of a set of steam scoop machinery, but it has to be carefully inspected before any final offer is made for it. I am not aware that the South Australian Government have abandoned the use of steam scoops, but I am advised that a large quantity of tank-making is being done by private individuals by their use.

STANDARD DRAWINGS AND COST OF WYNDHAM CATTLE YARDS.

MR. DEHAMEL, in accordance with notice, asked the Director of Public

Works:—(1.) What had been the total cost of the preparation of standard drawings for the cattle yards at Wyndham. (2.) Had anything, and if so how much, been expended on surveys of the grounds. (3.) How many square yards would the cattle yards cover, and what was the estimated or contract price of their construction. (4.) Would the Commissioner lay the standard drawings on the table of this House without a motion for that purpose.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn) replied as follows:—(1.) No "standard" drawings were prepared. The cost of the preparation of "contract" drawings on which tenders were called, in February last, was £11 5s. (2.) The surveys on ground cost £8, being portion of expenditure on surveys conducted at several Northern ports. (3.) (a.) The cattle yards, including "rounding up" yard, but exclusive of addition to Jetty, forming a "race," will cover an area of 5,498 yards; (b.) the estimated cost of construction is £1,000. (4.) The drawings (P.W.D., W.A., 2126) of the yards are (temporarily) laid on the table.

TERMS OF APPOINTMENT OF ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF.

MR. DEHAMEL, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier whether the terms under which the Engineer-in-Chief was engaged had been in any way altered or modified, and would he, after about five years service in this colony, become entitled (from our Government) to a pension similar to that which he would have received in New Zealand if he had completed a service of 20 years there; and, if so, what would such pension amount to, and at what date could it be claimed.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Mr. C. Y. O'Connor, M.I.C.E., was appointed to the position of Engineer-in-Chief on the 26th May, 1891, and on his arrival in the colony, on leave for 12 months, from the Government of New Zealand, the terms of his engagement were considered. It was mutually agreed that the appointment should be a permanent one, that the salary should be £1,200 per annum, and should not be lessened for five years, and that the duties should be fixed from time to time by the

Government; but the question as to the number of years to be added to his service in the event of his being incapacitated, or of his office being abolished, was the subject of consideration between Mr. O'Connor and the Government for some time. It was finally, however, agreed that ten years should be added to Mr. O'Connor's service, on retiring from the Service by reason of his being incapacitated, or by reason of his office being abolished, or in the ordinary course as provided by the Superannuation Act. As Mr. O'Connor was entitled, when he left New Zealand, under the New Zealand Act, to a pension equal to nearly one half of his salary, in the event of his being incapacitated, and as he gave up this in order to enter the service of this Government at a much later period of life than officers of his reputation and attainments usually enter the Service, it was considered but reasonable that this concession, which, while it might not in reality cost the colony anything, was a source of security to Mr. O'Connor. The Government is of opinion that the colony has every reason to be satisfied with having secured the services of the present Engineer-in-Chief on the above stated terms.

RECEIPT OF INFORMATIONS AND COMPLAINTS AT POLICE COURTS.

MR. TRAYLEN, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier whether the Government would make suitable provision for receiving informations and complaints at Police Courts.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I have referred this matter to the Police Magistrate, and he informs me that "he does not see any necessity at present for any further provision—that he attends at the Police Court, and remains the greater portion of the day, and can hear applications for summonses after the rising of the Court, and indeed frequently issues them from the Bench."

PUBLICATION OF "HANSARD."

MR. SIMPSON, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier whether the Government proposed placing *Hansard* in the hands of members before the General Election, in accordance with the resolution of the House passed on the 12th

October last, and could the Premier name the date when.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied as follows:—(1.) It is expected that *Hansard* will be issued for last session and the present session by the end of January. (2.) A rough advance copy up to page 864 is placed on the table of the House. The balance is in hand, and will all be printed in about ten days. It is probable that there will be two volumes. (3.) An advance copy of the Votes and Proceedings showing progress to date is also placed on the table of the House.

INSPECTION OF PROPOSED WORKS AT ROBB'S JETTY.

MR. SOLOMON, in accordance with notice, asked the Director of Public Works when the Government intended to carry out the proposed works at Robb's Jetty.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn) replied that the Government intended to carry out this work as early as practicable.

ERECTION OF YARDS FOR TRUCKING CATTLE AT FREMANTLE.

MR. CONNOR, in accordance with notice, asked the Director of Public Works whether it was the purpose of the Government to have (as promised last session) yards erected for trucking cattle at Fremantle.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn) replied that yards for trucking cattle would be put up at North Fremantle for this purpose, as soon as possible.

SELECTION OF LANDS UNDER HOMESTEADS ACT.

MR. MONGER, on behalf of Mr. PIESSE, in accordance with notice, asked the Commissioner of Crown Lands whether any lands had been set apart for selection under the provisions of the Homesteads Act; if so, where.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) replied: No lands have yet been set apart for selection under the Homesteads Act, but the books, plans, and forms required for carrying the Act into effect are being prepared, and will be ready before the end of the month, when some lands will be

set apart for selection, and the Act proclaimed, so as to come into operation in January.

ESTABLISHMENT OF AGRICULTURAL BUREAU.

MR. MONGER, on behalf of Mr. Piesse, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier,—(1.) Why the Agricultural Bureau, for which funds were voted last session of Parliament, had not been established. (2.) When did the Government intend to establish such bureau?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied: (1.) The Government has during the past two months, that is since Parliament was prorogued, been making inquiries, both in the colony and out, as to a suitable person to appoint as secretary, upon which appointment the success of the bureau will largely depend. (2.) The Government hope shortly to finally settle the matter, and appoint both the members and the secretary of the bureau.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS RE PUBLIC BILLS.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest), in accordance with notice, moved that the Standing Orders be suspended for this session, so far as relates to the passing of Bills through their various stages.

Question put and passed.

PRECEDENCE OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest), in accordance with notice, moved that during the present session Government business shall take precedence of all Notices of Motion and Orders of the Day.

Question put and passed.

THE ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: In speaking to the Address-in-Reply, it is not my intention to detain the House, neither is it my intention in any way to obstruct the business of the House. I have been accused of general obstruction, but I have no idea of obstructing the public business in any way. At the same time I hope that fair and honest criticism will not be construed into obstruction. While I have been in this House I have endeavoured, when I

objected to any policy of the Government, to oppose it honestly and straightforwardly; and when I thought they deserved support, I have not hesitated to support them. I have never to my knowledge obstructed the business of this House, and I do not wish to do so on this occasion. We are called together at this period of the year to endeavour to rectify some defects in the Electoral Act, which ought to have been foreseen by the Government when the Act was passed last session. The Premier on that occasion told us that he was fully competent to pilot the Bill through the House in the absence of the Attorney General. I ventured then to express the opinion that the hon. gentleman, with all his ability, would not be able to steer the Bill through all the legal technicalities which surrounded it; and it appears I was not far wrong, otherwise we should not be in the present muddle. Notwithstanding the fact that we provide the Crown Law officers with a large staff, and pay them large salaries, it appears they are not able to prepare a Bill without making a serious omission in it, and committing a mistake which might easily have been foreseen, if a little more care had been exercised. A Bill has been placed before us this session to rectify this mistake, and I think it will be the duty of this House to pass that Bill, so that the electoral rolls may be prepared as soon as possible. But I notice that this Bill deals with other matters besides rectifying the mistake committed last session. We are asked in Clauses 6 and 7 of the Bill to do something beyond legalising the preparation of the rolls. Those clauses introduce another subject altogether; one relates to claims in respect of joint ownership, and the other deals with mortgagees and trustees claiming to vote. Why these clauses should be introduced into this Bill, which is intended simply to authorise the preparation of the new electoral rolls, I cannot understand.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): All your constituents would be otherwise disfranchised.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: They would not be disfranchised. We are dealing with the question of voting.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): They would be disfranchised but for Clause 7, which deals with mortgaged property.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): They are all mortgaged.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I do not think there are any mortgaged stations in my district; they are all in the district beyond. At any rate, I should like to know why Section 6 of the Bill, dealing with joint owners, was not inserted in the Act of last session. I am a joint owner in several properties myself, and have already made application to be registered in respect of some of these properties, but according to this clause this application will be informal, because it does not furnish all the information which is required under this new clause. In the claim I sent in I fixed the position of the property, and gave other necessary information, but I did not give the names and addresses of my partners, who may be all over the country, and I fail to see the necessity of it. This clause deals with the details of the Electoral Act passed last session, as regards the claims of voters, and goes altogether beyond the scope of the present Bill, which I understood was brought in simply in order to make the Act workable, by curing a certain defect in it.

MR. LOTON: I thought the question before the House was the Address-in-Reply. Surely the time for going into the details of this Bill is when we go into committee on the Bill itself, and the time to discuss it is on the second reading. The Bill is not before us now in any form.

THE SPEAKER: I think the hon. member had better reserve his remarks upon the Bill until the Bill comes up for its second reading. The question before the House now is the adoption of the Address-in-Reply to the Governor's Speech.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: The Bill is dealt with in the Governor's Speech. Paragraph 2 says: "As the law now stands, in order to proceed at once with the preparation of the electoral rolls, the Legislative Assembly would have to be dissolved; but as an immediate dissolution would result in there being no Parliament in existence for about six months—inasmuch as the rolls cannot be completed under the Electoral Act before the first of June—it is necessary that provision should be made for their preparation prior to the dissolution." I am now dealing with that question, and I am endeavouring to

point out that a section has been introduced into the Bill which is altogether beyond the scope of the Bill referred to in the Governor's Speech.

THE SPEAKER: I cannot say that the hon. member is out of order, but that it would be more convenient if the hon. member were to address himself to the various sections of the Bill in committee, while speaking generally of the Bill now.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: As a matter of fact I have finished with the Bill, but I desired to point out that the Bill goes beyond the object for which we have been called together, according to the Governor's Speech. I will now deal with Clause 4 of the Speech, which says that "the prospects of the colony are in every way satisfactory." I am very glad to hear, on the authority of the Governor's Speech, that the prospects of the colony are in every way satisfactory.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Point out where they are not.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I wish I could be perfectly sure that the prospects of the colony were in every way satisfactory.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Well, point out where they are not.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: He asks me to point out where they are not. I will endeavour to do so, but he will not give me time. I will endeavour to show that the prospects of the colony are not in every way satisfactory, if he will give me time; and he will be able afterwards to tell me and the House whether I am wrong. The Governor in his Speech, which is virtually the speech of the Ministry—I think I may go further and say that it is the speech of the Premier, for no doubt it was written by the Premier, and the sentiments are the Premier's sentiments—the Governor in his Speech is made to say that the prospects of the colony are satisfactory in every way; but, being the Premier's speech, I am not going to accept his mere statement as a guarantee that the prospects of the colony are altogether satisfactory. We have heard and read a great many speeches lately, delivered by the Premier. Some of them he says he is not responsible for, and, as regards some of them, he says he was only joking. I do not think the Premier ever made a joke in his life. I have heard it said that if anyone else

makes a joke it takes ten minutes before the Premier sees the point of it.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): That depends on the joker.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I hardly think the Premier himself is capable of a joke, and what he says he says in downright earnest. Looking at the speeches he has lately been making, when on an electioneering tour through the colony, and the unreliability of those speeches, and the misleading remarks he has indulged in, I am not myself prepared to accept the dictum laid down in the Governor's Speech—which is virtually the Premier's speech—that the prospects of the colony are in every way satisfactory. We know that since the present Government took office the public debt of the colony has increased very considerably, and that taxation has increased all round. We also know that, although our revenue has increased—increased to an unexpected extent—still our expenditure has increased in excess of our revenue.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Since we have been in office?

MR. R. F. SHOLL: During the time the present Government has been in office the revenue has increased, but our expenditure has increased in excess of our revenue.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I deny that completely. Prove it.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I will endeavour to show that it is so. I have done so already in the columns of the public press, and the figures I relied on were the figures in the public accounts, certified by the Auditor General; and I challenge the Premier to say that they are wrong. The year before the present Government took office—

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Let us have the date we took office.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: Would the hon. gentleman like to make a speech? If so, I will sit down. But if he will let me have my little say in my own quiet little way, he can say what he likes afterwards. The year before the present Ministry took office there was a debit balance of £83,023, but under the old form of government, I am pleased to say, those in power realised that they had to watch carefully over their expenditure, and they did so, and just about that time the revenue showed

a wonderful vitality, and next year—the expenditure being watched and the revenue increasing—instead of a deficit of £33,023, they had a credit balance of £45,509, showing that within that year they had saved £78,622.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): How much had they spent on public works?

MR. R. F. SHOLL: You may tell us that when you speak.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): No; you tell us.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I am simply having my little say in a quiet way; you can have yours afterwards. The present Government started with a credit balance of £45,509, left to them by the old Government. The revenue for 1890 was £497,670. At that time the present Ministry had not acquired that habit of extravagance which they have since acquired, but kept down their expenditure, and by the end of 1891 the surplus balance had increased to £107,000 and some odd pounds. But ever since that year, though the revenue has increased from £497,670 to £589,500 (which is the estimated revenue for 1894), their expenditure, notwithstanding that increase in the revenue, has even been in excess of that increase. The expenditure for 1890 was £435,622, whereas the estimated expenditure for 1894 is £649,881.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): That is in the future. Let us deal with facts, and not estimates.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I must ask him not to interrupt me, unless he wants the session prolonged. We were told by the Premier, in his financial statement, that he expected an increase in the Customs revenue, and also in the railway receipts and other sources, this year; but what do we find? During the first quarter of the financial year, ending 30th September, there was a falling off in the Customs of £5,027, and in railway receipts, £4,991, and in receipts from all sources a falling off of £13,868 as compared with the corresponding quarter of last year. Though the Government expected an increase in the railway receipts, owing to the opening of the South-Western Railway, we find there was an actual falling off in the receipts, and unless the Government watch their expenditure they will find that the whole of the surplus

balance which they had the year after they took office will be wiped off at the end of next year, and they will be landed in a deficit.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): What have we done with the money?

MR. R. F. SHOLL: That is best known to the Government.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): You ought to know.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: It is very difficult to know what they have done with the money. They generally spend a large amount under the head of the "Miscellaneous" vote, which I call the patronage vote.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The "Miscellaneous" vote is always given in detail.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I mean "Incidentals," which is a lump vote.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Only £2,400.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: Until we get the Excess Bill, there is no knowing what they do with the money; but it goes. In 1890 the public debt of the colony did not amount to more than £27 14s. per head of the population, the indebtedness of the colony being under a million and a quarter. By the end of 1892 it amounted to £2,147,570, and since then there has been £436,000 raised, the balance of the £1,336,000 loan.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): It is not all spent yet.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: Then there is the Midland Railway loan—

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): That is not spent yet, either.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: Which we are told we shall have to pay. If there is one liability which the colony is certain to have to meet it is that Midland Railway loan. There is not the slightest doubt in my mind that we shall have to pay not only the interest, but also the principal. It is not a contingent liability at all, but a debt which the colony will have to pay, and next year we shall find ourselves called upon to pay the interest upon the company's £500,000 debentures; and it is only a question of time when we shall be called upon to pay the principal.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): And get the railway. It won't be a bad bargain.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: Who are the shareholders in this precious concern? The first is Mr. Keane, who is down for £440,000. Does anyone think Mr. Keane could pay that amount if called upon? Then we have Mr. H. W. Bond down for £551,000. I do not know whether Mr. Bond is in a position to pay that amount. I doubt it. Then we have Sir B. Browne and Mr. Straker, Mr. J. T. Smith, Sir Wm. Crossman, Mr. Bonang Dobree, and a lot more. I do not think it is at all likely that these shareholders will ever provide sufficient money to pay the colony back this £500,000 which we have guaranteed. Nor do I think that they are at all likely—after paying the interest on their previous debentures—to pay the interest on this £500,000 when it becomes due.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): All this is very stale.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: Is it?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Yes; we have had it over about twenty times.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I know you don't like it. When we are told that we should not include this £500,000 as a debt owing by the colony, I think I am justified in showing that the contention is perfectly ridiculous. Then it is said that even if we have to pay it we have very good value for our money in the railway. But we don't know whether we shall not have to raise more money to finish this railway.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): We have got the money in our hands.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: It may not be sufficient. I know we have the estimate of the Engineer-in-Chief that the line can be completed for a certain sum.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): We have the contract, too.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: We have had other estimates from the Engineer-in-Chief, but they were nothing like sufficient to complete the works. We had his estimate for the Yilgarn Railway, and the South-Western Railway, and we know we have had to supplement the estimate by a large amount, and it is not at all certain we shall not have to do the same with this Midland line.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The contract has been let.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: Supposing we have to take over the line, what security have

we that it will even pay its working expenses? If we are going to lose £10,000 or £12,000 on the working expenses, besides paying the interest on the money, the question arises,—is the colony in a position to bear that loss? If we had known that this line was going to be thrown on our hands, I do not think it is likely we would have undertaken the other heavy liabilities we have undertaken, in the shape of the Yilgarn Railway, and the South-Western Railway, and the Mullewa Railway, which are not likely to pay their working expenses for many years to come.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): We would not have built any of them, if you had your way.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: To return to our indebtedness. In addition to our other debts, we shall have to provide sufficient taxation to pay the interest on this £500,000 guaranteed by the Government, and in 1904 we shall probably have to begin paying off the principal at the rate of another £20,000 a year. With this Midland Railway loan, and with the Treasury bills which have been raised, amounting to another £180,000, we find that our indebtedness, which was only £27 14s. per head when this Government took office, amounts at the present time to £50 per head.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Ridiculous!

MR. R. F. SHOLL: In 1890, although our population was only 46,290, our taxation per head was not more than £4 10s. 10½d., whereas in 1892, with a population of 58,674, our taxation per head amounted to £5 7s. 9½d. In addition to that, the new tariff will further increase our taxation by about 10s. per head.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): What is your authority for that? Have you calculated it out yourself?

MR. R. F. SHOLL: No; a better man than myself has done it. The hon. member for the DeGrey threw out a word of caution to the Government to be careful with their expenditure, and not to spend so much money upon ornamental buildings and other extravagancies. I will do the same. My advice to them is: "Build railways, and extend them as far as you can, but don't waste money on expensive ornamental buildings in the way of stations." I think we should be satisfied to

give people shelter for their goods and for themselves at the different stations and platforms. I consider we should be doing more good than by putting up expensive stations like the Bunbury station, which is to cost from £16,000 to £20,000.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Go it; go it.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: Approximately. I think it would be better to give improved railway facilities, and to spend the money in providing work for the people living in the towns which these railways run through, than to waste it in ornamental buildings. I think there has been too much extravagance in this respect, not only in the town here, but all through the country. The hon. member for the Williams said the only hope for this country, if we are going to have a large influx of population, was to give further protection to the farmers, to the extent of £5 a ton on flour, and other duties in proportion, which, no doubt, from his point of view is quite right. But I would remind him that we have already put a duty of 30s. a ton on flour, which, I think, is 30s. too much. I think it is iniquitous, until the farmers of the colony can grow sufficient wheat to grind into flour to feed the present population—I think it is iniquitous that the consumer should have to pay a duty on imported flour. We are told there is likely to be an influx of 30,000 or 40,000 people into the colony as soon as the winter rains set in. If that is so, where are we going to get the flour to feed them? There is not sufficient produced in the colony even to feed the present population. Last year we had to import 4,832 tons from the other colonies, and I have heard of no local stock being unsaleable; and, until the colony can produce sufficient flour for its own consumption, it should be admitted duty free. It is monstrous, I think, to ask for further protection for our farmers. We are told they cannot compete with the other colonies; yet I find that the average yield of wheat in South Australia, where we get the most of our flour, during the last three years was only 8·92 bushels per acre, whereas the average yield in this colony is reported to have been 12½ bushels to the acre. In addition to the smaller yield per acre, there is all the expense of conveying that wheat to a port

of shipment, there are the dock charges, freight, landing charges, and a duty of 30s. per ton; yet we are told by one hon. member that our farmers cannot compete with the farmers of the other colonies. The South Australian farmer can send his flour here and undersell them in their own market. I think it is perfectly ridiculous for members to come to this House and make use of arguments of that sort. I do not believe that this cry for protection is an agriculturist's cry at all; it is a miller's cry. We might put £5 a ton duty on flour to-morrow, and the agriculturist would not get any more per bushel for his wheat. There is not the slightest doubt about that in my mind. With regard to the public expenditure—

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): What, again!

MR. R. F. SHOLL: Yes, I am going back to the question of expenditure. I want to impress upon the Government the necessity for being more careful with their expenditure. I would suggest—though I do not suppose that the Premier, the gentleman who is running this colony, the Czar of Western Australia, will accept any suggestion from such an humble individual as myself—but I would suggest to him the wisdom of being more careful with the public expenditure. In an anonymous letter (written by the Premier, I think), published the other day, it was said that, though I was always finding fault with the Government, I never told the Government what they ought to do. I would suggest that it would be just as well if the Premier looked a little more carefully after the expenditure of the public money.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): And hand it over to you?

MR. R. F. SHOLL: No; distribute it amongst those who support his little follies, as suggested by him in his Newcastle speech. I hope it will never come to that,—that any Government will use the funds of the colony to conciliate their supporters, as suggested by the Premier at Newcastle. I know the Premier says he was only joking.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I said I was misquoted.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I have heard from other people who were present at

the dinner that he was not misquoted; and I thought myself, when I read that ridiculous explanation he made down at Bunbury, that he could not have been responsible for what he said. He talks about "irresponsible babblers;" yet here is the great Czar of Western Australia, the one man who governs the whole country, saying things, and virtually acknowledging that he was not responsible for what he said.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I never said so.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: That was the inference I drew from his remarks—that he did not mean what he said, and that he was only joking. I have known him all my life, but I never knew him to see a joke yet, much less make one; and I think he was in right-down earnest when he made that speech at Newcastle. Whether he was responsible for what he said is not for me to say.

MR. LOTON: An after-dinner speech.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: We are told that the Government are importing steam scoop machinery in order to obtain water for developing our goldfields. I must say I cannot congratulate the Government on the progress they have made, so far, in trying to obtain water for our goldfields. I think they have shown an utter want of capability in dealing with this question altogether; and now we are told that they are going to send to South Australia for some second-hand machinery. Why not have sent home, and got proper machinery?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): It would take too long.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: It could be done through the cable. Second-hand machinery is a dangerous thing to have anything to do with. It may last for years, or it may get into a stage of disrepair in a very short time. When we consider the great expense of getting such machinery out to the goldfields, I think it was very unwise on the part of the Government to have anything to do with second-hand machinery at all. I have been told by a person who is acquainted with them, that these scoops having steel facings will be virtually useless in gravelly soil, and that they have to allow as much as 20 per cent. for depreciation annually. We have had some experience with second-hand machinery before, from New Zealand, which was not at all satisfactory. I only

hope that what the Government are going to get from South Australia will be more satisfactory. Another bungle they have made is in connection with the telegraph line to the Murchison goldfields. Although everyone acknowledges the necessity of the early completion of this line, what have the Government done? They have allowed the contractor twelve months to build this telegraph line.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): It is a long distance; 300 miles.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: The conclusion I came to when I heard that they had given the contractor twelve months to construct the line, was that they had not had the foresight to look ahead and order the material from England in time.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The material is here, I believe.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I think that line could have been constructed in about three months. If the material is here, why all this delay? I believe the line could be constructed at the rate of from 5 to 10 miles a day. There is another thing I should like to refer to. There is a growing feeling throughout this colony that we are governed by one man.

MR. SIMPSON: What's his name?

MR. R. F. SHOLL: If a deputation wants to wait on the Government in connection with land, it waits on the Premier, and not upon the Minister in charge of the department. If a deputation wants anything in the shape of public works, it waits on the Premier, and not upon the Minister at the head of the Works Department. And so on with everything else. The other day when a deputation waited upon the Premier about a piece of land at Fremantle, for a recreation ground, the Commissioner of Crown Lands was actually one of the deputation.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): As member for Fremantle.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: And the Premier had the impudence to tell the deputation that they could depend upon having an Act passed giving them the land, and that they could go on with their improvements.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I did not say anything of the sort.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: The papers reported you as saying that the deputation might go on with their improvements on

the chance of having a Bill passed—showing that the Premier does not even consult his Attorney General in the matter of Bills.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Nothing of the sort. I was quite misunderstood.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: It appears that all the other Ministers are content to allow the Premier to take everything out of their own hands, even in matters connected with their own departments. I think it is a perfect disgrace to the colony that we should be governed under this one man system. The Premier seems to do what he likes. If he goes into the country to make a political speech, he takes a special train, at a great expense to the country. He is too big a man to take a compartment in the ordinary train; he must have a special train, and put the colony to the expense of £30 or £40 for his convenience. The other day it took two vehicles to take him and the Commissioner of Crown Lands, and his *aide-de-camp*, the editor of the *West Australian*, down to the Vasse. If the Premier would be a little more careful in watching the expenditure, and be a little more economical, and travel by ordinary train, as he used to do, and as he will have to do again some day, it would be better for the country and better for his own reputation.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Sir, I do not know that I would not be acting more wisely if I kept my seat, instead of saying anything on the present occasion, but—as members must no doubt be aware by this time—when anything is said that is detrimental to the interests of the colony, or anything that reflects upon myself personally, it is very difficult for me to keep my seat and not reply to it. I have another reason why I wish to say two or three words on this occasion, and that is in order to let the people of the colony know—if they want to be told; I don't think they do—that we are in a thoroughly solvent condition, and thoroughly well able to pay our way. A great deal is usually said by two members of this House—the hon. member for Albany and the hon. member for the Gascoyne—in regard to the Government of the day. They generally take good care to confine themselves to generalities; they never put their hand or their finger

upon any particular act or thing, and charge the Government with having done wrong in respect of that particular matter. That does not suit them. They generally charge the Government with mismanaging the affairs of the country, and with being extravagant. I think I have said in other places, and I can certainly say it now in this honourable House, that if there is one thing more than another that the present Government take their stand upon it is our actions. We take our stand upon what we have done—upon our deeds, not our words. We do not take our stand upon anything that any Minister may say here or there, or upon what I may say here or there. We take our stand upon what we do. Our acts speak louder than our words. That is the stand I take up in this House on the present occasion. We take our stand upon the present position of the colony as compared with the position we found it in when we came into office.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: It is in a worse position.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I will come to that presently. The hon. member for Albany complains that we take advantage of the hospitality of the various agricultural societies to explain to the people of the colony the condition of public affairs. I venture to say that, in the present circumstances of the colony, if any Minister, whether myself or any other member of the Government, were to attend any of these agricultural gatherings, and not tell the people something about the condition of the colony's affairs, how the colony was progressing, what was our financial position, and what our prospects were, the public would not be satisfied. The time may come—no doubt it will come by-and-by, when we have greater facilities of internal communication—when the people will be so well posted in what is going on in the colony that they will not have to depend upon any Minister, or any other person, enlightening them. But, in our present circumstances, I feel quite sure there is scarcely an agricultural society in the colony that would not be disappointed if a Minister of the Crown were to attend their annual gathering, on the festive occasion of their annual show, and not say something about the position and

prospects of the colony. So long as these societies which are good enough to invite Ministers or members to their gatherings do not object, but rather desire, that we should speak upon public matters, so long, I say, we are justified in doing so. When the time comes when these people do not wish us to do so, no doubt it will be a considerable relief to many public men, for speaking frequently on public affairs is not so easy a matter as some may suppose. At any rate, it is for the people themselves to judge and say whether they prefer Ministers to take them into their confidence, and to explain public matters to them, or whether they prefer Ministers to remain silent. The hon. member for the Gascoyne has even referred to the paltry—for it is paltry and insignificant—matter of my going down to some of these gatherings by special train, when it would otherwise have taken me a week to be able to avail myself of the invitation of my friends in the country. It is true that I have occasionally taken a special train, at the cost of a few pounds, but I have done so simply in order to save time, and so that I might be able to devote my services to the business of the State, as far as possible. I may tell the hon. member (if he does not know it already) that I am not one who puts his hand in the public purse for my own benefit. I may also tell him what perhaps he does not know, that since I have been in office—and I may say the same for my colleagues—I have never taken a single penny for expenses when travelling through the country. All my expenses on these occasions are paid out of my own pocket, and not out of public funds. I hope when the hon. member gets into office he will follow the example of the present Ministry in that respect. If those who succeed us in office will follow the example we have set them, they will find they will not get much to put in their own pockets. They will pay their own expenses, as we have done, when going about the country to accept the hospitalities of public bodies.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: So you ought, when you go electioneering.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): At any rate we pay out of our own pockets, whether we go electioneering or not. But the principal reason why I rose

to speak on the present occasion was not to bandy words with the hon. member for the Gascoyne and the hon. member for Albany, although I have no doubt that before I sit down I shall give them one or two hard hits, because they thoroughly deserve it. My principal reason for rising was to explain the actual financial position of the colony. During the twelve months ended the 30th September last, the revenue of the colony was £561,953.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: That is not the financial year.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): A balance sheet is issued every quarter dealing with the year ending at that date, and a very convenient plan it is too. That was £39,171 more than the revenue received for the corresponding period of the previous year—that is for the year ending the 30th September, 1892. Although probably the increase was not as satisfactory as everyone would desire, there were many reasons why it should not be satisfactory. The terrible financial troubles through which Australia passed during that period were alone sufficient, I think, to warrant me in making an excuse why the revenue had not increased as we might have wished. But, notwithstanding the financial panic, the revenue of the colony did increase to the extent of nearly £40,000 over the revenue for the previous year.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: How much did the expenditure increase?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I will tell him. The expenditure for the same period was £627,143, being £117,675 more than for the previous twelve months. Members will notice, therefore, that during the twelve months ended 30th September last we spent £65,190 more than we received, and, consequently, we reduced our credit balance, which, on the 30th September, 1892, was £124,604, to £59,414. I take no notice of that. We reduced our balance because we had the money to spend. If the colony has a credit balance at its bankers', and, in order to promote the welfare and progress of the colony by means of public works and otherwise, we reduce that balance, surely no one can complain. If we had not had the money, I could understand the argument; but, seeing that we had £124,600 lying to our credit, why should we not use it, so long as it was used for the good of the colony, and it was in the

interests of the country that we should do so? This House, at the request of the Government, authorised the reduction of this balance, and, I think, quite right too. It has often been said by the hon. member for the Gascoyne—although I have tried to drive it into his head that he was wrong—that we have been spending more money than we received during the time we have been in office. I can show him that is not the case. On the 31st December, 1890, when we took office, there was a sum of £45,600 to the credit of the colony, and on the 30th September, this year, we had £59,414 to our credit. Therefore, it shows that during that time we increased our balance by £13,814, or gained that difference. How, then, can he say that our expenditure has been greater than our revenue when we have £13,814 more in hand than we had when we took office. There is another thing: we need not have spent this money unless we liked. We might have kept it to look at, in the chest, instead of spending it on roads and bridges, public buildings, and other works. But we thought it better to do so, and so we reduced the balance, but still only to such an extent as to leave us at the end of last September with over £13,000 more to our credit than when we commenced business. The hon. member has referred to a quarter. I do not believe, myself, much in quarterly returns. You cannot base much upon quarters. There is always some extraordinary wind-fall or reverses affecting a quarter's returns. A year is quite short enough a time to deal with; but the hon. member seems to take some delight in pointing out that the revenue for last quarter did not realise our expectations. I admit that the last quarter was not a good one. There were a great many reasons for it. The Bank difficulties were hardly over, and there was scarcely any accommodation to be had at all during the September quarter, and business was carried on under the greatest difficulty. Trade was seriously interfered with, and the revenue for the quarter was £13,869 less than for the corresponding quarter of 1892. I admit at once that it was not satisfactory; still you must not take much notice of one quarter. Notwithstanding the falling off in the revenue during the September quarter, I may tell members that during the current quarter things have brightened

up, and we have quite recovered that £13,000 which we fell short in the previous quarter. In fact, up to the present moment our revenue is in excess of what it was during the corresponding period last year. I believe that during the next six months we shall certainly realise the estimated revenue for the year, and the hon. member, if in his place, on the 30th June next, will not have the pleasure of twitting me that the Estimates of the Government had not been realised. The hon. member advises us to watch the expenditure. He must think we are a lot of children, perfectly incompetent to deal with the public finances. "Watch the expenditure," he says; as if we were not watching it all day long, and always had our eye upon expenditure. We are trying in every way we can to keep down expenditure, consistent with what is due to the progress of the colony. The hon. member has made a long speech, but he has not pointed out any instance of recklessness or extravagance on our part. I wish he had been good enough to put his finger upon some specific item of extravagance, if he could. We might then have answered him. But when a man makes vague and random charges, and goes all round the colony, dealing with generalities, what can you do? You can only defend the Administration by dealing with actual facts. I regret very much that, owing to having had a great deal to do this morning, I am not in a position to tell the House the value of the export of gold during the last six months. During the first quarter we exported about £100,000, which I think was satisfactory; and I believe that during this quarter the value of our gold exports will be considerably greater. The hon. member has referred to a subject that I do not want to talk much about—the Midland Railway. No doubt, it is a subject that will give us plenty of trouble in the future, as in the past. But I may tell him that I do not care who the shareholders are, as we have the money to finish the line, and we have the contract, and in the event of their failing in their agreement, we have 2,400,000 acres of land as security. The contractor gets paid monthly upon the certificates and under the direct supervision of the Engineer-in-Chief. The hon. member has not found yet that any railway that we have undertaken has

not been completed; and why he should think that this one will not be completed I cannot say. I take it that the Midland Railway will be finished, in the same way as the Yilgarn Railway or any other railway will be finished, by the contractor, for the amount he has contracted to do it for.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: No extras?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I do not mean to say there won't be any extras. There are always some extras; but they have been very few under the contracts let by the present Administration at any rate. I should like to refer to what the hon. member calls "one man Government." If it is a one man Government, it certainly is a very amicable Government. I and the gentlemen I see around me, and who are my colleagues, work together very amicably, which does not look as if I were a sort of autocratic Czar. It shows at any rate that I must show a great deal of tact in managing these gentlemen, and keeping them in good humour. At any rate, I may inform him that when he is Premier—probably he will be, some day, though I hope he won't, if he holds the same views as he now holds—but should he ever be a Premier, he will find that he will have a great many things to see about; and he will also understand, before he has been long in office, that whoever may be associated with him, he, as Premier, will be the man whom the country will look to, and who will be held responsible. Responsible Government is a one man Government, to some extent. The Premier chooses his own colleagues, and he cannot avoid responsibility himself by trying to throw it upon his colleagues. As Premier, he will have to bear the responsibility of everything, whether connected with his own office or not. The country will look to him, and to no one else. I am sure that during the time we have been in office, there has been no trouble or misunderstanding at all between myself and my colleagues. We understand our relative positions, and everything is conducted in the most amicable and admirable way. They have assisted me in every way, and I have assisted them as far as I could; and I believe we shall go on in the same way to the end of the chapter, and maintain the same amicable relations that we started with. I think I have explained, to some extent at any

rate, that my views as to the position of the colony are altogether different from those expressed by the hon. members for Albany and for the Gascoyne. I believe that our credit is as good now—I think it is even better, than it has been ever since we are a colony. I believe that our prospects also are better than they have been ever since we are a colony. We were never better able to pay our way than we are at the present moment. I challenge the hon. member to point where the circumstances of the colony are unfavourable. He said he would, but he sat down without doing so. The pastoral industry is in an excellent condition this year; the wool clip, I believe, is as good as ever it was. All through the Northern districts of the colony they are rapidly getting over the effects of the great drought they experienced, and which nearly ruined them. All their difficulties are of the past, and not of the present. Everything is as bright and prosperous as it could be, so far as the seasons, and the pasture, and the position of their stock are concerned. In the agricultural districts, too, the crops are good, and they have had, at any rate, a fairly abundant harvest. Wherever we look throughout the colony the mineral industry shows every sign of development. With tin at the South, gold at the North, and gold at the East, when were there such prospects in our history before? I challenge them to put their finger upon any industry and say that it is languishing. Were wages ever better in the colony than at the present time? I do not mean to say that everyone can get work readily, but were wages generally ever better than they are now? If people are not so well off, I cannot see why. Perhaps there are more men in the colony than there are employers. But in a small community like ours you cannot expect, when there is a rush, that everyone can find employment at once. As to the cost of living, with the exception of meat everything else is cheaper than it ever was before in the history of the colony. Sugar at 2½d. a pound, and 3d. for a loaf of bread—are those prices that will ruin people? When I was a boy, bread was 6d. a loaf, and sugar 5d. or 6d. a pound. The hon. member is talking without book. He is dealing in generalities, and not with actual facts at all. Look at the

public works in progress at the present moment. Was there ever a time when so many public works were going on as there are now? Four railways in course of construction in our small community—the Yilgarn Railway, the Busselton Railway, the Mullewa Railway, and the Midland Railway—hundreds of miles of railway construction in full swing. Is this a time when people should say that the colony is in a bad state? There never was a time when so many public works and public buildings all over the colony were going on. On all the goldfields of the colony we are taking measures for their development. My friend the Commissioner has been authorised to expend large sums of money in that direction. Telegraph lines are being constructed to our principal fields—one to Marble Bar, another to the Murchison, and, in a few days, we hope to be able to construct one to Coolgardie. Public works are being put in hand as soon as the department can get the plans out. The utmost resources of the department are being taxed to get out plans of works for which the money has been provided by this House. The deviations on the Eastern Railway, to obviate the terrible grades on the present line, are to be tendered for on the 9th of next month, and other works are about to be contracted for. [MR. R. F. SHOLL: Unproductive works.] Surely I have said enough to show that there never was a time when so much public money was being expended on important and necessary works; and I want to know why all this grumbling, why all this wailing, on the part of one or two members? I cannot understand the lachrymose speech and the sanctimonious tone of the hon. member for Albany. You would almost think he was praying; he was almost in tears. I would like to see him attempting to carry on the Government without undertaking some public works; I am sure the public would soon rush him out of office. Or the hon. member for the Gascoyne, with his ideas about hoarding up money.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: Not wasting it, I said.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I want him to prove where we have wasted it.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: At Yilgarn, and all over the country.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The speech of the hon. member for Albany was a mere wail, and the speech of the hon. member for the Gascoyne was nothing but fault-finding—a pessimistic speech. As I said before, I would not have troubled to have got up in my place to refute these remarks, were it not that I felt they were a libel upon the colony. People in the colony know better; they are not so easily misled; but the worst of these speeches is, they go out of the colony, and they are caught up by the English press, and the press of the other colonies, and we are traduced, most unfairly traduced. All I can say is, I hope that Providence will keep this colony long from the guidance of such men as the hon. members for Albany and the Gascoyne, who are never tired of traducing the good name of the colony. I cannot understand why they should try to make things look a hundred times worse than they are, except from a pure spirit of opposition and obstruction; because surely to goodness they must know that traducing and defaming the colony must be to their own disadvantage as well as to the disadvantage of all of us. I do not believe that if these two hon. members had their way, they would have undertaken any of the great public works we have constructed, or are constructing. They have not said so at any rate, nor told us what works they would have constructed if they had been in office. This colony would be kept back for many years by the do-nothing policy of such croakers. I ask the House, and I ask the country, what have such men done or said that is worth remembering? They have sat in this House for many years, but I do not remember anything they ever did or said that was worth remembering.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: They did not advertise themselves, like you, at the expense of the colony.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I really cannot understand their object. It cannot be patriotism. If they were only reasonable and fair, they must acknowledge that the present Government has lifted this colony from the position in which they found it to a position of importance, and they must admit that there never was a time in the history of the colony when so much was being done to advance it, and when the prospects of

the country were more favourable than they are at the present moment.

The Address-in-Reply was then agreed to.

ELECTORAL ROLLS BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): I think there is no occasion for me to repeat to-day the remarks I made in connection with this Bill when introducing it. In my explanation of the provisions of the Bill on that occasion I arrived at the last clause but one—Clause 6; and I propose now to add a few words in continuation of what I said yesterday, with regard to Clauses 6 and 7. Clause 6 provides for claims by joint owners or occupiers. Section 40 of the principal Act—that is, the Constitution Act, 1889—provides that joint owners or joint occupiers may vote in respect of the shares they hold in the property, so long as their individual interest in the property, separately considered, is of such value as to entitle each owner or occupier to a vote. Clause 8 of the Electoral Act of 1889 sets out in what manner persons claiming in respect of joint ownership or occupation are to make their claims, and the form of application is given in the Schedule of the Act. But that section was repealed by the amended Act of last session, and that Act is altogether silent as to the manner in which joint owners or joint occupiers are to make their claims. There is no form of claim in the case of joint ownership given in the Schedule of the Act, only a general form, to meet all cases, which is given in Section 14; and some difficulty might arise in the minds of electors, who are joint owners or joint occupiers, as to the shape in which their claims have now to be made. Therefore in this Bill we provide that a person claiming to have his name inserted on the roll in respect of joint ownership or occupation shall state the share held by him in the property, and the value of his share, and also give the name and address of every other owner jointly concerned with him in the property. I think it is necessary that a person claiming should not be silent as to the value of his individual interest, otherwise the Registrar might be in doubt as to whether he possessed the necessary qualification. Take the case of a house: there

might be several persons claiming to be registered in respect of joint owners or occupiers of the house, and, the qualification for a householder being £10, if that house was not valued at more than £10, only one person would be entitled to claim a vote in respect of it. If two persons claimed, the rental value would have to be at least £20, so that the individual interest of each amounted to £10, the necessary qualification in the case of a householder. The same, again, in regard to freehold property. The qualification there is ownership in possession of the clear value of not less than £50 above all encumbrances. If, say three, persons claimed in respect of a freehold property as joint owners, it would be necessary that each individual share in the property was of the separate value of £50, and unless the full value was not less than £150, the three would not be qualified to vote in respect of that property. Therefore it is necessary that those who claim as joint owners should state the value of their share in the property, otherwise the registrar might not know whether they were qualified or not. There is nothing in this section of the Bill that was not in the clause of the Electoral Act of 1889 that was repealed last session. It merely puts the law exactly in the position it was in before. The next section, Clause 7, deals with mortgagees and trustees. That section also found a place in the Electoral Act of 1889, a portion of which was repealed by the Act of last session, and I can only think that this section was repealed inadvertently, because I cannot satisfy myself, nor can the Government satisfy ourselves, that it could have been considered advisable to omit the clause. I think it is very necessary to make the provision that is made here, that "no mortgagee of any lands or tenements shall be qualified to be registered as a voter in respect of any mortgaged estate, unless he shall be in actual possession, or in receipt of the rents and profits thereof; but the mortgagor in actual possession or in receipt of the rents and profits thereof, shall be qualified to be registered in respect of the same, notwithstanding such mortgage." If this provision is not re-enacted, it becomes a question—or rather it would be a fact—that a mortgagee would be qualified to register in respect of any property

over which he held a mortgage, and the mortgagor would be disqualified. Unfortunately, some properties in this colony are heavily mortgaged, and a great many are mortgaged to some extent, many of them being held by Banks and other large financial institutions, and in respect of which the Banks and these institutions do not vote, so that these properties would be entirely unrepresented unless we have some provision of this kind. We propose to leave the vote (as it was before, in the repealed clause) in the hands of the mortgagor. The section also provides that "no trustee of any lands or tenements shall in any case be qualified to be registered as a voter in respect of any trust estate." That also was the law before, and we propose it shall remain so. A trustee ought not to be registered by virtue of his holding the property in trust for others. He can vote in respect of his own property, but the person for whom he holds a trust estate should be entitled to vote in respect of that trust estate. We therefore provide that the *cestui que trust* in actual possession, or in receipt of the rents and profits of the estate—though he may receive the same through the hands of a trustee—shall be qualified to vote, notwithstanding such trust. These are the main provisions of the Bill. I do not know that it is necessary to amend the Electoral Act in any other respect at the present time, and I think these provisions will meet the difficulty with which we are confronted at present. Before I sit down, I would like to say that the framing of the Electoral Act passed last session, and which we are now seeking to amend, was a matter of very great intricacy indeed, to work it in with the amended Constitution Act. The session was a very lengthy session, and the Bill necessarily could not be prepared until the end of the session, after the passage of the Constitution Act through both Houses. A very great deal of attention was devoted to the Bill, and the only thing that occasioned the calling of Parliament together at this time was simply that a portion of the Act dealing with the new franchise and the new representation could not come into force until the present Assembly was dissolved. It is not desirable that this House should be dissolved now, and that a long period should intervene

between the dissolution of Parliament and the election of a new Parliament. Therefore, the Government considered that the wisest plan would be to summon Parliament to pass this enabling Bill, so as to hasten the approaching elections and to enable the registrars to proceed at once with the compilation of the new rolls. Of course, if the Government had wished to delay the elections, or to delay going to the country, they might have let the matter (so to speak) slide, and recognised the impossibility of making up the new rolls, and let matters remain as they were. But I think all members will agree with me that it is only right and proper that this should be corrected, and that provision should be made for the immediate compilation of the new rolls, and that the elections should be got over as quickly as possible. With these remarks, I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

Question put—That the Bill be read a second time.

POINT OF ORDER.

MR. TRAYLEN: I rise to a point of order. Is this an occasion on which there must be an absolute majority of members present, giving their concurrence to the second reading of the Bill? It appears to me that this is a Bill affecting the constitution of Parliament, and, if so, I wish to point out that there is not an absolute majority of members present.

THE SPEAKER: I cannot say that I consider this Bill a Bill that makes any change in the Constitution. I saw it stated in one of the papers that it might be so considered, but I never regarded it in that light.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): I should be sorry it should go forth that this Bill makes any change in the Constitution.

MR. TRAYLEN: Section 73 of the Constitution Act says: "The Legislature of the colony shall have full power and authority, from time to time, by any Act, to repeal or alter any of the provisions of this Act. Provided always that it shall not be lawful to present any Bill by which any change in the constitution of the Legislative Council or of the Legislative Assembly shall be effected, unless the second and third readings of such Bill shall have been passed with

"the concurrence of an absolute majority of the whole of the members for the time being of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly respectively." This Bill deals with Sections 12 and 21 of the Constitution Act Amendment Act, both of which relate to electors; and, surely, anything touching the qualification of electors, or lessening or increasing the number, must affect the constitution of the Legislature. I wished merely to call the attention of Mr. Speaker to the matter, in the event of its being said hereafter that there was some irregularity.

THE SPEAKER: I notice there is a quorum present now. Even if this were a question affecting the Constitution, I find there is an absolute majority—sixteen members—present, besides the Speaker. I will, therefore, put the question.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time, and committed.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clauses 1 to 5 inclusive:

Put and passed.

Clause 6—"A person claiming to have his name inserted in the Electoral list of Voters for an Electoral District or for an Electoral Province, in respect of joint ownership or occupation, under Section 40 of the Constitution Act, 1889, must, in answer to the question in the Form of Claim, 'What are the particulars of your qualification?' state the share held by him and the value thereof, and the name and address of every other owner."

MR. MONGER thought this clause would lead to confusion. He knew several persons who had already sent in their claims as joint owners; would it be necessary to send in fresh claims, in accordance with the requirements of this clause? If such was the case, it appeared to him it would be necessary to have the forms of claim at present in existence altered, because the particulars here required were not provided for.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said that Section 3 of the Bill validated any claim that had been sent in, in accordance with the provisions of the Electoral Act of last session. Those claims would have exactly the same force as if they were sent in after the passing of this Bill, provided they were legal

claims. This Bill would not make an informal claim formal, but it validated any claim previously sent in, so long as the claim was in due form. If the claim did not give the required particulars, the registrar would probably object to it, but, if in form, it would have equal force with a claim sent in after this Bill became law. As he had already pointed out, it was necessary that each joint owner or occupier should state the value of his interest in the property, otherwise the registrar would be unable to ascertain whether the applicant possessed the required qualification.

MR. MONGER said he knew a number of persons who were jointly interested in certain properties, and who were registered two or three years back, and who were on the present rolls as joint proprietors of those properties. No particular amount was stated in their claims as the value of their individual interests; would those persons' names be now struck off the roll?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) thought the hon. member must be in error as to the claims not specifying the value of the share held by each joint owner, as the Electoral Act of 1889 was very precise on that point. The form of claim, which was given in the schedule to the Act, required that information to be given. For instance, the form of claim in respect of a freehold estate contained this provision, which had to be signed by the claimant: "That my share in the said estate is one-half [or one-third, or as the case may be], the other joint owner [or owners] being [state names and residences]." The hon. member would see that the claims he referred to must have contained these particulars before they could be registered. The present Bill put the law in exactly the same position as it was before, under the corresponding clause in the Electoral Act of 1889, but which clause was repealed by the Act of last session.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said he had already put in some claims as a joint owner of property, and had stated the position or situation of the property, so as to enable it to be easily identified, as required by the Act of last session, but he had not given the value of his interest in the property, nor the names and residences of his co-partners; nor could he see the

necessity of doing so. This clause, however, would make those claims informal. The form of claim which had been issued for the coming elections did not provide for all these particulars; and, when he was up at the Gascoyne the other day, he left a lot of these forms with the electors to be filled in. It now appeared that all those claims would be informal, and would be rejected. He thought this clause would lead to a great deal of inconvenience and confusion, especially if it applied to limited liability companies.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 7.—“No mortgagee of any lands or tenements shall be qualified to be registered as a voter in respect of any mortgage estate unless he shall be in actual possession or in receipt of the rents and profits thereof: but the mortgagor in actual possession or in receipt of the rents and profits thereof shall be qualified to be registered in respect of the same, notwithstanding such mortgage. No trustee of any lands or tenements shall in any case be qualified to be registered as a voter in respect of any trust estate; but the *cestui que trust* in actual possession or in receipt of the rents and profits thereof, though he may receive the same through the hands of the trustee, shall be qualified to be so registered, notwithstanding such trust.”

MR. SOLOMON said this clause gave a vote to the *cestui que trust* in actual receipt of the rents and profits of an estate; he should like to know whether it also applied to cases where the rents or profits were, under a will, allowed to accumulate for some years in the hands of a trustee, before the division of the property between the joint *cestuis que trustent*. The legatees were not in actual receipt of the rents and profits of the estate, at present; they were put by and invested for their joint benefit. Who would be entitled to be registered as a voter in the case of property like that, the trustee or the *cestui que trust*?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said he took it that, under this clause, if the rents and profits were put by for the *cestui que trust*, the *cestui que trust* would be entitled to be registered. It made no difference in the case of joint ownership: the *cestuis que trustent* would each be equally entitled to a vote, provided

the value of their separate interest in the property was sufficient to qualify each of them separately.

MR. LOTON asked how the clause would affect the lessees of Crown lands who had parted with their leases as security. Would the holder of the security, as mortgagee, be entitled to vote in respect of the lease, or the person in possession of the land?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said that, in the case referred to, the mortgagor in possession would be entitled to vote, and not the mortgagee. Many of these leasehold lands were in the hands of large corporations, who were mortgagees, and this section provided that a mortgagee should not be qualified unless he was in actual possession, or in receipt of the rents and profits. The mere holding of the lease as security would not entitle a mortgagee to a vote. This was exactly the language of the repealed section in the Act of 1889, and also the language of the corresponding sections in the Municipalities Act and the Roads Board Act; and it was the same in the Acts of the other colonies, and in other countries.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 8:

Put and passed.

Preamble and title:

Agreed to.

Bill reported, and report adopted.

THIRD READING.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) moved that the Bill be read a third time.

Question put and passed.

MR. SPEAKER having reported that an absolute majority of the whole number of members of the House was present,

Bill read a third time.

Ordered—That the Bill be transmitted to the Legislative Council, and their concurrence desired therein.

PREVENTION OF FIRES CAUSED BY ENGINE SPARKS.

MR. TRAYLEN, in accordance with notice, moved “That this Assembly is of opinion that the constant losses to which the residents of Greenough, Dongarra, and Northam are subject, in consequence of fires started by locomotive engines, demand the practical sympathy of Parlia-

ment; and the Government is requested to again initiate such legislation as will tend to prevent the occurrence of losses by fires of this character." He said he rose on behalf of a number of sufferers from fires occasioned by these sparks, which chiefly occurred on lines that were not worked by the Government. On the Northam-Yilgarn line, still in the hands of the contractors, and on the line from Geraldton to Minginew, it all too frequently happened that someone found his or her field set on fire, and property destroyed, by sparks from passing engines. He should like to emphasise the fact that this occurred much more frequently on the lines he had referred to than on lines worked by the Government; and, allowing for some difference in temperature, and for the dryness and consequently the inflammatory nature of the material alongside these lines, he still thought he might fairly quote the immunity from fires along the Government lines as an argument that the greater care taken by the Government in the management of their engines saved the surrounding country, to a great extent, from the losses to which his less fortunate constituents were so frequently subject. He was sure that members were so interested in the welfare of the colony as to look with a considerable degree of eagerness to the columns of the daily papers for items of news, from different parts of the country; and they must have been pained, from time to time, on learning of large properties being sacrificed in the manner he had described. Only a few days ago the Nhargo flats, in the neighbourhood of Dongarra, were set on fire by a passing train, and property estimated of the value of £500 destroyed. They also heard of other fires from the same cause in other parts of the colony; and he thought the House should make another effort to show its practical sympathy with the sufferers from these fires. They did in that House make an effort in that direction some few weeks ago, and they thought they had fairly succeeded; but their labours did not meet with entire approval elsewhere. The object of his present motion was to ask the Government to again look this pressing subject in the face, and to be prepared next session with some measure that will afford relief to the sufferers from these fires. It might be

said that it was within the range of possibility that the present Government might not be in office next session; but he took it that the Premier would come back there in July as leader of the Government, and he wanted him to be prepared with some measure that would meet the object in view. He need not elaborate the question; it was only a short time ago since they discussed the subject in various lights, and made some attempt at legislating to meet the difficulty. He therefore felt he had only now the duty of asking the Government to again give their attention to the matter, and of begging them to do what in their judgment would be right. He only hoped that the result would be that the settlers on parts of the Greenough, at Dongarra, and elsewhere, would come to look upon railways as a blessing, instead of looking upon them, as they actually now did, as the reverse of a blessing. Surely it was possible to do something to afford these people some relief. He begged to move the resolution standing in his name.

MR. PIESSE said he seconded the resolution on the ground that it was really necessary that some steps should be taken to prevent, as far as possible, the recurrence of these fires. Only quite recently there had been instances of the destruction caused by these fires from engine sparks. The difficulty of dealing with the subject was, no doubt, a great one. Although it received some attention last session, and a Bill was passed through that House dealing with it, the Bill did not meet with a good reception in another place. He thought the Government should take into consideration the facts before them, and make another effort to introduce some legislation at the next session of Parliament dealing with the subject. He thought some provision should be made in future railway contracts, compelling the contractors to provide efficient spark arresters on their engines, or to take some precaution against causing these fires.

MR. THROSSELL had very much pleasure in supporting the resolution, so far as it applied to contractors' engines. The resolution referred to Northam, amongst other places, as being a sufferer from these fires. The settlers in that district were placed in great jeopardy

from the contractors' engines, but not from the Government engines. If contractors who were building railways took the same precautions as the Government had done—burn alongside the line—the danger from these sparks would be reduced to a minimum. The municipality of Northam had already called attention to the matter, as several farmers were burnt out last year. They called the attention of the Government to the matter, and the Government had caused the country on both sides of the line to be burnt for several miles. That seemed to be the only effectual remedy, and the use of coal instead of wood.

MR. A. FORREST said, while he sympathised with those who had suffered through these fires, he must say, with all due deference, that the contractor for the Yilgarn Railway appeared to have taken every precaution against accidents of this kind. He had travelled along that line a few days ago, and he found that the land alongside the line had been burnt on each side from Northam to Merreden, and there was only one farm near the line at all. The contractor told him that he once had to pay compensation for some goods he destroyed by fire, and he had taken every precaution against such losses in future. He did not think there was much danger now along this line, because the country alongside had been burnt by the contractor, and there was only one farm in proximity to the line, until you came to the Meckering area, and he did not think it would matter much if that was burnt. After you passed about 15 miles out of Northam, he did not think it mattered much if the country were burnt every year, and every day in the year. The greatest portion of it was sandplain and forest country, with nobody living on it. The farmers of the Greenough and Dongarra districts had his entire sympathy, but he failed to see why Northam should have been included in the resolution at all.

MR. LOTON said no doubt this was a very serious question, not only as regards the damage occasioned to private property, but also to the lines of railway themselves. He had on several occasions been a considerable sufferer from these fires, and had endeavoured to get some recompense, but unless you could prove positively that the fire originated

from a spark from some particular engine, it was very little use going to a court of law for redress. The only practical way of dealing with the matter was that suggested by the hon. member for Northam—burn the land within the railway line and alongside it early in the season. He hoped the Government would take the subject into their serious consideration between this and the next session of Parliament.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said he was in sympathy with the resolution, and he hoped the Government would take every precaution to prevent a recurrence of these fires. If time had admitted of it, he should have been glad to have seen a Bill brought in this session, compelling not only the Government but also private companies to take the necessary precautions during the present summer.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said he should like to say at once that the Government recognised the importance of this matter. It must be seen that they did so, from the fact that last session they introduced a measure for the very object referred to. That Bill, however, having obtained the sanction of this House, went to another place and did not return. He was sure he might say, on behalf of the Government, that, during the recess, they would endeavour to devise some other measure that would be likely to meet with the approval, generally, of Parliament, in order to minimise as far as possible the danger which they recognised arose from sparks escaping from the funnels of locomotives, and he believed, from the ashpan underneath. He did not know that he need say anything more. Before sitting down, however, he hoped the hon. member for the Greenough would allow him to express the high appreciation of the Government of the complimentary tone in which the hon. member had referred to the prospect of the present occupants of the Ministerial bench returning there at the next meeting of Parliament.

MR. CLARKSON said the Commissioner of Railways had already caused all the country within the railway lines in the Newcastle district to be burnt, and, as he had said on a former occasion, he had never heard of a fire occurring in his district from this cause. He had often read

of such disasters at the Greenough, and he believed there had also been some fires about Northam. But, as for the country along the line between Northam and Southern Cross, he would be very glad indeed if an engine were to set fire to it and burn it all, for it was about the best thing that could happen to it. No one would suffer any loss.

MR. TRAYLEN said he ought to be thankful to everyone, save the last speaker, for the support they had given to his resolution. With regard to the suggestion that the only practical remedy for the evil complained of was to burn the country alongside the railway lines, those who had offered that suggestion had not, apparently, taken note of the fact that, at Dongarra especially—and he presumed the same applied to the Greenough—such was the state of the atmosphere, and such was the nature of the wood used by the engines, that no burning of the grass alongside the line would save the adjacent crops. There was something peculiar about the atmosphere, or about the sparks generated by the wood burnt on the locomotives, that these sparks travelled, not a few feet, but, he believed, he might say, fully a hundred yards without dying in their transit through the air. Those who were born in the colony, or who were here 25 years ago, would remember the tremendous disasters that overtook the Dongarra flats about that time, when almost the whole country was burnt; and, on that occasion, the sparks were carried—he thought he was quite safe in saying—much more than one hundred yards. That being so, he trusted the Government would not be satisfied by giving to them—whoever might be in the House next July—a measure merely providing for the burning of the grass alongside of the line. Someone had deprecated a reference to Northam in this resolution. Mrs. York's property was burnt down, without a doubt, by a spark from an engine; and no burning of the grass would have saved it. He therefore thought he was justified in including Northam in his resolution. He was much obliged to the Government for their promise to deal with the matter during the recess, and he was sure his constituents would be grateful to them if they carried out their promise.

Motion put and passed.

PURCHASE OF PERTH WATERWORKS AND CONTROL BY A BOARD.

MR. TRAYLEN, in accordance with notice, moved that the House do now resolve itself into a committee of the whole, for the purpose of considering the following resolution:—"That whereas the experience of the chief cities of the Eastern colonies shows that the water supply and the allied subject of sewerage should either be in the hands of the Government or preferably be held by a Board: this committee is of opinion that the Government should be prepared, next session, with a measure to authorise the purchase of the Perth waterworks, under a Government guarantee of the bonds, and to create a Board to hold the works, and for other purposes."

MR. PIESSE seconded the motion.

Question put and negatived.

WATER SUPPLY FOR SOUTHERN CROSS MINES.

MR. A. FORREST, in accordance with notice, moved, "That the question of water supply for Southern Cross mines be taken into consideration, and that the Government be requested to carry out what is necessary for a good supply of water to meet the present difficulties." He said: In moving this motion, I do so with a feeling that I shall receive the support, not only of all the members of this House, but of the country as well. The proposal I have to make is a simple one, and it means to the colony a very great deal. The members of this House are fully aware of the importance of Southern Cross to these and other parts of the colony. There are only four mines working there at present, and they are in this position—through no fault of their boards of directors or their shareholders, and through no fault of the Government—that the companies have spent their money in doing all that is possible, but now find that the deeper they sink the mines, the less water they get. These four mines, some short time ago, were returning at the rate of about £80,000 worth of gold a year to their shareholders, whereas at present they are not returning more than at the rate of £60,000, or less. I have had occasion, during the last few weeks, to visit Southern Cross, and have consulted the people there as to a water supply for the mines and the township.

I visited a locality very close to Southern Cross, where I believe a permanent supply of water can be obtained for a small expenditure of money. The scheme is a small one, and will entail no loss of revenue to the colony, while it will be the means of not only keeping these four mines in constant work, but many other mines which will be started when a water supply can be depended on, as there are any number of reefs in the locality, on which machinery can be placed, if the scheme I will lay before the House is agreed to, or if the Government are empowered to have surveys made in order to see if the scheme be practicable. The scheme is this: One mile and a quarter from the town of Southern Cross is a supply of salt water, sufficient not only to supply permanently the four mines which are at present working short time, but also many more mines, and also the township. The water can be pumped up to the summit of a hill close to the town, and conveyed through pipes to the townspeople and the mines requiring it. The cost will not exceed £5,000, and the supply will be not only adequate for the present requirements, but for any future mines that may be started in the locality. The proposal would be that the mining companies should pay for the water they use at a metre rate, in the same way as the large users of water in Perth pay the local company. The interest on £5,000 at 4 per cent. would be £200 a year, and this amount would be a very small charge when apportioned among five or ten mining companies. The four mines now working employ not less than 30 to 45 men each, and there are the wives and children to provide for, besides the general wants of the township. Southern Cross depends entirely on these mines. The town is a growing one, with large public buildings, and the railway will shortly be completed to it. Therefore I say that, by an expenditure of £5,000, with the interest on it assured by a guarantee on the machinery and plant of the mining companies, this public work would be remunerative, not only to the people at Southern Cross and others interested in it, but to the Government and the colony at large. This is not a motion that can be laughed out of the House, nor one that can be considered in any way but in the general interest of the country. Southern

Cross is the centre of an important goldfield, which is contributing largely to the revenue of the colony. The Government are building a railway to Southern Cross at a cost of £380,000, and that great work was sanctioned and commenced long before there were any new finds of gold to the eastward. It was considered, at that time, that the population engaged on these mines and the goldfield traffic generally would cause a remunerative traffic. The Yilgarn Railway was not undertaken because it passed through a large agricultural country, but was started entirely in the interest of the mines on the Yilgarn Goldfields. Therefore, if a permanent supply of water sufficient for these and other mines can be procured for an outlay of £5,000, with the interest guaranteed by the different companies which will use the water, I say the Government cannot go far wrong in providing this water supply to Southern Cross. These mining companies have expended, in private enterprise, a total capital which is estimated to-day at nearly £100,000; and the position they are in now, through no fault of their own, is that the deeper they sink the mines, the worse the supply of water becomes. From practical experience in having visited the spot lately and obtained information, I believe that at a point of the lake a supply of water sufficient for these mines and many others can be got, at a very small cost; and this supply will not only be the means of making the town, but also give a great impetus to the mining industry in that part of the colony. It may be said, "Why do not the mine shareholders put their hands into their pockets and provide this water supply?" It is very easy to say so, but what are the Government doing for other goldfields? On the Murchison field the difficulty in sinking mines is to get rid of the water, and the question there is not one of obtaining water to supply machinery. The Government are spending not only £5,000, but many times £5,000, at Coolgardie, the Murchison, and elsewhere, in opening roads and supplying water along them, in making surveys, and in doing other things that are not all urgent works, and some of which might very well be done without.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): What surveys are those?

MR. A. FORREST: Surveying round the different rocks. And at Southern Cross you may see a boring apparatus standing very high out of the ground, with a great stack of wood piled up; and even if water be struck at a great depth, I should like to know what the benefit to the people there will be. I believe that, some twelve months ago, an officer in charge of the Government Water Supply sank some dozen of holes at the lake I have referred to, and when I visited the place there were holes 25 feet deep with 23 feet of water in them, showing conclusively that there is no appreciable evaporation in that part of the lake. I believe this source would give an unlimited supply of water to the mines, and I appeal to the Government to carefully consider this question during the recess. A tank or dam is far more serviceable, and more likely to be successful, than deep boring in country similar to that between Northam and Southern Cross. The contractor who is making the railway has to carry every drop of water required, and he pumps it out of the pool at Northam, because there is no other water along the line to the eastward. The question arises whether these mines will be able to carry on unless something is done to supply them with water at a reasonable cost. The sinking of main shafts costs £10 or £12 a foot, and they have gone down nearly 300 feet now, with the result that there is less water obtainable than there was at a depth of 100 feet; so that it behoves this House and the Government to see if they can do something not only to keep the present mines going, but the hundreds of other mines that must be opened about Southern Cross when the railway is completed to that place. We know that from Hope's Hill to Southern Cross the whole of the country is good enough for reefing and battery purposes. I appeal to the House, because I am certain that, even if this motion be not carried, I am moving in the right direction. Southern Cross as a goldfield means a lot to this colony. These mines are held by people in the colony, and not by foreign companies; and if these mines fail, our own people will suffer a large loss. At the greatest depths yet reached in these mines, the stone is as good as can be found on any goldfield in the colony; and all that these

mines require to keep them going constantly, and to be further developed for paying dividends, is a sufficient supply of water, in order to enhance the value of the property of people in the towns who own shares in these mines, and the property of people at Southern Cross. I may remind hon. members that Southern Cross is not now a small township. It has post and telegraph offices, a police court; it has hotels which will bear favourable comparison with many of the hotels in the city of Perth; it is a great place of business; it has enabled the hon. member for Northam, as a merchant, to sell a large amount of produce from the farming districts, and in fact it is making the farmers of Northam, York, and the Eastern Districts a more prosperous class of men than they were three years ago. In moving this motion, I appeal to the good sense of the House to support me in asking the Government to take such steps, during the recess, as they may think advisable, on the lines I have laid down.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: In seconding this motion, I do not know that I am altogether pledged to it; but I second the motion because I feared the hon. member might not get anyone else to do so. As far as the motion goes, it proposes to commit the Government to take action by constructing some scheme of water supply for the mines at Yilgarn—that is, to supply them with salt water. But before the Government should commit themselves to this resolution, I think they should get some expert advice, and also ascertain from the different companies interested in the Southern Cross mines whether they are prepared to contribute to the cost. We know that one mine has plenty of water pretty nearly all the year round, that another has water for pretty nearly three-parts of the year, and that the other two are working intermittently. The House will also want to know what the cost is to be. I think the Government would be perfectly justified in sanctioning a water supply for Yilgarn, the same as for Carnarvon, or, I hope, New-castle.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Carnarvon is the only place where we have done it.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I think that, in a small municipality, it was a proper work

to be performed by the Government, in supplying the town with water; and if the town of Southern Cross can be supplied at a small cost, I can see no objection to it. There is not the slightest doubt that the mines at Southern Cross contribute largely to the revenue of the colony, and employ a large number of men. We are expending large sums in endeavouring to procure water at Coolgardie and all over the alluvial diggings; but I think the reefing mines are much more important to the colony than the alluvial workings, because when once a reefing mine gets established, it is doing more good to the country than a very large area of alluvial workings. The only weak part of this motion is that it rather commits this House to any expenditure which the Government may choose to undertake. There is nothing definite before us: no survey, no expert advice, and no levels taken. I think the House should have more information before committing itself to this resolution. The House last year passed a resolution about deep boring for water; but the Government, instead of giving a bonus to any company for sinking as deeply as possible in the shortest time, stipulated that the shaft should be of a certain width. The consequence was that mine-owners took advantage to sink their main shafts deeper, which they would have to do in any case, but they did it to get the bonus. If the Government wanted to test the depth at which water could be obtained, there should have been no stipulation as to the width of shaft, but the companies should have been induced, by the bonus, to put down a bore or do anything else for ascertaining whether water could be obtained at a certain depth. The consequence of the Government method was that most of the mines took advantage of the bonus by sinking their main shafts much deeper, and which they would have had to do at their own cost without a bonus, while the question of the depth at which water can be procured has not troubled the mine-owners at all. If a scheme for supplying Yilgarn with water, at a fair expenditure, can be put before the House, with a guarantee from the different companies to pay interest on the cost, I think it would be a wise expenditure. It is a calamity at present that valuable mines cannot be kept going constantly for want

of water. This proposal opens up a very wide question, and I simply second the motion *pro formâ*.

MR. DEHAMEL: We really see, in this House, some of the strangest jumps that are witnessed in the world. I was never more amused than when the hon. member for the Gascoyne jumped up to support this motion. What does it come to? That there are four mines at Southern Cross—the Central, the Central Extended, Fraser's, and Fraser's South—which, by an expenditure of £5,000, or equal to £1,250 for each mine, can obtain a sufficient supply of water—salt water, as the mover himself describes it—and for what? For keeping human life alive? No; but for the benefit of the shareholders in these mines! We are actually asked, in this House, to provide £5,000 of the moneys of the people, for enabling the shareholders in these four mines to obtain enough water to keep their mines going all the year round. Now I would like to know who are going to receive the benefits, the dividends, from these mines. Are the public generally going to receive the profits? No. The Government? No. Then who are going to receive them? The shareholders of these mines—the mover of this very resolution and other people are going to receive the profits from the money that we are asked to expend for their benefit. I have never heard a greater insult offered to the intelligence of any Assembly in this world than the insult that is offered in this motion of the hon. member for West Kimberley to-day. I hope and sincerely trust that every member of this House will cast it out, and throw it from him in the same way that I do. We have an instance given us of moneys spent by the Government at Coolgardie. Sir, I say the Government have done right in providing water—drinkable water—for Coolgardie. If people come over to this colony, being drawn here by the advantages which the Premier himself sets forth when he says this is one of the greatest colonies in the whole of Australia, I say it is the duty of him and his colleagues to try and provide water for drinking, so that those persons who are attracted here by the great prospects of Western Australia may be able to find enough water to prevent them from perishing with thirst or starvation. But

to ask us, the members of this House, to provide salt water—useless for human consumption—to ask us to provide salt water for enabling capitalists to carry on their mines and make dividends, I say no greater insult has ever been offered to this House; and I trust that the motion of the hon. member, supported though it be by my friend the member for the Gascoyne, will, by the good sense of the House, be absolutely cast from us.

MR. CANNING: In rising to support the motion, I may say that if it would have the effect of committing the Government to a good sum of money, instead of supporting it I should have raised a point of order. But I take it that the effect of the motion is that the House recommends the Government to take into consideration what means can be devised for facilitating the development of these mines at Southern Cross, and I do think that no more reasonable motion, with regard to the way of seeking the aid of the Government, could be put forward. We may bear in mind that these mines at Southern Cross were opened out by means of the capital of residents in this colony, who in doing that were the first to develop the gold-mining industry in this portion of the colony. Their action has further led to the discovery and development of the Coolgardie goldfield, and in this way is attracting a large population to these shores. They have been expending money for a very considerable time past, and with very poor results, owing chiefly to the want of water. This continued expenditure must eventually reach a vanishing point, and the time must come when those who are interested in such undertakings will be tired of paying out money and seeing very little return. We should bear in mind that this undertaking is in some sense a national one, being the development of the great gold-mining industry, which is making this colony known as it never was before all over the world—that industry which will be the means of developing the other industries and resources of the colony. And we may bear in mind also that the persons to whom these mines will give a profitable return are residents in the colony, and that the money will be so much added to the wealth of the country, and will not be like the alluvial and reefing gold which is got at Coolgardie and other

places, and is mostly spent elsewhere, instead of being added to the wealth of the colony. The gold which is got in these mines worked by local companies is expended in the employment of a considerable number of men, and the wages find their way, by a hundred different channels, into general circulation. Bearing all this in mind, I think that no undertaking has a stronger claim on the support of the Government than the one suggested in this proposal. A railway is being constructed to Southern Cross, for developing the mining industry, and considerable sums are being expended at Coolgardie to provide water for those who are going there. That expenditure is considered to be a reasonable one, although persons go there solely for the purpose of obtaining gold, and when they have got it they mostly go out of the colony to spend it. We are incurring great expense in providing them with water, whereas they might reasonably be called on to contribute something towards the cost. But we do not expect them to pay, and it would be contrary to the policy of Governments to do so. There would be nothing unreasonable in asking the thousands of people who come here, seeking for gold, to pay something towards the cost of water as a necessary of life, and which is expected to be provided for them at great expense. What do we get in return? The men who get the gold take it away to spend in other colonies, only a small minority of them remaining to settle in this colony and spend their money here; and I do not see that they establish any stronger claim on the finances of the colony, for providing them with a water supply, than those who are settled in the country and employ their money in developing these mines at Yilgarn. The claim of these latter for a water supply to keep the mines in full operation is one that deserves the careful consideration of every member of this House, and I think this motion should commend itself to the Government. I do not think the House desires that the Government should be committed to the expenditure of money forthwith, but the motion suggests to the Government that it should carefully consider the means of providing water for the development of this great industry at Southern Cross.

MR. TRAYLEN: I think it is a sufficient answer to the last speaker to say that the Government, in providing drinkable water at Coolgardie, have provided themselves also with the power to charge for it, and those who read the newspapers will observe that the Government are taken to task somewhat for charging too much. The hon. member for West Kimberley has made out an excellent case for a company to acquire water rights, and supply those mines which want the water. It has transpired that one of the mines at Southern Cross manages to run the year through, that another has water enough to run about three-quarters of the year; and can it be possible that the two left are the Central and the Central Extended? Therefore the moneys of the colony are to be used for providing these two mines with water for working their plant. I think I know the site of a water supply that is referred to by the mover, and I believe I paid for making one of the holes there some time ago, and for putting down a pump and other appliances necessary to raise water. If I do know the spot correctly, I repeat that this seems to be an excellent case in which a company may acquire water rights for protecting their investment in the manner provided in the Goldfields Act and Regulations; and they may pump up the water to high ground, and from thence convey it in pipes by gravitation to those mines which require a water supply. We have helped these four mines sufficiently by passing a resolution which allowed a bonus to be paid to any company for deep-sinking at per foot; and it has been properly pointed out that the regulations made in relation to the bonus were such as enabled the mine-owners to be paid by the Government for doing that which they would otherwise have had to do in their own interest.

MR. CLARKSON: In my opinion, no matter more important than that of providing water on goldfields engages the attention of the Government. During the last session I submitted a motion bearing on that subject, and I was assured by the Government that every means would be adopted. On that understanding I withdrew the motion. But I am sorry I cannot approve of this motion, which is to provide water for only a portion of the goldfields. I think the owners

of the mines at Southern Cross should be in a position to provide water for themselves; and, as pointed out by the hon. member for Albany, the expense to them would not be great. It is not right to ask the House to provide water for these four mines. If the motion were to provide the whole of the goldfields in that district with water, I would be the first to sanction this expenditure, or five times the amount.

MR. CONNOR: As the representative of a small mining constituency, I would be sorry to appear as opposing anything that would assist in the development of mining; but although the mover of this motion represents the constituency next to mine, and is a gentleman for whom I have great respect, and whose influence I shall always seek when I want anything done in this House, still I cannot support this motion. I have great respect for the hon. member's talents, but I certainly never thought he had such "cheek" before.

MR. A. FORREST: That is not argument. Give us some reasons why it should not be done.

MR. CONNOR: It has been said by the hon. member for East Perth (Mr. Canning) that the people whose money has been spent on these mines have as good a right to subsidies and to have public money spent for their benefit as the people who are at present risking their lives on the goldfields. I say the men who are risking their lives have the first claim on our consideration, and if we want gold mining to attain any great success, these gold-seekers are the men we should try to keep here. It is my impression that there is no goldfield in the colony where anything like the same amount of public money has been spent as at Southern Cross; and I think some of the Government money has been spent there foolishly—£380,000 for a railway! The four mining companies at Southern Cross have power to call up more capital, to the extent of £79,000.

MR. A. FORREST: How do you make that out?

MR. CONNOR: I can give you figures. One mine, which has paid a dividend to-day, has £45,000 available to be called up; and yet the hon. member asks this House to vote £5,000 for subsidising that particular mine. There are £79,000 of

uncalled capital available, and I say the Central Extended has £45,000 of uncalled capital available at present, and it has to-day paid a dividend. These are the people we are asked to subsidise, at the expense of other parts of the colony, which are quite as important in gold-mining matters. Take the Murchison, for instance. The people there do not ask the Government to subsidise private enterprise. They go there, in a public spirit, to work the mines. I am glad to have an opportunity of being here to oppose this motion.

MR. A. FORREST: In reply to the different speakers who have thought fit to criticise the scheme I have asked this House to agree to, I should like to say a few words. I notice particularly the hon. member for Albany has said this was a matter for private enterprise. I hardly think it can be called a private enterprise to provide a water supply for a town containing 500 people, including the workmen and their wives and families, and to supply also the surrounding district. Of course the water will be condensed, and be fit for drinking. There is no water in the country between Northam and Southern Cross, except at rock-holes after rain; and the salt water used at the mines is condensed for the use of the workmen and their families, each single workman being allowed three gallons a day, and six gallons to married men. These mining companies do not ask the Government to give them the money. They offer to pay a fair rate of interest for a supply of water to their mines. The opening of these mines has led to the other gold discoveries, and in this way has drawn the attention of the whole world to this colony. The hon. member for the Gascoyne knows the difficulties these mining companies have had to contend with, and the main difficulty has been the uncertainty of a water supply. I feel sorry that the hon. member for East Kimberley (Mr. Connor) has taunted me with being impudent and cheeky. I repudiate the imputation. The conditions of water supply at Southern Cross and Coolgardie are different from those in the Murchison, Roebourne, and Kimberley districts, for on those goldfields generally the difficulty is to get rid of the water after sinking the mines, whereas in the mines at Southern Cross the shareholders' money has been

spent in trying to get water for keeping the machinery going. Reference has been made to the Central and the Central Extended, as if I were a big shareholder in them. The hon. member for Albany always casts dirty water wherever he goes. He never says a kind word in this House, but only taunts members with having personal interests and unworthy motives.

MR. DEHAMEL: I never said a word of the kind. It was one of the other members who said that; but, if the cap fits, I have no objection for the hon. member to wear it.

MR. A. FORREST: I may inform the hon. member that the cap does not fit. I am capable of standing here to justify my conduct, and am not afraid to state here what are the facts in doing my duty to my constituents, or those on whose behalf I am moving. This question does not concern me in the least, because the companies I am interested in are quite capable of providing the money, if necessary. But the people residing at Southern Cross, and others who pass through there going eastward, are asking: "Where is the water supply for the town to come from?" What was the motion of the hon. member for the Greenough that has just been thrown out? It asked the Government to guarantee a loan for providing a water supply in the Perth district, where there is water all round. I say the hon. member who moved that motion is not what he tries to represent that he is in this House. He tries to get the city waterworks purchased for supplying other people in the Perth district, and he refuses for Southern Cross £5,000 to enable these mines to employ some 200 people and to keep a town going—a very good town it is, too. I defy any member to say the Southern Cross mines and the town have not been the salvation of the colony and the salvation of the Government.

MR. SIMPSON: That is a big statement: "the salvation of the Government."

MR. A. FORREST: Certainly; that is where the revenue of the colony has come from, as I told the people there. It is the most important district in the colony. Anyone who has travelled to Southern Cross in the last few weeks, and seen the great amount of traffic—the hundreds of swags and horses and camels, and

the men coming in with gold found on the fields—must realise the great importance of the Yilgarn District, and of Southern Cross as the business centre. While I was there, the hon. member (Mr. DeHamel) was proposed at a public meeting as a fit and proper person to represent the district in the new Parliament; but when I informed the meeting that he had voted against the construction of the Yilgarn Railway, they said nothing more about him. I have done my duty to the people who have asked me to bring this matter before the House, and if the motion is not entertained, I must bow to the decision of the House. I only say that if the Government can see their way to a small expenditure to be guaranteed by these mining companies, it will be a move in the right direction. If I had £5,000 myself, I would put the water supply on, because I know there is not a mine on that line of reef which would not have a battery and stampers going. Whether it is considered "impudence" or "cheek" I know not, but if I were a member of the Government in power, I would certainly help those who try to help the country. In undertaking this work, we would be doing something to move this great country ahead; for after travelling out eastward 160 or 170 miles beyond the settled districts, through a desert, one comes to a thriving population at Southern Cross. In conclusion, I must express surprise that the hon. member for the district (Mr. Clarkson) should have opposed a motion which was passed at a meeting of 300 people at Southern Cross, asking the Government to provide a water supply for the district.

MR. H. W. SHOLL: Our experience in the district I represent (Roebourne) is that it is no good to ask the Government to give us a water supply. I shall certainly oppose this motion, although an interested party in these mines. The town of Cossack, which has been established 26 years, besides the shipping population continually travelling along the coast, has waited all these years without a water supply. There is only brackish water to drink, although for £10,000 a proper water supply could be provided.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): You never brought the matter forward.

MR. H. W. SHOLL: Then I will do so.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) I do not altogether agree with the view taken by those who have spoken against this motion—to the extent they have spoken, at any rate. The Government are expending money at present for proving whether water is obtainable at a depth on the goldfields, in order that, if we find it existing at Southern Cross, the owners of mines may be able to go on with certainty in expending large sums to bore for water for their own purposes. No objection was taken to the resolution of this House that the Government should take steps to prove whether water existed, and at what depth. We are trying to obtain water by deep-boring, not in the interest of any particular company at Southern Cross, but in the interest of all. Those who speak of expenditure on goldfields should not think only of the benefit to mine-owners. The mines working in the country are the greatest benefactors to the whole community; and I have no hesitation in saying that these four mining companies at Southern Cross, which have been spoken of with some contempt, are of the greatest importance to this colony as a whole. What have we done? We are building a railway to Southern Cross, for the sake of these mines; because Coolgardie was not in existence when that work was entered on. When I proposed that a railway should be built for connecting Fremantle and Perth with the Yilgarn goldfields, it was because I believed the colony had a large goldfield in that locality; and I still believe that. These mines, all the way to Parker's Range and Southern Cross, will be found valuable in the future; and if anything should happen to stop the mines at Southern Cross, it would be nothing less than a national calamity. The hon. member for West Kimberley says the output is valued at £60,000 a year; therefore that large amount of money, which is now spent all in this colony in carrying on these mines, would be altogether lost to the population by a stoppage of these mines. That is not a matter we can regard lightly. I can only hope the mines will not stop. As to a water supply, there is sufficient money and energy amongst the companies to provide a water supply for their own wants; but if the Government can assist them in any way in providing water, I shall not hesitate for a moment to do it;

but, at the same time, the companies will have to pay something for it. We cannot assist private enterprise. I think the hon. member was unwise in moving in this matter. The Government are thoroughly alive to the importance of a water supply, and we are taking steps there and all over the colony to provide water on goldfields. It is not necessary to prick a willing horse. The hon. member was asked, while visiting Southern Cross lately, to move in this matter, and that is his excuse for doing so, I hope. At the same time, the Government do not need any urging in this matter. The House does not seem to be in favour of the motion, at present. However, the Government will go on trying to further the interests of the mining community and of the colony in providing a water supply in these mining districts, which are so much scattered.

MR. LOTON: The motion is not definite enough. The House may be in favour of taking some action, but I do not think it would be justified in committing itself to an indefinite proposition of this kind, on which the Government might feel inclined to spend a large amount of money. I think the Government are fully alive to the wants of those districts, and, if they are not doing all they might do, they are doing a great deal and spending a lot of money in trying to provide water. We have been trying to procure water at Yilgarn during the last five years—before this Government came into office—but up to the present we have failed. I cannot support the motion, because it is not sufficiently definite.

MR. A. FORREST: After the expression of the opinion of the Premier, I shall withdraw the motion, trusting to the good sense of the Government, during the recess, to devise some scheme for supplying water not only for the mines now working, but for the mines generally at Southern Cross.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

ENFORCEMENT OF CLAUSE 39 OF MIDLAND RAILWAY COMPANY'S CONTRACT.

MR. LOTON, in accordance with notice, moved, "That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable in the interests of settlers residing within the area of the

Midland Railway Concession, and also in the interests of the colonists generally, that the terms and conditions of Clause 39 of the Contract between the Government and the Midland Railway Company should be enforced by the Government."

He said: The clause referred to in my motion provides that when a railway has been completed, and any section is opened and worked, it shall be continuously worked and a train run once a day, or, with the consent of the Government, not less than three times a week, and must attain a certain speed. The only point I raise is the question of the running of sufficient trains. I think the clause itself is broad, and allows to them a sufficient margin, without the necessity of my pressing any detail upon them. If I were asked, I should say it is not necessary to enforce the clause to its fullest extent at present—that is the running of one train per day—but I think there is an absolute necessity for enforcing the clause to something less than the full extent, and I am surprised the Government have not taken action in this direction before. This railway has been completed, so far as it is opened, for over twelve months; and if any settler in the districts which this railway is supposed to serve—say about the Victoria Plains—wants to come to Perth or Fremantle on business, it takes him about five days before he can get back. It is the same from the city end, for if a person wants to go to Victoria Plains, he has to spend four or five days in the excursion. For various reasons, it is obvious there should be some further train accommodation. One reason is that the lands which have been shut up during the past seven years are now open to selection; and there are a number of people who want to select lands in those districts, but before doing so they want to visit the localities. I do not see why it should be necessary for a man to spend nearly a week in going a journey of 60 or 70 miles and returning, when there is a railway opened to these districts. I do not know what the Commissioner of Railways or the leader of the Government would say, if he went by railway to some place this side of Bunbury, and had to remain there a day or two before the train started back to Perth. This is the position which people are in, and have

been in during twelve months, in the Midland Railway district. I say it is in the interest of the Railway Company themselves that they should provide greater facilities for traffic than they do at present, for if facilities are not given the railway cannot be utilised, and, if not utilised, it cannot pay, and if it does not pay, I suppose in time the company will have to forfeit the railway. But, in any case, we surely do not build railways to look at; we build them to be utilised for traffic; therefore I think the time has arrived when greater facilities should be given by the Midland Railway Company. I brought this matter before the Government, by question, in this House, something over a year ago, for on the 5th December, 1892, I asked whether the Government intended to urge on the Midland Railway Company the necessity of running a train daily as far as the line was opened; and to that question the Commissioner of Railways replied that the Government intended very shortly to call on the Midland Railway Company to run three trains weekly. That reply was given over twelve months ago; the change has not been made yet; and I do not know what "shortly" means. I submit that the people who have occupied lands in the Midland district, and whom this railway is supposed to benefit, have been a long-suffering people; and the country generally has been long-suffering, and been very lenient with the Midland Railway Company. I am not bringing forward this motion in any spirit of antagonism towards the company; it is rather in the interest of the company than otherwise; and seeing that they have not moved, and the Government have not moved them, it is time someone else moved in the matter. I do not know any reason or objection on the part of the Government to take the steps I propose in this motion. It seems to me that when the country builds railways, facilities should be given for using them, and I am in a position to know that the facilities given at present are not at all sufficient. I do not intend to go further at present, unless I see some serious opposition, and I trust there will not be opposition. I am aware, from remarks made by the Premier to-day, that the Government do not like to be pricked up on various occasions; but sometimes they require a little prick-

ing up. Now that the Commissioner of Railways has got the Government railways well under way and some of them out of hand, I trust he will find time to give more attention to the details of this Midland contract. We are in a fair way now, I suppose, to see the Midland Railway completed through, and, in the meantime, let us give facilities. If the company won't do so, let us enforce the provisions of this clause to the extent of requiring reasonable facilities. I do not say there is any necessity to run one train a day, at present; but we want more facilities provided for enabling people to visit the land with a view to settling on it, and for those who are on the land to use this railway. I wish to draw attention to one or two other details. There is the question of a regular tariff of charges, and I may say that at present the tariff is anyhow. In some cases the company charge very moderate rates, but not always. Surely the time has arrived, after a hundred miles or more of the railway have been opened for traffic, for the Government to take some steps in reference to these details, in the interest of the people of the colony. There is another matter. We have had brought before us, on various occasions, the large expenditure on station buildings upon the Government railways; but the terminal station at the Midland Junction can scarcely be called a station, for there is only a bit of a rough platform at the back of the shanty which the Government own at the Junction, with a wooden office for the issuing of tickets; and anyone who has to wait an hour or so for a train, when changing from one line to the other, is exposed to all weathers, without any accommodation. If it is requisite to spend £5,000 or £10,000 on a terminal station in parts of the Government railway system, surely some reasonable accommodation should be provided for a terminal station on a private railway. I trust the Commissioner will take note of the remarks I have made. On these grounds, I am sure he cannot defend the Midland Company, and I do not know that he can defend himself or the Government for not having taken certain action earlier.

MR. SOLOMON: In seconding the motion, I think the Government will see it is a reasonable one, which should be

taken advantage of, because the Midland Railway exists for the benefit of the country. People are coming here daily and inquiring about the Midland district, with a view to settling on the land, and there should be more facilities for travelling on this railway as far as it is opened. The arguments used by the mover will show the necessity for every facility being given to those who wish to visit the district and select land.

MR. CLARKSON: I rise with much pleasure to support the motion. If any country has been imposed on by a private railway company, Western Australia has been imposed on by this Company. The best of our lands, during the last five years, have been locked up, in the interests of this Company. A large portion of the district I have the honour of representing, which includes some of the best land in the colony, has been locked up; and although we have been told lately that the financial troubles have been settled, yet the Company goes on doing as it likes. It runs only two trains a week—one on Tuesday, and the other on Saturday—although the line has been completed for a hundred miles. I have received notice from the Company that all the land I hold on lease from the Government within their concession is claimed by the Company; therefore I presume they are liable to perform their duties under the agreement. As the mover has pointed out, the facilities for traffic are not sufficient. There is only a miserable little station at the Junction, which reminds me very much of the station at Newcastle; and I believe there is no other station building on the Company's line.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): There is one at Gingin; a fine one.

MR. CLARKSON: At the intermediate stopping places there is not a shed at all; the goods are thrown out on the sand alongside the line. I recently travelled over the South-Western Railway to Bunbury, and, as far as the country and the settlement go, I saw very little difference between the country on that side of Perth and the country along the Midland line to Gingin. On the Government line I saw very nice station buildings; on the Midland line I see none at all.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn): The mover has alluded to a question he put to the

Government about twelve months ago, but the hon. member knows that twelve months ago the Midland Company were in the throes of a great financial trouble. They got over that only a month or two ago. I did previously take up the matter, and from all the evidence I could gain at the time, with some trouble, I ascertained that the train service which was being run was equal to the requirements of the traffic. I was assured that if the Government enforced the condition as to running a daily train, it would place the Company in a most serious difficulty, and would seem as though the Government were trying to harass the Company by enforcing a condition which they were not in a position financially to carry out. During the last twelve months the Company have been in the same position up to about six weeks ago. Now that they are in a better position, and a contract has been let for the completion of the line right through, I think we can now reasonably demand that the action suggested by the hon. member shall be taken by the Company, and that greater facilities shall be provided for the traffic. This change will not involve much greater expense, because the contractor uses the line now for construction purposes, and the country no doubt requires greater facilities to be given, and it is the intention of the Government to enforce them. I think the Government may be excused for not enforcing the requirement of Clause 39 prior to the present time, and I do not think we could reasonably have taken more active steps in this direction than we have done. I hope very shortly to be able to obtain a more extended train service, and that the rates for traffic will be rather lower.

Motion put and passed.

DELAY IN APPOINTMENT OF SECRETARY TO AGRICULTURAL BUREAU.

MR. HARPER, in accordance with notice, moved, "That this House regrets the inaction of the Government in delaying to appoint a Secretary to the Agricultural Bureau, as asked for by delegates of the Agricultural and Horticultural Associations of the colony, and as provided for by the Legislature; this delay being greatly prejudicial to the important interests affected." He said: I do not think this colony is ever likely to

have a Government which will be more ready to express its sympathy with, and good wishes for, the advancement of the horny-handed sons of toil, the bold peasant, or the farmer. Some months previous to the last session, the representatives of the several societies which are interested in vine and fruit growing held a conference in Perth, and decided that they had some special wants or requirements which should be pressed on the attention of the Government. Their requests came before the Legislature, which assented to them; and there they appear to have stuck ever since.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): "Ever since" is not very long ago.

MR. HARPER: A meeting of the Vine and Fruit Growers' Association was held last evening, and it passed a resolution on this subject, expressing a desire that I should press the matter in this House to-day. I may say that there is, amongst those interested, a general feeling of disappointment at the delay that has occurred. I am confident that the Ministry have done some harm to the country by the delay, and done some harm to themselves, for I have constantly heard expressions of disappointment at the delay of the Government in furthering this matter. I only hope there will be no further delay, and that the Ministry will give a practical exhibition of that desire for the furtherance of the interests of this class of the community which they have so often expressed.

MR. PATERSON: In seconding the motion, I may say it is a curious coincidence that there was handed to me, five minutes ago, a photograph of the secretary of the Agricultural Bureau in South Australia; and it seems to rise in judgment against the Ministry here for not having taken action in the matter of appointing a secretary of the promised Agricultural Bureau in this colony. It is a serious want felt throughout the length and breadth of this country. I believe there is in this colony a gentleman well suited to fill this position, and I hope the Government will consider whether they can appoint him to the position.

MR. PIESSE: In supporting this motion, I can quite see the difficulty the Government must labour under in selecting some person to fill this post. It is really necessary that, in making a selec-

tion, they should use all discretion; and although a little time has been lost to the country, and the agricultural interests may have suffered a good deal by the delay in appointing the members and secretary of a Bureau of Agriculture, yet I have no doubt the Government see the necessity of taking immediate steps to carry out the intention. In appointing a secretary, it is to be hoped the Government will select some person with practical knowledge and trained intelligence to fill so important a position. It will be of no use to select a person who is only a man of theory, with no practice at all—some man who has no practical experience of what he professes to teach others, but simply clips extracts from newspapers and publications, to dress them up as if they were his own ideas—a man of mere scissors and paste. Such men may collect and set forth ideas of what can be done elsewhere; and we know that many persons in this colony have suffered very much from suggestions thrown out broadcast as to the treatment of diseases. No doubt much can be learnt from simple books about insect pests which have caused trouble in other parts of the world; but what we require is practical ideas from persons who have tried these things—not from mere theorists who have never given them any test at all. We can get such knowledge for ourselves, by picking up a book on insect pests and the management of a garden, wherein we may find numerous recipes given for the destruction of particular pests, the proper management of an orchard, or the cultivation of certain plants. What we want is a man to combine the two requirements—able to give us practical instruction in knowledge tested by his own experience, and ability to set forth his ideas in an interesting manner. I have no doubt it will be a hard task to make a proper selection, but I am sure the Government will use every discretion in selecting a suitable man. I hope that when a secretary is selected and a board is formed, we shall have a bureau which will carry out the object which hon. members and the Government have in view.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): My friend the member for the Williams has made some remarks for which I am much obliged to him; but, holding the views he does, I do not see how he can

support the motion now before the House. My own opinion is that the motion is altogether too strong. It is like bringing a big cannon to shoot a pigeon. No doubt the matter is an important one, but this motion would lead one to suppose the Government had neglected the matter for a long time. But only two months have elapsed since the last session in which the resolution was passed. There has been a great deal for Ministers to do during the short recess, besides going about the country in many parts; and still some action has been taken in this matter of the Bureau, for we have made inquiries in other colonies as to the requirements and working of this department. We have also received a lot of applications from persons desirous of being appointed secretary, and I may say the Government have some hesitation about making this appointment, because we feel that the success of the Bureau will largely depend on the suitability of the person to be appointed as its secretary. I do not think the Government should be told we have been neglectful, and have been ruining the colony. I say that—excepting a casual remark from the hon. member for Beverley—not one of the societies or committees interested in the matter have addressed a word to us since Parliament was prorogued. Therefore, if we have been neglectful, they have been neglectful too. The matter has been considered several times by the Government in Cabinet, and we have any number of applications in hand. Not more than three days ago I was in telegraphic communication with the Premiers of other colonies on the subject; still, the Government have not, up to the present moment, come to a decision as to the appointment of a secretary. Of course I quite understand that the hon. member for Beverley, who feels very much interested in this matter and in everything that conduces to the welfare of the agricultural interest especially, may have expected us to move a little quicker; but while regretting that he has been disappointed to that extent, I do not think we deserve this very strong motion to be directed against us. We have taken a good deal of action, but have not come to a conclusion. If anyone else were in our position, they would find themselves in the same difficulty as we do, in settling this matter. I

may promise that the Government will at once take this matter in hand, by appointing a secretary; and we will try to get suitable gentlemen to form the Bureau, in order to set the new machinery in motion. I hope the Bureau will be very successful. I have heard from others that this kind of department has been successful in other parts of the world, and especially in South Australia. After having made that promise already to-day, and again now, I do not think the hon. member will desire to have this censure on the Government recorded in the minutes, because I can assure him that, if we have not been very active, we have not lost sight of the question, and the matter has been before the Government several times.

MR. THROSSELL: I am aware there has been a great sense of disappointment throughout the agricultural districts, and especially at the meetings of the Vine and Fruit Growers' Association, that the Government have not acted more promptly in forming a Bureau of Agriculture and appointing a secretary. The general opinion is that we have a gentleman in our midst who is thoroughly well qualified for the post. I judge so from knowing that the country districts generally have benefited very largely from the information which this gentleman has disseminated through the columns of the *West Australian* newspaper. I can say for myself and my neighbours that we have taken advantage of that information, and have profited by it; and I know from actual results that great good has arisen from the information he has given throughout the country. I say, let us have a practical man, who will travel through the country districts and give useful information to settlers. The extent of viticulture and fruit culture has doubled in the past six years, and I can assure the Government that the increase will go on, and that these are going to be among the chief industries of the colony, if properly supported by the Legislature. I think the hon. member for Beverley has done well in calling attention to this matter; and, speaking without any personal feeling, I believe the appointment of the writer of the articles signed "L. L. C.," as secretary of the Agricultural Bureau, would give general satisfaction.

MR. LOTON: I am somewhat surprised to find, in the present motion, such strong words of censure emanating from the hon. member for Beverley. I am glad the Premier has made the remarks he did, because possibly they will save the time of this House. After the discussion that took place in the last session with regard to the appointment of a secretary to the Bureau, I can easily understand the difficulty which the Government have found themselves in when considering the kind of man they should appoint, in order to find a man possessing the qualifications which have been described by several hon. members as being necessary. We had it laid down emphatically by one hon. member that he must be a thoroughly scientific agricultural chemist; another said he must be a thoroughly practical person, conversant with all the working details of agriculture and viticulture and horticulture; while the hon. member for Beverley said he must, further, be an enthusiast, and, if he was not that, he was sure to be a failure. The Premier has pointed out to-day that, after all, the success of this Bureau of Agriculture must depend mainly on the man who is appointed secretary. I am not going to express any opinion as to the merits of any person I am acquainted with. I will leave that to the good judgment and discernment of the Government, as being responsible, and I can fully recognise the difficulty they find themselves in. But I would like to express one word of opinion—that is, I hope the Government will not be carried away too much by enthusiasm. We want some practical knowledge to be possessed by the gentleman who is to be appointed to this position. He should have as wide a range of information as you like, with ability to impart it, by writing or orally, to others; and if he is also capable of practically showing and demonstrating various matters to farmers and cultivators, that will be the kind of man we want. I am afraid, however, the Government will have some difficulty in finding him, although there are, no doubt, a number of men of this kind. I cannot cordially support the motion in its present wording, as it is too strong for the occasion; but the hon. member is quite right in urging the Government to proceed in the matter. The latter part of the motion says: "This de-

lay being prejudicial to the important interests affected." I cannot help thinking that some hon. members may be placing too much reliance on the kind of information they are going to get from the secretary of this Bureau; that persons who are in this frame of mind may be waiting too much for assistance, instead of trying to help themselves. A lot of the information which we see in the newspapers, on these subjects, is obtainable from other sources by those who seek it, though it is brought into greater prominence by being printed in the form of a newspaper article. I do not know that these industries have been very much prejudiced by a couple of months' delay in making this appointment. No doubt the formation of a Bureau, with a first-class man at the head of it, ought to be a leading factor in the promotion of these particular industries. But these industries should not be over-valued; and I do not know, after all, but that with a moderate amount of common sense, and the information that can be obtained by almost any ordinary person, we can do, perhaps, nineteen-twentieths of what can be done by the secretary of an agricultural bureau. I would like to see inculcated in this colony a little more reliance upon self than upon someone else.

MR. HARPER: The Premier and the last speaker have expressed some disapproval of the strength of this motion. I made it as nearly as I could in accordance with the feeling of the people interested, and I can only say it expresses facts, and I think they are what should be brought before this House. I am confident that what is in this motion is simply a statement of facts, and it is desirable that the Ministry should, as far as possible, know the correct feeling of the country. One mistake made by the Premier was when he described this as a very little pigeon. That is not the view of the people interested.

THE PREMIER (HON. SIR J. FORREST): I referred to the censure for a delay of not two months.

MR. HARPER: It was last April when a deputation waited on the Premier, and he promised that a sum should be put on the Estimates for an Agricultural Bureau. A sum was put on the Estimates, and passed by this House, but no further effect was given to it.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): We could not take action until we obtained the vote of money.

MR. HARPER: During the session there were certainly two questions asked in this House and one in the other House, on this matter. The Premier cannot challenge those interested with not having kept the matter before the notice of the Government, because they have brought it forward time after time; and yet nothing has been done by the Government. We are now informed that the matter is going to be taken in hand immediately. I do not wish to press this motion, after having brought it prominently before the Government. If hon. members think the motion should be withdrawn, I am willing to take that course; but it is quite as well the Government should understand that the feeling exists.

MR. SOLOMON: When I saw the notice on the paper, it struck me as being rather severe on the Government. It is only a few weeks since the prorogation took place, and surely the hands of the Ministers have been pretty full. This is a matter which will permit of a little delay, surely. It has been under the consideration of the Government, as the Premier has told us, but no doubt the selection of a suitable secretary has required great care. I cannot support the motion in its present form, and I hope it will be withdrawn.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

ADJOURNMENT.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) moved that the House, at its rising, do adjourn until the next day, at 12 o'clock, noon.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at 6:43 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Friday, 22nd December, 1893.

Electoral Rolls Bill: committee; third reading—Suspension of Sitting—Prorogation.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton) took the chair at 11 o'clock a.m.

PRAYERS.

ELECTORAL ROLLS BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clauses 1 to 7 were passed.

Title—"An Act to authorise the immediate Preparation of the new Electoral Rolls to be compiled in accordance with the 'Constitution Act Amendment Act, 1893'":

THE HON. J. MORRISON: I hardly think this is a fit heading for the contents of this Bill, for it does not describe what the Bill really is. Something should be put in the title to show that such matters as clauses relating to joint owners, mortgagees, telegrams are in the scope of the Bill. These matters have nothing to do with the amendment of the Constitution Act, and, therefore, do not come within the title of the Bill.

THE HON. J. W. HACKETT: I think it would be well if we made an alteration. We may assume, I think, that the draftsman has made an error, and it is obvious how it occurred. It was intended at first that the Bill should deal only with the amendment of the Constitution Act and the Electoral Act, and the other clauses have been added, but the draftsman forgot to alter the title. There is no question that the title is at variance with the Bill. If the English language means anything at all, we must see that a provision as to striking out words in the Telegraph Act has nothing to do with the compilation of rolls, still less has the clause relating to joint owners and mortgagees. Unless we are going to pass a Bill which is at variance with the rules of the House we must make an alteration.

THE HON. G. RANDELL: The rules say that the Bill must not contain subjects foreign to the title.

THE CHAIRMAN (Hon. Sir G. Shenton): Standing Order No. 231 says: "Such matters as have no proper relation