

Bills would then be taken into Committee. If the second reading of any Bill should be moved, it would be open to any hon. member to move for the adjournment of the debate until the next Tuesday, so that hon. members would have full control over the business; but it was expected that formal business would come from the other Chamber, and if this could be advanced a stage, the work of the session would be assisted.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: Was there any reason for meeting to-morrow? He understood it was the intention of the Colonial Secretary to move the suspension of the Standing Orders on Tuesday, in order that Bills might be carried through all stages at one sitting.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: If necessary. Notice of motion had to be given.

HON. R. S. HAYNES: If the Standing Orders were suspended, the meeting to-morrow would be inoperative, because all the business could be proceeded with on the next Tuesday. He was now speaking on behalf of country members and others who desired to be at every meeting of the House, and it would meet their convenience if the House adjourned until the next Tuesday.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: A number of members had intimated their willingness to make a House to-morrow, and it was very desirable there should be a sitting, which, though only short, would enable him to move the second reading of one or two Bills, also to receive Messages from the other House.

THE PRESIDENT: Now that the session was drawing to a close, it would be advisable to meet to-morrow in order that Messages might be received from the other House, and as a certain number of members had promised to attend, it would be wise to accept the suggestion of the Colonial Secretary, and make a House to-morrow for the transaction of formal business.

The House adjourned at 5.15 o'clock until the next day.

## Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 31st October, 1900.

Paper presented—Question: Legislative Assembly Buildings. Additions—Question: Rabbit Incursion, Prevention—Question: Circuit Courts and Fourth Judge—Exportation of Arms Bill, first reading—Coolgardie Exhibition Lands Repeal Bill, first reading—Patent Acts Amendment Bill, third reading—Loans Bill, third reading—Kalgoorlie Tramways Bill, second reading, in Committee, reported—Kalgoorlie Roads Board Tramways Bill, second reading: Select Committee—Leederville Tramways Bill, in Committee, new clause, reported—Fremantle Tramways Bill, Recommittal—Roads and Streets Closure Bill, in Committee, reported—Annual Estimates, Committee of Supply, Railways vote (resumed), adjourned—Adjournment.

The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock, p.m.

### PRAYERS.

### PAPER PRESENTED.

By COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Retrenchment of Mr. H. W. Hargrave, Correspondence (as ordered).

Ordered to lie on the table.

### QUESTION—LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY BUILDINGS, ADDITIONS.

MR. ILLINGWORTH asked the Premier, Whether it was proposed to make arrangements whereby a commencement might be made as soon as the House was prorogued, with the necessary additions to this Chamber, in accordance with the plans submitted last session for the approval of members, and in order that the additional rooms might be available when the new Parliament met for the despatch of business.

THE PREMIER replied:—The first thing to be decided is what amount of money it is advisable to spend on this old building. I would suggest that a Select Committee be appointed to report.

### QUESTION—RABBIT INCURSION, PREVENTION.

MR. MITCHELL asked the Commissioner of Crown Lands: 1, Whether any steps were being taken to check the inroads of the rabbit pest. 2, If so, what was the nature of them.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS replied:—1, Yes. 2, Lightly equipped parties are being organised for the purpose of destroying any colonies of rabbits that may be found in the infested areas.

# QUESTION—CIRCUIT COURTS AND FOURTH JUDGE.

MR. MONGER (without notice) asked the Attorney General: In view of the inspired declaration by Dr. Jameson, that three Judges are sufficient to discharge the judicial business of the colony, do the Government intend to take any steps to compel the Judges to go on circuit? And will the Government fix early dates for the holding of Circuit Courts at Kalgoorlie, Coolgardie, Cue, Roebourne, Derby, and Wyndham?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member should give notice of such a question as that. Of course the Government can answer it without notice, if they choose, but the matter is rather important.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. W. Pennefather): I should be obliged if the hon. member would give notice.

MR. MONGER: I will give notice of my intention to move, to-morrow, a motion embodying the substance of my question. [Notice given accordingly.]

## EXPORTATION OF ARMS BILL.

Introduced by the PREMIER, and read a first time.

## COOLGARDIE EXHIBITION LANDS REPEAL BILL.

Introduced by the PREMIER, and read a first time.

## PATENT ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

## LOAN BILL.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

## KALGOORLIE TRAMWAYS BILL.

### SECOND READING.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. B. C. Wood), in moving the second reading, said: This is a Bill to confirm a provisional order authorising the construction of tramways in the municipality of Kalgoorlie. It is merely a formal measure, and there is no controversy about it. The proper agreement has been entered into by the people at Kalgoorlie and the contractors or conces-

sionaires, and everything is in proper order.

Question put and passed  
Bill read a second time.

### IN COMMITTEE.

Clauses 1 to 7, inclusive—agreed to.

New Clause:

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS moved that the following be added, to stand as Clause 8:

8—Protection of telephone service from injury by tramways:

Whenever any telephone service now or hereafter constructed is prejudicially affected by the construction or working of the tramways, the Postmaster General may, at the cost of the promoter and his assigns, do all such things as may be necessary to protect the telephone service from being so affected, either by placing the same on a metallic circuit system or otherwise.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: If any existing telephones were interfered with by the tramway, the company should be made liable to make good the damage; but it was unreasonable to ask that the company should be liable to keep the telephone system in order for all time, and make good any damage. He moved that the words "or hereafter" be struck out.

MR. MORAN: The amendment would not effect the object the hon. member had in view, for if it were passed the tramway people would have to keep the telephone system in order.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That was not so much a matter of consequence; but if the hon. member was willing to go as far as his remark suggested, one would be prepared to go with him. It should be made clear we were not going to ask the Tramway Company to keep our telephone system in order for all time.

MR. MOORHEAD: The difficulty which had arisen or would arise in connection with the tramway system and the telephone service must be altogether attributed to the fact that we had an antiquated telephone system, which he understood was dependent on the earth as a conductor. It was too much to expect the company to remedy a defect of that character. Long ere this the telephone service should have had a little more attention devoted to it.

MR. SOLOMON: To pass this amendment would be to impose a great hard-

ship upon various tramway companies. Possibly some compromise might have been arrived at if the various companies had been consulted beforehand, and it seemed hard, when everything had been arranged for a series of years, for a clause like this to be suddenly placed before the Committee without the companies knowing anything about it.

**MR. HIGHAM:** It was not just to ask any of the concessionaires to complete a telephone system erected upon antiquated lines in any particular town in which they desired to erect tramways at their own expense. The Government should make the system as perfect as possible and bear the expense. The proposed amendment would affect the Kalgoorlie, Leederville, and Fremantle systems, and several others also. He could not see why the Government should derive a very large revenue from the telephone system and not bear the cost of the proper construction of the system. The present system of an earth circuit was bad, and would bear no comparison with the metallic circuit for efficiency. The Committee should protest against this clause being inserted in the Bill, and the Government should put their telephones into proper working order.

**THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS:** The Government desired to protect the revenue, and that was the object of this clause. In Perth great inconvenience had been caused by the telephone service being interfered with when tramways began working, and the Government had to expend no less than £8,000 to remedy the difficulty thereby created. Surely it was desirable that the revenue should in future be protected in matters of this kind, and that tramway companies should contribute something towards the cost of making good any damage to the telephone system resulting from the working of their tramways. The telephone service in Perth was installed before the tramways began to work, and surely the company which worked the tramways for their benefit, and he believed at a great profit, should do something towards repairing the damage caused to the telephone system.

**MR. KINGSMILL:** It was the duty of the Government to protect the revenue, but in doing so the Government should not impose on these companies the cost

of putting the public telephone service into efficient working order. The Government should provide an up-to-date telephone service, and should not expect tramway companies to assist them in doing it. The principle in the clause was distinctly wrong in making provision for imposing this obligation on tramway companies in regard to the construction of future telephones. Therefore he could not support the amendment.

**MR. MORAN:** Hon. members should not tumble over each other in their eagerness to protect private enterprise. We should study the colony first, and the concessionaire after. When a tramway company got a right to lay a tramline along a certain street, say Barrack Street, the company knew they had to put that street in proper order and make it at least as good as before. In such case the concessionaire knew his obligation, and provided accordingly; but in this case the Government were imposing on the concessionaire an obligation for which he could not well provide in advance, by making him responsible for any damage which might result to any future telephone service, caused by the working of his tramways. It would be sufficient to provide that any tramway company interfering with the efficient working of an existing telephone system should be required to make that system as efficient as it was before his electric tramway began to interfere with it.

**THE PREMIER:** Where telephone lines were laid, a tramway might come after, and the tramway company would not pay for the interference caused by their tramway.

**MR. MORAN:** Let the new clause apply to any telephone in existence before the construction of a tramway affecting that telephone.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** There might be new and possibly expensive improvements devised in connection with telephones in the future, and if the Government had it in their power to call on the owners of a tramway to make good any defect in the working of the public telephones after that tramway started, the Government might call on the company to make the public telephones equal to the most expensive appliances then invented. The reference to futurity in the new clause should be struck out.

**THE PREMIER:** We might come to an understanding that would be fair. Everyone would agree that where a telephone system existed, whether it was primitive or not but served the purpose of a telephone, any tramway company interfering with the proper working of that telephone should be called on to make the system at least as serviceable as it was before the interference began. As to the present telephone system in Perth being out of date, he was not aware that it was so. He knew that in London and other places he had visited the telephones were not better, but often worse, than he found them in Perth. The metallic circuit was introduced in Perth in consequence, as he understood, of complaints that people could overhear what others were saying along the telephone, and this was certainly objectionable, as he had found in his own case. Since the metallic circuit was introduced, the hearing had been better, but there was still a buzzing annoyance to anyone trying to use the telephone. It was necessary for the Government to protect the revenue, and it should be remembered that the telephones were in possession of certain routes before the electric tramways were introduced here, consequently any damage caused to the telephone system by the working of the tramways should be made good by the company. If a tramway system were in possession first and a telephone erected after, the owner of the tramway would certainly not consent to make good any damage to his system caused by the other service which came after.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** Supposing the telephone came after the tram?

**THE PREMIER:** Then the tramway company, being in possession first, would have good reason for saying that those who came second should look after themselves. These electric tramways affected the working of the telephones a long way on each side of the line, and he could not say how far that influence extended. The member for Fremantle (Mr. Higham) had said the Government were making a large revenue out of telephones; but the fact was that the Postal and Telegraph Department, of which this was a branch, was being worked at a loss.

**MR. HIGHAM:** The telephones were making a profit.

**THE PREMIER:** But the Post Office, which was part of the department, could not be left out of the question. Another reason why we should not be too easy with these tramway companies was that if the terms in this Bill were made pretty severe, the companies would take care to obtain the best scientific appliances, so as not to interfere with the working of the telephones; whereas if the Government had to pay the cost of making good such interference, the companies would not try to obtain these better appliances. Science was progressing, and improvements in the application of electricity were made from time to time; therefore improvements might be devised by which the interference of tramways with telephones could be limited if not prevented entirely, and we might depend on it if such improvements were available, the tramway companies would take advantage of them after this provision in the Bill came into operation. If this provision were not made, and the Government had to pay for interference with their telephones, perhaps as much as they had paid in Perth, amounting to some £8,000, this would be a serious interference with the revenue, and was altogether undesirable.

**MR. HIGHAM:** The new metallic circuit had improved the telephone service.

**THE PREMIER:** No; the telephone service was not improved, in his opinion, and he could say certainly that the telephone to his house was worse now than before the working of tramways began. To use the telephone under present conditions was sometimes most distressing. The clause might be amended to provide that where the tramways came first, those responsible for the telephone system should look after themselves; and that where the tramways came after the telephones, the owners of the tramways should pay for any injury done to the telephones. The Attorney General was drafting an amendment to the new clause.

**MR. CONNOR:** This was a fitting opportunity for criticising the telephone service between Perth and Fremantle. Far from being, as was alleged, one of the best services in the world, it was most dreadfully conducted, absolutely bad, and the management deserved the censure of the House. Occasionally one's telephone would be satisfactory for a week, would

then go wrong, and would be workable only while complaints were being made to the manager of the exchange. The supervision was radically defective.

MR. MITCHELL: If the telephone service were satisfactory before the tramways came, then the tramway company should pay for damage done afterwards to the telephone service. Why should the Government rectify a system put out of order by a trading company?

MR. ILLINGWORTH withdrew his amendment in favour of one to be proposed by the Premier.

THE PREMIER moved that the words "now or hereafter," in line 1, be struck out, and "is erected prior to the construction of the tramways and" be inserted.

MR. HIGHAM: The full significance of this amendment could not immediately be grasped. Apparently the Government were desirous of throwing upon the tramway companies the responsibility for perfecting defective telephone systems. He moved that progress be reported.

Motion put and negatived.

Amendment (the Premier's) put and passed, and the new clause as amended agreed to.

Schedule:

MR. MORAN: The former amendment which he had tabled altered the routes. New streets had developed, and both council and tramway company had decided on the alterations. He moved that all words after "along Lane street," in paragraph 5, be struck out and the following be inserted in lieu: "To the junction of Lane and Macdonald streets, thence along Macdonald street to the junction of Macdonald and Lionel streets, thence along Lionel street to the city boundary joining Gala Road."

Amendment put and passed.

MR. MORAN further moved that the following be added to the Schedule:

6. From the junction of Hannan and Maritana streets, along Maritana street and Boulder road, to the municipal boundary line.

7. From the junction of Hannan and Nethercott streets, along Nethercott street to Macdonald street, and thence along Macdonald street to the Racecourse entrance.

Route No. 1 to be a double line from Hannan street railway station, along Outridge terrace and Hannan street, to Wilson street.

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

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments, and the report adopted.

# KALGOORLIE ROADS BOARD TRAMWAYS BILL.

## SECOND READING.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. B. C. Wood), in moving the second reading, said: This Bill is intituled "An Act to confirm a provisional order authorising the construction of tramways in the district of the Road Board of Kalgoorlie." There has been some little dispute in the district as regards the construction of this tramway in connection with the Roads Board. This is quite a Roads Board matter, and has nothing to do with the municipalities of Kalgoorlie and Boulder. We have had strong representations made from the Kalgoorlie Roads Board and from the Kalgoorlie Municipal Council, that these tramways are absolutely necessary, and are desired by the majority of the people there. In June last the West Australian Goldfields, Ltd., obtained the consent of the Roads Board of the Kalgoorlie district to the construction of tramways within that district. A provisional order was applied for, and a petition against the provisional order was received from residents of Boulder; the main objection being that if a tram line was a necessity, that line should be constructed by the Government or the municipality. A counter petition was received from the residents of Kalgoorlie in favour of the concession; the main reason being that there was no probability or possibility of a tramway being constructed by the local bodies, as the financial obligation would be beyond their means, and a large number of the people would be inconvenienced and the progress of the town retarded owing to the absence of direct and speedy communication. The Kalgoorlie Council, the Kalgoorlie Roads Board, and the Kalgoorlie Chamber of Mines support this Bill on that ground. The Boulder people oppose the Bill, on the ground that tramways should be controlled by the municipalities; and the Trades and Labour Council argue in the same way. All the papers are here for members to see. We decided that the provisional order should be granted, and it is now submitted to the House for confirmation. If the

House see fit to throw out the Bill, the House may do so; but such a course of action would deprive people on the gold-fields of a great advantage, and would be taking from them the new line we promised, which would serve a great mining population in and around Kalgoorlie, affording accommodation to thousands of people. The Railway Department have no objection to the route, and, as far as I can gather, the department see no objection to the Bill.

**MR. MORAN:** Have you official information, or is that your own opinion? Have you made inquiry?

**THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS:** I made that special inquiry, and I find that the Railway Department see no objection, but, on the contrary, wish to do all they can to encourage the construction of these tramways. A few days ago a very strong deputation waited on me from Kalgoorlie, and the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) then assured me it was the most representative deputation that had ever waited on a Minister. That deputation consisted of men representing the various fields and classes up there, and especially the Chamber of Mines. Very strong representations were made to me, and I was urged to do all I could to get this Bill through the House as quickly as possible. There is a letter from the Mayor of Kalgoorlie, dated the 24th—

**MR. MORAN:** Did you not say that the Mayor of Kalgoorlie or Boulder had nothing to do with it? Why read that correspondence?

**THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS:** I will just read what was said by the mayor, who was not able to attend the deputation.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** Who are the promoters?

**THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS:** The West Australian Goldfields, Limited.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** Who are the individuals?

**THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS:** I do not know. I know Mr. Rogers, the eminent engineer connected with the Perth tramways, is associated with the undertaking.

**MR. MORAN:** He is not an engineer at all.

**THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS:** He may or may not be.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** Who are the leading men who want this tramway?

**THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS:** I will read the mayor's letter:

Municipal Chambers, Kalgoorlie,  
24th October, 1900.

The Right Hon. the Premier and the Hon. the Commissioner of Railways, Perth.

Sirs,—The deputation urging the granting of the Kalgoorlie Roads Board Tramway Concession has the unqualified concurrence of this Council, and the unanimous support of the people of Kalgoorlie and the Roads Board District.

Much surprise is expressed at objections being received at so late a date, as, some considerable time since, a petition strongly in favour, signed by over 3,000 residents in the Municipality and Roads Board District, was forwarded to the then Commissioner of Railways.

It is hoped this matter will receive your most favourable consideration, and that your influence will be used in getting the provisional order confirmed by Parliament, thereby conferring upon the residents of this large and important district the inestimable boon of cheap and easy transit between the mines and Kalgoorlie, the central town of the Eastern Goldfields.

Regretting my inability, in consequence of business engagements, to accompany the deputation,

I have the honour to be, sirs, your obedient servant,

J. W. FIMISTER, Mayor.

That letter was addressed to the Premier, who had arranged to meet the deputation, and I was present. The deputation urged with all the force they could that this tramway was a great necessity, that it would be a great convenience, and that the work was a most desirable one. I promised, and the Premier promised, that we would do our best to get the Bill through the House. I now commend the Bill to hon. members, trusting we shall be above all parochialism, and that we shall look upon the matter from a national standpoint. The tramway is a necessity to the people up there, and I trust the House will have no objection to the second reading of the Bill. I therefore beg to move the second reading.

**MR. PIESSE (Williams):** A few evenings ago, when by some inadvertence another Bill was introduced to this House dealing with these tramway concessions, I said I considered the introduction of a Bill providing for the construction of

tramways running parallel to our present railway system required very great consideration before the matter was agreed to by this House. The construction of tramways in a district such as this is a very important matter. I have had an opportunity of looking into the various proposals. As I said on a previous evening, I offer no objection in regard to the construction of tramways within the township of Kalgoorlie—in fact a provisional order was issued under my hand during the time I filled the position of Minister, agreeing to the construction of that tramway; but the provisional order for the construction of the tramway along Boulder road, thence round through the various mining centres, had been applied for only recently, and had not been finally decided upon at the time I relinquished office. I do not know that it is my intention to offer any strong objection to the construction of this tramway; but at the same time I would like to see some inquiry made as to how far this tramway will interfere with the railways of the colony, and also to bring under the notice of this House a proposal which has been made for the construction of what is called the Brown Hill loop line. If it is intended to grant the concession asked for by this tramway company—that is for the construction of this line of tramway in different directions, and also through the mining centres and then back again to connect with the railway at Hannan Street, or some other point near it—I think that, having before us a description of the route, we ought seriously to take into consideration whether we ought to agree to the construction of the Brown Hill loop line. This line was proposed to be made some time ago. I was under the impression that we would construct it for the purpose of dealing with the passenger and goods traffic, and of course I knew the construction of that line at that time would pay the Government. But now we have one source of revenue taken from us, if we agree to this proposal for the construction of a tramway through the very areas through which we propose to construct railways; therefore I think that, if we look into this matter a little more closely, we may save the country the cost of constructing the Brown Hill loop line, if we agree to the construction of the

tramway. If the service to be performed by the company is sufficient to meet the convenience of people in this locality, that is all we require. I take it that it is not necessary to have two lines of communication, one by tram and one by rail, each running in opposition to the other, and probably neither paying in the end; so it would be far better to either allow this private company to have an opportunity of carrying out the tram line through this area and not construct the Brown Hill loop line, or prevent the company from doing it, and let the Government carry out the work. I am not anxious to see the matter delayed, because I quite agree with those who have proposed to carry out the work that something should be done in some portions of this district. Still at the same time, seeing we have these two proposals before the House, further consideration should be given to the matter, and that consideration can only be given by some slight delay. Although, as the Minister has already pointed out, delay may mean that the matter may not be disposed of this year in the way desired by the people who ask for the works to be carried out, still I think the delay of a day or two will not be so material, and after all it may result in the obtaining of such information as will enable us to judge which of the two lines should be constructed. Either the Government should carry out the Brown Hill loop line, reaping the advantages of it, or else the tramway proposed by this company should be constructed, if it can accommodate the people in the way proposed, and provide means of communication between these centres and the centres of the various townships named. Something should be done in the direction I propose, there being good reason for inquiry, and I beg to move that a Select Committee be appointed for the purpose of inquiring into these proposals.

MR. MONGER (York): With regard to the remarks of the member for the Williams (Mr. Piesse) in favour of referring this Bill to a select committee, I think we have had a sufficient number of select committees this session. Hon. members are getting sick of the very name of "select committee," especially after the abuse one is apt to receive from being privileged to sit on a select

committee. If we cannot in solemn conclave assembled discuss questions arising under this Bill, and either amend the Bill or throw it out, then I think we cannot do any good even by referring it to a select committee. The time has come when for this session, at any rate, we should say we will have no more select committees. We have had them rammed down our throats from the time we first met this session, and several committees are still sitting and have not yet reported. In these circumstances, I am surprised that the hon. member, with his experience of select committees, has proposed this method of dealing with the Bill now before us. Personally I do not care whether this Bill goes through or not, but I am full up of select committees, and I am full up of the practice by which some members, after getting tired of debating, their points in this House, propose to refer the whole question to a select committee. I always admire and respect the remarks which fall from the member for the Williams, and I do hope he will take a broad and more sensible view of this question, and consent to have the Bill dealt with in the ordinary way, instead of being referred to a select committee at this late period of the session. I shall be the last one to vote for referring any measure to another select committee this session; and in saying this I hope I shall not be understood as referring to any of those gentlemen who happen to occupy positions on select committees which have not yet reported. I know that almost every day the chief messenger is running about looking for members to come in and form a quorum, so as to enable this or that select committee to carry out the duties for which it was appointed. There is, in fact, a terrible amount of trouble in forming a quorum to get on with the business of the select committees we have now; and I hope the House will not agree to refer this or any other measure to a select committee this session.

**MR. MORAN (East Coolgardie):** Is there any question before the House?

**THE SPEAKER:** The question before the House is the second reading of the Bill.

**MR. MORAN:** I understood that a motion had been made to refer the Bill to a select committee.

**THE SPEAKER:** The proper time for moving to refer the Bill to a select committee will be after the Bill has been read a second time.

**MR. MORAN:** There appears to be a good deal of difference of opinion among many members who have examined the plans of the routes for the proposed tramways. I wish to view this matter in a distinctly impartial light, and I am agreeably surprised to learn that the Commissioner of Railways does not object to the competition of this tramway with the railway. I did think, before his assurance on this point, that it was not good policy to run a tramway along a route which would compete with the railway. It would be absurd, in my opinion, for these two lines to be authorised by which we give a right to run this line which will compete against the railway, and a right to another company to build a tramway which will compete against both. My desire is to speak independently on the matter, and I do not think the people who are asking for this concession are adverse to considering the question as to whether the Brown Hill portion of the tramway need be constructed. I am loth to oppose the second reading of a Bill that has been recommended by the local governing body in the district I represent; but I do insist, as a member of this House, that when this matter is being considered, the interests of the Boulder population shall be taken into account. I shall endeavour to get a clause put into this Bill to enable the tramway to be carried on to the Boulder township, and I shall oppose any concession which will enable a tramway to be made to the boundary of the Boulder township without going through it, and thereby tap the traffic without providing at the same time a sufficient convenience for the population in that locality. We must not consider the interests of one place apart from the interests of the other. If the Boulder people say they will not have a tramway, I do not think that will be a sufficient reason for us to refuse to grant a tramway concession to someone else. Is it wise to construct this tramway in competition with the Government railway? I think it is not wise to construct the Brown Hill loop line in competition; but I think also there is no occasion to



sacrifice either. It will be possible to build the Brown Hill loop line and to build this tramway so as to serve the needs of the local population. I did think at first that it was undesirable to grant a tramway concession which would have the effect of competing with the Government railway; and I asked the Commissioner of Railway pointedly, and was told in reply that the department did not object to it at all. Therefore my objection on that ground is removed; but I would suggest that we pass the second reading of the Bill, and the Commissioner of Railways will probably move his motion afterwards, so that we shall have an opportunity later of making any amendments in the Bill that we desire.

**THE PREMIER** (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The more means of communication we can give to people in localities such as Kalgoorlie and Boulder and the country between, the better it will be. I question whether in point of fact this proposed line will affect the railway traffic to the extent some of us may suppose, because railways can never take the place of tramways, as the trams run every few minutes, and when a person misses one tram he has only to look round and he sees another coming along. In every populous locality the same objection might be taken, that a tramway must interfere with the Government railway. In the case of the suburban traffic of Melbourne, the granting of tramway concessions was not prevented on the ground of interference with the Government railways, and there the trams are owned by private companies. In fact you cannot have a railway under existing conditions to give the same facilities to a large population as tramways can give; and apart from that, I am quite willing, if it can be arranged, that we need not go out of our way to encourage competition against the railway in these early days. Still, I question whether this tramway will interfere largely with the railway in that district. We must remember, too, that a railway cannot be made to pay in that locality if trains run as frequently as a tramcar would run. I think the Brownhill loop line, even if there were no passenger traffic and it had to rely on the carriage of goods, timber, and firewood, can be made to pay; whereas a

railway going along the same route could not be made to pay to the same extent. I am in favour of giving to these people facilities of transit as much as possible, and taking the risk as to whether the effect will be to interfere with the working of the railway, because if sufficient traffic were not there we could not afford to run trains frequently, and if there were not enough traffic we would certainly not run so many trains as if the traffic were large.

[**MR. ILLINGWORTH** and **MR. JAMES** made interjections.]

**THE PREMIER**: More experts in railway management! I was saying the less mileage you run, the less cost there will be; that the cost of working a railway depends on the number of train miles run. You would not run a large number of miles with that loop line, if there were not traffic enough to make the line pay for the number of runs; and in working a railway where the traffic is not large, we should have to reduce the mileage and of course reduce the cost of maintenance according to the amount of traffic. Somehow, these experts in finance and experts in law are also experts in railway management; and as they know better than the department how these things should be done, these experts must interfere when one is trying to put in a simple manner one's views on a question of this kind. I know that the granting of traffic facilities is the greatest boon we can give to people in those districts, outside the great boon of a good and plentiful supply of water, and these tramways will give those facilities. The convenience of the people is the first consideration for us here. I do not know anything about the route, but the people in the district are very eager for the tramway, and we should not do them any wrong. I have not seen a map of the route, but the line will not go to an out-of-the-way place. If the two lines do run parallel, I would rather not jeopardise the convenience of the public.

**MR. JAMES** (East Perth): The right hon. gentleman is always amusing, but seldom instructive. It is interesting to hear his common sense view of the Bill, although he admits that he does not know where the route is going to. If one accepts the speech of the Premier in its entirety, there is ample justification

for every scheme brought before Parliament for the construction of railways by private enterprise. We might apply the argument of the Premier to justify every scheme for the construction of a railway or a tramway by private enterprise. How are we to stay our hand for the construction of a line from Perth to Kalgoorlie? In this instance the Government have a line between Kalgoorlie and Boulder, and by this Bill we give leave for the construction of a line running parallel with the Government line, 300 yards from it. If that is going to be allowed, if it is common sense to encourage competition of that sort, I admit the Premier has common sense, and that I have not. I think, however, it is entirely out of reason. I have seen the map, and know the routes.

**THE PREMIER:** Have you been there?

**MR. JAMES:** Several times. More than that, I have seen the route, and know where the tramway is going to run. I am always open to learn, but the Premier is not; and he needs knowledge very badly. If we build a line to carry the traffic between Kalgoorlie, Coolgardie, and Boulder, it seems unfair to grant a concession now that will tap the great bulk of the paying traffic on that line; and for the reason that the Premier gave, that tramways are efficient and run more frequently and constantly. If there is a tramway anywhere near the railway line, the people will use the tramway and discard the railway line. If any of us lived there, we should use the tramway line in preference to the railway. As we are catering for the traffic, it does not matter much whether we call it a tramway or a railway line. We are endeavouring to meet the traffic: why encourage a private line to oppose the Government railway line, which will have the effect of very seriously interfering with the profitable nature of our traffic?

**THE PREMIER:** Why do all the people want this tramway?

**MR. JAMES:** I quite understand they want the tramway, and it is the duty of the Government if they want it to see that they get it; but here is an instance where it is admitted that if this line is constructed it will pay. Why should not the Government take the work in hand? Why were the Government so anxious to introduce a line like the

Norseman railway, which would inflict an expenditure of £600,000 on the country, while we have a line like this which will pay from the very start. I would like to know why it is so; it seems difficult of explanation.

**THE PREMIER:** We have not gone in for tramway building yet.

**MR. JAMES:** Pardon me: what about the Cossack-Roebourne line? These rash statements should not be made by people who have so much common sense.

**THE PREMIER:** That is not a tramway.

**MR. JAMES:** What matters it if we call it a tramway or a railway line? We want to supply the wants and the needs of the people living in those parts. In Sydney the Government had lines which they called steam tramways; now they are going to have an electric tramway on the same lines, but there is no difference, whether called tramway or railway. We are going to allow competition to take from us the traffic on our line: it is an absolutely unheard of thing to hand over to a private company the right to construct a line running parallel to our line, and only 300 yards from it, to take the traffic from our own line.

**THE PREMIER:** You are doing it at Leederville.

**MR. JAMES:** We are doing it there for the purpose of tapping Leederville. The people of Leederville are some distance from the railway line, and the residents can come from Leederville by the tram quicker than they could get to the railway station. In addition to that, ours is a main line from Perth to Fremantle: it is not built for carrying suburban traffic. If it had been built for carrying the suburban traffic, the line could be extended accordingly. At Kalgoorlie the Government built a line for suburban traffic. We are told that the whole district is in favour of the tramway, but Boulder is strongly against it. The line goes to the boundary of Boulder, and it taps the Boulder traffic almost as much as if the line ran right into the heart of Boulder.

**THE PREMIER:** These people would be glad to run a tramway through Boulder.

**MR. JAMES:** We are told that the tramway has the support of the roads board; quite right. The roads board are to get 3 per cent., which is a good reason

for supporting it. The members of the roads board know that if the line is built by the Government they will not get 3 per cent. If I were on the roads board or living in the district, I should support this line warmly, because 3 per cent. means a great deal and the rates will be reduced considerably. As to the town of Kalgoorlie, that town wants to aggrandise by bringing to itself all the traffic it can. The people of Kalgoorlie do not say they want the line constructed by private enterprise in preference to the Government. They say they want the convenience: all are agreed on that. Why should not the Government provide the convenience when we know very well the line will pay from the start, and pay handsomely? I do not think there is the slightest doubt in the mind of any member of the House about that.

**THE PREMIER:** These are business men: they are not going to make a bad bargain.

**MR. JAMES:** No doubt they are business men, and they are not going to make a bad bargain. I have heard the Premier say that if a line will pay private people to construct, why should not the Government build it. Why does not the Premier stick to that position now?

**THE PREMIER:** We cannot do everything.

**MR. JAMES:** But we can do this. The Premier says the finances of the country will stand a sufficient sum of money to build the Norseman railway. This line will not cost as much as the Norseman railway would, but it will pay 200 or 300 times better. To say that it is a municipal work is only trifling with terms. If it is done by a municipality it is a municipal work; if it is done by private enterprise, it is a private work; and if it is done by the Government, it is a Government work. Why not hand over the railway to Norseman to be built by private enterprise? Why not hand over the Coolgardie-to-Esperance line to be built by private enterprise?

**THE PREMIER:** What are you driving at? Do you intend to vote against the Bill?

**MR. JAMES:** Every reason the Premier urged in favour of the Bill is a reason for handing over a great number of lines to private enterprise to construct. That may or may not be good. Whilst the

Premier has expressed his determination as far as possible that all profitable works should be carried out by the Government, why is an exception to be made in regard to this line which has so many objectionable features about it? This line will take from the existing Government line a great deal of the traffic. I shall oppose the Bill.

**MR. DARLOT (DeGrey):** I am favourably inclined to the Bill, but some allusion has been made to the great traffic that the railway will carry in the shape of firewood, which the tramway cannot carry. The company which proposes to build this tramline is going to dispense power by electricity. That will do away with a great deal of the firewood now required, which will minimise the returns on the railway. At the same time we have the assurance of the Railway Department that this tramway will not materially interfere with the returns of the railway. It is not my intention to oppose the Bill.

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

Ayes ...	...	...	21
Noes ...	...	...	2

Majority for ... 19

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Darlot	Mr. Kingsmill
Sir John Forrest	Mr. James (Teller).
Mr. Higham	
Mr. Holmes	
Mr. Hubble	
Mr. Hutchinson	
Mr. Dillingworth	
Mr. Lefroy	
Mr. Locke	
Mr. Mitchell	
Mr. Monger	
Mr. Moorhead	
Mr. Pennefather	
Mr. Piesse	
Mr. Rason	
Mr. Solomon	
Mr. Vosper	
Mr. Wallace	
Mr. Wilson	
Mr. Wood	
Mr. Quinlan (Teller).	

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### SELECT COMMITTEE, APPOINTMENT.

On motion by **MR. PIESSE**, the Bill was referred to a select committee consisting of Mr. James, Mr. Kingsmill, Mr. Moran, Hon. B. C. Wood, with the mover (**Mr. Piesse**); to sit during any adjournment of the House, and to report 6th November.

At 6-30, the **SPEAKER** left the Chair.

At 7-30, Chair resumed.

**LEEDERVILLE TRAMWAYS BILL.**  
IN COMMITTEE.

Consideration resumed from 30th October.

New Clause (protection of telephones):  
**THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS**: The clause of which he had given notice was intended to be inserted in all Tramway Bills, and had already been amended this evening prior to insertion in another Bill. He now moved that the clause be inserted (as Clause 9) in the amended form, as follows:

Whenever any telephone service is erected prior to the construction of the tramways, and is prejudicially affected by the construction or working of the tramways, the Postmaster General may, at the cost of the promoter and his assigns, do all such things as may be necessary to protect the telephone service from being so affected, either by placing the same on a metallic circuit system or otherwise.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH**: This was a tramway going over a route where a telephone line already existed. Should not the Government bear some of the expense of alteration?

**THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS**: The tram line started from the head of Newcastle street only.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH**: Why should the Tramway Company be compelled to perfect the telephone system, which ought to have a metallic circuit from the start? Further, the posts and telegraphs would shortly be handed to the Federal Government, and expensive alterations might then be required, the cost of which might be ruinous to the tramway promoters. Let the latter bear, say, half the cost.

**THE PREMIER**: The telephone service had a vested interest.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH**: Not quite.

**MR. GEORGE**: What was a metallic circuit?

**MR. ILLINGWORTH**: A metallic circuit, he understood, was a circuit completed by a second wire, without using the earth as a conductor. If the sum were a fixed amount, the company could know exactly what they were carrying out, and we could understand the matter; but in this case there was an unknown quantity. The Government had no right

to complete their telephone system at the expense of any of these companies, but ought to bear some of the costs, if there were costs.

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL**: In looking at this question, the hon. member (Mr. Illingworth) must bear in mind that a concession was asked for, and not a right. The company were not doing this at the request of the public or the Government, but for their own benefit; and if the use of that concession involved interference with the public telephone service, the company should bear the cost resulting from such interference.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH**: If the company destroyed the service, the company must bear the cost.

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL**: That was the position. This clause only went to the length that if the company interfered with the telephone service, they must bear the cost of putting that service in order.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH**: This premised that the service was perfect.

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL**: Not necessarily so. If a service cost £10,000, why should the owners be compelled to spend another £5,000 on it, prejudicially, simply because a concession was granted to someone else?

**MR. HIGHAM**: In coming forward in this matter the company were meeting a great public want. Granted that the introduction of the tramway service might affect the telephone service to some extent, it must also be borne in mind that the telephone system as now existing was far from perfect. It was absurd to maintain that because the telephone service would be affected to some extent, the concessionaires should bear the whole of the burden. The Government ought to favourably reconsider this matter, and to take their own share of the responsibility.

**THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS**: Whilst sympathising with the member for Fremantle (Mr. Higham), he thought the Government had gone as far as they could in this matter. When the hon. member moved his amendment later, in proper shape, the Committee would consider it. The revenue of the country should be protected as far as possible.

Clause put and passed, and added to the Bill.

Schedule and title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendment, and the report adopted.

# FREMANTLE TRAMWAYS BILL.

## RECOMMITTAL.

Consideration resumed from previous day, at new clause.

New Clause (previously moved by the Commissioner of Railways, afterwards amended in connection with another tramways Bill), as follows:—

Whenever any telephone service is erected prior to the construction of the tramways and is prejudicially affected by the construction or working of the tramways, the Postmaster General may, at the cost of the promoter and his assigns, do all such things as may be necessary to protect the telephone service from being so affected, either by placing the same on a metallic circuit system or otherwise.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS, by leave, substituted the amended clause, to stand as Clause 6.

Question put and passed, and the clause added to the Bill.

Schedule and title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment, and the report adopted.

# ROADS AND STREETS CLOSURE BILL.

## IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Schedule:

THE PREMIER: The Schedule had been examined by him most closely, and he could assure members it was quite correct. The local authority had been consulted in regard to these closures, and there was nothing to which anyone could take exception. The plans were on the table, and he confidently asked members to pass this Schedule, and also the others on the Notice Paper. If any member desired information with regard to any of these Schedules, one would be able to supply it. Of course in all these matters the main thing was to be assured that the roads board or the municipal council had been consulted; and that had been done. There was one case in which the local authority had not been consulted, that being in relation to Bellevue Terrace. That portion of the road between the Park fence and the Butts was closed by Act of Parliament. Since then, last year, the Government purchased one more lot of the Park, a chain and a half, and therefore the Government proposed to

close up that chain and a half, so that this piece of road would be thrown into the Park. That matter had not been sent to the local authority, because there was no reason to send it. No one could take any objection to this piece of road being thrown into the Park, seeing that the piece of land which it was intended to serve had become the property of the Park. He moved that the following descriptions be included in the Schedule:

## IN THE CITY OF PERTH.

All that portion of Irene and Lincoln Streets lying between a line connecting the North-West corner of Perth Town Lot N 111 to the North-East corner of Lot N 110 and the West side of Clifton Street, produced Southwards to the South boundary of Lincoln Street.

All that portion of Bellevue Terrace, starting at the North-West corner of Perth Town Lot L 65, and extending 1 chain 50 links along its West boundary; thence 287° 8' 1 chain 50 links; thence 17° 19' 2 chains 25 links; thence 1 chain 18 links along the arc of a circle having a radius of 75 links, its centre being situate at a point 332° 8' 1 chain 6 links from North-West corner of Lot L 65 aforesaid, and thence 107° 8' 75 links to the starting point.

## IN THE TOWN OF FREMANTLE.

All that portion of a public street 75 links wide between the West side of Attfield Street and the North side of Alma Street, the Northward side of which starts from a point on the West side of Attfield Street, situate 216 links Northward from the North-East corner of Fremantle Town Lot 681, and extends 269° 58' 6 chains 5·1 links, thence 165° 48' 3 chains 20 links to a point on the North side of Alma Street, situate 345° 48' 50·2 links from the North-East corner of Lot 847.

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

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendment, and the report adopted.

## ANNUAL ESTIMATES.

### IN COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.

Consideration resumed from 18th October.

RAILWAY DEPARTMENT (Commissioner, Hon. B. C. Wood).

Vote — Railways and Tramways, £920,716:

MR. MORAN: Second to the debates which occurred in the House on the loan proposals early in the session, nothing could equal in importance the debate on this great vote. The Railway Department was responsible for over a million of the earnings of Western Australia.

Taken in connection with the other great earning department, the Customs, we had two millions out of £2,800,000, the revenue of this colony. The importance of the Railway Department to hon. members who had the time and the inclination to watch matters closely could not be overrated. It was of such vast importance for us to watch this vote always, but of greater importance now, as the Legislature would, in a very short time, lose control over the other great earning department of Western Australia, the Customs. The importance of the question would be seen in a moment, when analysing it. We should be in the dark for some time as to the customs revenue.

**THE PREMIER:** Three-fourths: we were all right for.

**MR. MORAN:** No; we were not.

**THE PREMIER:** Three-fourths, yes.

**MR. MORAN:** Not at all; we did not know whether the returns would be one-quarter of what they were now.

**THE PREMIER:** Three-fourths of the revenue would be returned.

**MR. MORAN:** We did not know what that revenue was going to be.

**THE PREMIER:** We knew what it would be for several years, at any rate.

**MR. MORAN:** Two or three years. The Railway Department had been considered as the pioneer of civilisation in Australia. At present the State might recoup the revenue which was lost by running the railways through the Customs Department; but when we had lost the control of the customs, if we continued to run the railways at a loss we could not expect for a certainty to make up the loss by customs revenue. The time had arrived when in the history of Western Australia it would be compulsory for the colony to run the railways on a commercial basis, and not to tolerate a loss in this great department. We must not for a moment follow the example of any country by saying the railways were run at a loss to open up the country. The time had arrived when we should watch jealously the Railway Department to see that it carried its own expenditure within its own earnings, and if possible to make it an earning department. That would be seen as we went through the railway report. He proposed briefly to give a general sketch of the railway system, to arrive at a firm basis of railway returns compared with

the returns of the railways in the Eastern colonies. We had the bold statement that the Western Australian railways were the only railways that were paying; but, as had been stated by a former railway manager, one could not institute a proper comparison of the economic working of any two systems until we found out what capital basis they were working on. The few statistics of a general nature he would give would be confined to showing that in Western Australia we were running our railways on a population which was not quite one-half the lowest in any other part of the world: therein was one present danger. The population per mile of the lines of railway in sparsely populated countries outside Australia were: Canada, 312; Australasia, 315; Argentine, 447; Cape Colony, 727; and notably Western Australia with a population per mile of 315. In Western Australia, if we took the Government lines only, there was a population of 133 people per mile; but that would not be fair, because the people had to support the Midland railway as well as having to support all the private lines in the colony. If we took the total mileage in Western Australia we found that there was a population of 103 people to every mile of railway open. That was sufficiently startling to make us appreciate it. Our travelling public here were generous towards the railways. That needs must be so when we found that the population per mile in Canada, throughout the sparsely populated centres and the whole of the country, was 312. Ours was 103; 33 per cent. of the next lowest. That was taking the mileage open in Western Australia at 1,355 miles of Government lines, and 391 miles of private lines. The same lines practically could serve a million of people. In viewing these facts we had to consider whether it was wise for us any more to give way to popular clamour for increasing unnecessarily the working cost of the railway lines, or was it wise to carry stuff at a dead loss over some of the railway lines. Was it wise, in view of these facts? When the Premier was bringing forward the Coolgardie Water Scheme, the greatest argument which he used, and the one argument which carried conviction in this Chamber and throughout the country, was that the scheme would provide the interest and a sinking fund

of two and a half per cent. Why was that two and a half per cent. sinking fund put on? As explained by the Premier, the gold industry was not the same as any other industry, such as farming or coal-mining, which went on for a long period. The Premier's argument was based on the fact that the gold-mining industry was not interminable; it was not long-lived compared with other industries. Take the great gold mines of Ophir: they had not been heard of for centuries, but the wheat fields of Egypt were heard of to-day. The land in the arable portions of Western Australia would be productive when the great goldfields of Kalgoorlie, and of Western Australia as a whole, were things of the long-forgotten past. It would be a long day before the gold mines of this country would be cutting out, but compared with other industries, the gold-mining industry could not be used as a basis for saying the interest on the capital money expended on building the goldfields railways and the water scheme would be produced for ever; nor could it be expected that the goldfields railways would earn the sinking fund and interest in the same way as agricultural lines. Agriculture was a permanent asset going on for ever: where the land was cultivated, and scientifically cultivated, agriculture would go on for ever, but it was not so with the goldfields. Every mine that was worked meant so much less gold in the country; it had gone never to come back again. When we viewed the peculiar circumstances of the railway system in Western Australia, it would be unwise to give way any more to a reduction of rates, and to his mind the time had come when we should raise our rates on some things: timber perhaps was one article on which the rate should be raised. When we found that three of the railway lines of the colony were being run at a loss, for this one reason—

**THE PREMIER:** A change was coming over the spirit of our dream.

**MR. MORAN:** Our great railway system was divided into two parts; the two great trunk lines going to the eastern goldfields, and the trunk line from Geraldton to the Murchison goldfields. Our system seemed to be a network of railways along the coast sending their stems

through a desert and reaching into a region of activity and industry, a comparatively evanescent industry. If it was wise legislation, or good and just legislation, to protect the people of the colony in connection with the water scheme by a sinking fund, the argument was equally good to protect the railways by a sinking fund also. Therefore our railways, he maintained, should be run on a commercial basis, more particularly in Western Australia than in any other colony of Australasia. Now he came to an interesting comparison of the capital costs of the different railways. When we compared the cost in our country and other countries in the world, we arrived at the happy conclusion that here we had a comparison which we regarded as altogether in favour of Western Australia, for which we should be thankful. The capital cost per mile in the United States was £12,889; in Canada, £11,522; in Argentine, £10,632; in Australasia, as a whole, the average cost per mile was £9,617; in Mexico, £9,417; and in Cape Colony, £9,093. Then there were two great countries of America—Brazil £8,104, and Chili £6,358. In Western Australia the capital cost was £5,000. There was no other country in the world approaching Western Australia for cheapness of construction, except Chili, which was £1,300 per mile dearer than Western Australia. In Australasia the total average cost per mile was £9,600. These figures revealed to us the fact that we had a great deal more to be thankful for to nature, in Western Australia, than most people were inclined to admit. He would proceed to show how the cost of running in Western Australia stood when we took into consideration the capital on which the interest was being paid. The two colonies which came next to Western Australia in point of cheapness per mile were Queensland with £6,800 per mile, or a difference of £1,800, and South Australia with £7,476 per mile, or a difference of £2,500, roughly speaking; and in all the instances quoted, there was a tremendous balance in our favour. In New South Wales, where the railways were admitted to be fairly well managed, the capital cost was £14,000 per mile, or nearly three times the cost in Western Australia; while in Victoria the capital cost was £12,430 per mile—in one case

two and a-half times, and in the other case nearly three times the capital cost in this colony.

MR. WILSON: There was a broad gauge in Victoria.

MR. MORAN: That did not matter much. The broad gauge was considered as cheaper to run, but it was said that a gauge of 5 feet 3 inches was too broad to be economical. When we came to analyse the earnings per train mile, we found again that Western Australia was at a disadvantage. In some of the countries he had quoted there was a narrow gauge, and still their cost was from 40 to 80 or 100 per cent. higher than ours; because nature had been most kind in Western Australia, where railways could be constructed at a low capital cost, so that with care, we could capitalise still more to provide necessary rolling-stock, and continue to pay a handsome return on another £1,500,000. The earnings on capital in Western Australia were 5·81 last year, and in New South Wales—though we had not the return for last year—the earnings were 3·83, taking into consideration interest and everything else. He believed that a return of 3·83 in New South Wales did not pay interest and sinking fund, or even pay interest, which was about 4 per cent., because that colony had borrowed money at a pretty high rate of interest in the old days. In New South Wales there was a bit of a loss on interest alone, because while they paid interest on the absolute money, they did not pay interest on the nominal capital. If the two systems were compared on this basis, a little gilt was knocked off the “gingerbread” in Western Australia, and we got considerably the worst of the deal; because if we earned 5·81 on a mileage capital cost of £25,000, what would we earn with the same traffic on a mileage capital of £14,000 per mile? Worked out, that gave a return of 2·07; so that if our railways cost as much as those in New South Wales, we should be paying only that amount per cent., as compared with 3·83 paid in New South Wales.

THE PREMIER: “Ifs and ands”: no doubt, they had some water about there.

MR. MORAN: The Premier must not “jump his hurdle” before he got near. His (Mr. Moran’s) object was to make as good a case as he could for the railway system of Western Australia, which he

believed had the brightest future of any department in the colony; and he intended to prove there was sufficient room for another million of capital on open lines, and that the system would continue to pay handsomely. He was only putting this case in order that he might be able to show afterwards that notwithstanding all these disabilities, there was a bright light ahead for our railway system. To continue, we should, with the same capital cost, pay nearly 50 per cent. less than New South Wales, and then not pay anything like interest to say nothing of sinking fund. There was the present condition of our rolling-stock, and droughts had to be contended with on the goldfields, causing an expenditure in one year of something like £50,000 for water carted from Northam, though happily there was not the added cost of carting 200 miles further on to Norseman; but with all these difficulties, our railway system, if put on the same efficient basis as that of New South Wales, would be able to hold its own. As for the furnishings given to the railway servants in order to work the lines, that would be dealt with later on; but there was a confirmation of the comparison, apart from the working out on a capital basis, if we took the train mileage earnings and working expenses in the two colonies. In New South Wales the gross earnings per train mile were 7s. 1½d., with total expenses 3s. 10d., showing a profit per mile of 3s. 3½d.; and that was a very handsome result, which reflected the greatest credit on the New South Wales Railway Department. In Western Australia the gross earnings were 6s. 2d. per mile, and the expenses 4s. 4½d., showing a profit of 1s. 9½d.; and, there again, the comparison went to prove that had we the same capital cost, we should not be able to show the same percentage return on the capital invested. Mr. O’Connor, who formerly had the management of our railways, made a very interesting remark in a report some years ago, when he said that it would be very foolish to run our goldfields railway traffic at the same rates as the traffic of the rest of the colony, because, judging from the experience of Australasia, goldfields were short-lived. He (Mr. Moran) opposed that view at the time, and continued to oppose it, because he did not think there ought to be any invidious distinctions made,



such distinctions bringing in politics at once. We should, however, always be careful that the whole of our railways returned the interest on the whole of the capital invested in railways in Western Australia. Mr. O'Connor, in that report, compared railway systems, giving the percentage returns from different colonies, and said:—

Other things being equal, it is in this table that one should look for evidence of the effect of economical or expensive construction works, and I think there can be no doubt, in view of this and other correlative tables herein, that the low cost of the Western Australian Railways, as a whole, has been largely instrumental in producing the actually and relatively satisfactory result which this table shows.

That was the opinion of a man whose opinion was worth having, and he went on to show it was fair to take capital cost in comparing the work done by the railway servants in the different colonies. Our railway servants were on their trial to-night, and no undue advantage should be given one way or the other; and he was not inclined to find a great deal of fault with the servants, because any blame must lie on the House, or the working majority and the Government, if railways were built with a meagre supply of rolling-stock. The conclusion to be drawn from the comparisons with New South Wales was that from one or more causes our railway system was worked more costly than any other in Australia. He had omitted to state that in comparison with New South Wales or any other colony on the mainland, we came out behind in profits. Tasmania, for obvious reasons, was never taken into consideration in comparing railway systems, because in that colony the system had been a huge failure, the distance traversed being only a stone's throw across the island, and most of the trade being done by shipping. But on the mainland amongst the great colonies, his deduction was confirmed when we glanced at the list and saw that Western Australia made less profit per train mile than any other system in Australia; and the conclusion was that, from one or more causes, our railway system was worked more costly than any other in Australia, and we had again to thank nature that our capital outlay was so comparatively small. It was only fair that the people of Western Australia

should know exactly what our position was; and if further confirmation of the comparison he had made were required, it could be found on looking at page 6 of the Railway Report, where it was shown that the working expenses in Western Australia were 15 per cent. higher than those of New South Wales, and 10 per cent. higher than those of any other Australian colony.

MR. PRIESSE: That was, working expenses to gross earnings.

MR. MORAN: Yes; and it was for us to inquire whether that was accounted for by the fact that we had greater difficulties to contend with, or that there was something loose in the management. These comparisons were only useful in helping us to arrive at a true idea of what our returns meant; but happily for us these were supposititious cases. Our railways had not cost £14,000 or £12,000 per mile, and if we took care in the future, there appeared to be no reason why the railways of Western Australia should go beyond the capital cost of £5,000 per mile, excepting that the railways now open required at least £1,000,000 spent on them to bring them up to an efficient standard. He went further and said, that by this report Parliament was asked by the General Manager to expend £1,500,000 on the railways already opened, which meant another £1,000 per mile on the capital cost of our 1,500 miles of railway. When we put aside comparisons with other colonies, and considered the history of our own railway service and the returns for the last few years, we had food for deep reflection. In 1896-7 our total earnings were 9·04 per mile. When speaking in the House on federation, he had compared this return with those of the other colonies, and it was double that of any other; though, as he had then remarked, there was a time when the railways of the other colonies, like ours, paid handsome returns, and there was thus a danger that our profits would fall off, as was now the case. In 1898-9 the profit was 4·55. Though last year's report showed a profit of 5·81, there was a great difference between that percentage and 9·04; and there was no guarantee that the railways would continue to pay at the present rate. The gratification derivable from the report was immensely lessened on reading of the

depleted rolling-stock and the "sick" condition of the engines. The report of the General Manager was clear and honest, and showed no desire to hide anything. Considered as a report on the condition of the railways, it was the best he (Mr. Moran) had ever seen laid on the table, for it set forth facts clearly and succinctly, and was confirmed by figures at which none could cavil, for they bore evidence of truth, required no checking, and were quoted from votes of the House, balances in hand, and the opinions of railway experts as to cost of works required to be constructed. He thanked the General Manager for this faithful report, though no doubt a candid disclosure of facts was the best policy. The report contained some startling statements. Expenditure had been charged to capital which should have been debited to working expenses. The leader of the Opposition (Mr. Illingworth) might criticise that method, but better an honest statement than any quibbling. [MR. ILLINGWORTH: Hear, hear.] The first and most important part of the report dealt with the engines and rolling-stock, giving the opinions of the General Manager, the Chief Traffic Manager, and lastly of the Chief Mechanical Engineer, whose opinions were set forth in terse, plain, and blunt language. How grave was the situation regarding rolling-stock would be found from these reports. On pages 21 and 22 it would be found from the General Manager's report that there was £156,490 worth of rolling-stock on order, and £216,050 worth of extra stock urgently required. At the present time, the engines were double-banked with loads, and according to the Chief Mechanical Engineer were struggling on with great difficulty. The men were working harder than should be required.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: And with more risk.

MR. MORAN: And much overtime was worked which could be saved with proper rolling-stock. There was dissatisfaction and grumbling amongst men and officers, because they were endeavouring to draw double loads, with the result that engines had to unhitch at the foot of a hill and pull up half the load at a time. Both passenger and goods trains frequently arrived late; goods trains were hours and days overdue; and no wonder the men and the heads of departments

were discontented, and the erstwhile beaming countenance of the Commissioner wore a look of worry. One of the finest pictures in human nature had been transformed by the worries of the department. There was urgently required for engines £135,000, 45 additional engines being needed to work the present traffic; and though it was estimated the traffic would increase, no engines could be landed in time to cope with emergencies. The work could be done only at the cost of worry to the men and responsible officers, more overtime, and more anxiety to the Minister. The General Manager stated he required for rolling-stock alone £507,000 at once, and 5 per cent. was added for contingencies during the next two years, past experience having shown that requirements were always under-estimated. The total amount required for rolling-stock was therefore £529,260. To meet that there was a balance at the Treasury of £65,260; therefore there must be found £464,000. These figures were much higher than he (Mr. Moran) took when discussing the colony's total indebtedness before the present public works policy had been determined. With mingled feelings hon. members would perceive this £65,000 in hand would be enough, without borrowing any more this year, to meet the paltry little parcel of rolling-stock which could possibly arrive in the colony inside the twelve months. How was that? Did he not say last year, in speaking on the Loan Bill, that we required half a million pounds' worth of rolling-stock? And did not the then Commissioner (Mr. Piesse) say there was required something like £700,000? The ex-Commissioner was right; for including cost of brake-power, £210,000, the total of requirements was £750,000. There was the same trouble when the Hon. H. W. Venn was Commissioner; in fact, the question of rolling-stock had always stared the Government in the face.

THE PREMIER: A very good thing.

MR. MORAN: True. This was a difficult problem in a colony spasmodically increasing in prosperity; and the Government might have gone too far in supplying such requirements.

THE PREMIER: Better be short than overstocked.

MR. MORAN: But better have enough trucks to do the work.

MR. PIESSE: The department had all the stock asked for by officers during the last two or three years.

MR. MORAN: Then the departmental report was incorrect.

MR. PIESSE: The General Manager was asking for these supplies now.

MR. MORAN: Last year, Mr. Davies's report said the same thing. Neither the Government nor the House had listened to the advice of responsible railway officials, and with the evidence available he (Mr. Moran) could not acquit Parliament from blame, though for the present he was willing to exculpate the General Manager. He would wait for the speech of the member for the Williams (Mr. Piesse) to have this point explained, and the blame, if any, equitably apportioned.

MR. PIESSE: There was no blame.

MR. MORAN: Still, there was a necessity to be faced.

MR. GEORGE: The hon. member, if Premier, would bring in a Loan Bill for £2,000,000.

MR. MORAN: But would the money be raised?

THE PREMIER: Not at the present rate of interest.

MR. MORAN: Money for our railways was worth  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.; and he would not scruple to pay that.

THE PREMIER: Rightly enough.

MR. MORAN: Only £57,000 worth of rolling-stock would arrive before June next. In that fact there was consolation for the Treasurer, who had less to pay, but commiseration for the Commissioner and the unfortunate public; for the Commissioner because traffic would increase, and for the public because the railway service, which to-day was unsatisfactory and unsafe, would become still more so. Buyer and seller never knew when goods could be sent or received, and heads of departments stated trains were being run at great risk for want of brake-power. Apparently we were to struggle on for another twelve months with inadequate, unsafe, and incomplete rolling-stock, which was as "sick" as possible, and with no hospital to cure diseases. In the face of these facts, there should never have been a discussion this session on the railway workshops. With regard to the cost of rolling-stock required, it was not evident how much was properly chargeable to capital and how much

to revenue. No doubt a great deal should be charged to capital, but he would propound a theory that we should not ask the revenue to pay one penny. The time had come in this colony when we had to go to work boldly, and we should secure a million and a-half and place our railways on a thoroughly working basis. We should start afresh, and raise the capitalisation up to £6,000 per mile. On the present returns, with increased population we should, with a capital of £6,000 per mile, meet interest and sinking fund, and perhaps obtain a little profit as well. The trouble was that we did not know where we should get the money just yet, to do it with. The railways were able to bear their burden, but unfortunately we had no money with which to buy the rolling-stock. We had nominally a profit of £162,000, but really that was not profit, but money in hand. Wear and tear had existed longer than they should have existed, and some of this money should have been devoted to repairs. From this £162,000 Mr. Davies never deducted sinking fund. He (Mr. Moran) was told that it was not usual in any colony to deduct sinking fund in making out the railway earnings; that if there were any profit, it went into the general revenue; and as we had a general sinking fund for the whole of our loans, that amount went to help pay the general sinking fund. We must take the sinking fund away to arrive at the basis which should be kept steadily in view—absolutely the true capital cost of the railways. After interest had been paid, and provision made for sinking fund, the profit could be handled as we pleased. The capital cost of the railways, as given by this report, was £6,500,000. What was our sinking fund in Western Australia? One per cent., was it not?

THE PREMIER: One per cent.

MR. MORAN: That would be £65,000. We must deduct £65,000 from £162,000, more especially in view of the fact that our railway system had to be closely watched.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It was necessary to deduct an amount for a great number of years, as the system had never been debited with sinking fund.

MR. MORAN: Only one year's earnings were being taken, and therefore only one year's sinking fund should be dealt with.

If we spent six and a half millions in the capital cost of railways, it would not be just to charge half of that capital cost to the Fremantle Harbour Works, or anything else. The sinking fund must be charged against the railways, because they were earning so much money, and there was so much capital outlay. That had always been done in every other part of the world. In Western Australia we did not charge sinking fund, but the Premier in his Budget Speeches quoted the railways as paying interest and sinking fund, and said there was a bit to the good. That was quite true, but the sinking fund was £65,000, and that left a balance of £97,000; say, £100,000.

THE PREMIER said he did not make it so much as that. He believed he said it was about £50,000.

MR. MORAN: The figures quoted were from the Government returns. One would come to the traffic earnings. That £100,000 would sink considerably if we charged against it what ought to be charged in the way of repairing rolling-stock, instead of buying new and bringing the system up to a pitch of safety and efficiency. We knew that the rolling-stock was not in a safe or efficient condition. Therefore we knew that the £100,000 (for which we were thankful) was somewhat fictitious, seeing that a good deal of that £100,000 was contained in the estimate of a million and a half to replace the rolling-stock. We were taking money away from its proper place, and we were going to borrow from the British capitalists to pay interest and principal. Page 17 of the report contained a considerable amount of additional food for reflection. It had reference to the question of continuous brakes, as dealt with in two conferences between the Minister and his chief officials as lately as the 29th June and the 27th September—a few days ago. He did not want to read these minutes. They were well known. The Engineer said that even to make our railways efficient and safe in brake power to carry big loads on our ruling grades, he wanted continuous brakes to the extent of £210,000. The minute contained the following:—"It was suggested that the work should be spread over a period of three years, though, if possible, a shorter period (say one year only) would be desirable." A shorter period,

one year, to make our goods traffic safe, and for that matter our passenger traffic.

MR. PIESSE: Our passenger traffic was supplied with continuous brakes.

MR. MORAN: That was a statement he was thankful to hear. The amount referred to was £210,000, and this was not included in the five hundred and odd thousand pounds just quoted for rolling stock. Those two items—£529,000 and £210,000—added together gave a total required of £739,000, according to our own people's report, and the Mechanical Engineer said it would be desirable to do this work in one year, in order to avoid dangerous speeds down steep places, and delay when the trains got to the bottom. He (Mr. Moran) was talking to the Chief Traffic Manager, Mr. Short, who said no doubt this was a great evil in the railway service, and a great handicap. We were, said Mr. Short, working under great difficulties. The officials had to wait on the top of the hill to put all the brakes down, and when they got to the bottom they had to wait to take the brakes off, and thus lost the impetus they should have obtained in going from one grade to another. There was an enormous loss of power, as anyone could imagine. On pages 18, 19, and 20 would be found some interesting figures of anent capital and expenditure. Loan and other expenses on works added to the capital account £428,000 last year. Now we came to the estimated expenditure on works, which would go to increase capital cost, no matter where the money came from in this year. It should be remembered that in regard to some of this work Mr. Davies said he only wanted half the money; but he (Mr. Moran) had taken the total because he assumed what would take place if we had the system made thoroughly efficient during the remainder of the present year, and another year. For works which were in hand (and nearly the whole of them were in hand), we had a total of £183,485. Expenditure on the Boulder duplication was put at £41,634. Before he went any further he wanted to call somebody's attention—the Commissioner's if possible—to something one could not quite understand. That was on page 20. If members would look in connection with the Boulder railway duplication, No. 3, they

would see "Platforms, sub-ways, station buildings, quarters for staff at Hannan Street, Kallaroo, Golden Gate, Boulder City, and Kamballie." Averaged roughly at £5,000 per station, £25,000; taking £20,000 for expenditure during 1900-1901, and carrying forward £5,000 to 1901-2." Then they brought forward £10,000.

MR. PIESSE: A mistake had been made in the addition. The amount should be £20,000. The total was correct, £41,634.

MR. MORAN: Why one wanted to ask about this was that he was afraid we were only going to spend half that money in very necessary works. There was £40,000 entered as being spent between Kalgoorlie and the Boulder, along that road.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That had reference to the tramways, had it not?

MR. GEORGE: It was said that someone was going to start a four-wheeled cab.

MR. MORAN: £41,000 for the Boulder duplication, and further on we found rails and fastenings, £120,802. This work between Kalgoorlie and the Boulder was of extreme urgency. The three items together made £345,921. That, added to the £210,000, with the half-million and upwards added for rolling-stock, gave £1,085,181 as the total to be taken from the amount mentioned in this report. These were not his figures, but he was merely making a little addition of them. Keen as Mr. Davies was to show a good financial statement, he would not have put that statement before us had he not felt the necessity for letting the truth be known. One would refer to page 34 of the report. He did not know whether the present Commissioner had carefully read this report or not.

THE PREMIER: Oh, yes; certainly.

MR. MORAN: It would be very unfair to regard the present Commissioner as being in any way connected with this report. We had to await with pleasurable anticipation the first report under the new régime next year. In or out of Parliament he would never cease to take the deepest interest in the country's welfare. On page 34 of the General Manager's report, if members would look under the heading of "Eastern Gold-fields Railways," the second paragraph, they would find there that it was recom-

mended, in order to cope with the increased weight of engines and the heavy traffic, 199 miles of 45lb. rails between Merredin and Kalgoorlie should be relaid early with heavier rails. That work was in hand and must be pushed on with. Would the Premier say whether there were 60 miles of light rails on the line, and the remainder heavy rails?

THE PREMIER: Heavy engines were not running on the light rails?

MR. MORAN: If the Department did not run heavy engines on the light lines there was good reason why the light rails should be replaced with heavier ones, because Mr. Davies was sending for 45 more heavy engines to run the goods traffic. If the Premier had the money to-morrow he would set to work relaying, and the Commissioner of Railways would say the same thing. The work had to be done.

THE PREMIER: It was going on very fast.

MR. MORAN: The cost of the rails for this distance, and taking 200 miles instead of 199, would be £166,000; the cost of the relaying would be £40,000, making a total of £206,000 for relaying 199 miles of line.

THE PREMIER: We had the old rails, which were worth £4 or £5 a ton.

MR. MORAN: Not in the slightest; what was going to be done with them?

THE PREMIER: Sell them.

MR. MORAN: Who would buy them?

MR. KINGSMILL: Jobson would buy them.

MR. HOLMES: And give water in return.

THE PREMIER: Twenty miles of these rails had been put into the Goomalling line.

MR. MORAN: Until a purchaser was found, the railways would have to be debited with them.

THE PREMIER: There had never been a difficulty in selling old rails yet.

MR. MORAN: That was good business. He hoped there would never be a difficulty.

THE PREMIER: Credit must be taken for the rails.

MR. MORAN: It was most discreditable that heavy rails were not used from the start.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The rails were stolen from the Nannine line.

MR. MOORHEAD: What was the hon. member doing?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Railing against it all the time.

MR. MORAN: From the £206,000, the cost of relaying the 199 miles, we had to deduct £63,000 included in some of the works voted, which would make the amount £143,000 for relaying the line with heavier rails. Add that to the £1,085,000 and we got £1,228,458. He had allowed nothing in this for additions and improvements to opened lines for 1891-2. Every year up to date there had been something like £100,000 spent, so that he put down another £100,000 for that. According to Mr. Davies's report that would be all too short, because the General Manager said the bridges wanted repairing, and the lines wanted ballasting. The Railway Department had been working on a new implement, and the railways were only beginning to decay now. The department were only beginning to arrive at what was necessary; they never knew what upkeep was before. He had only put down £100,000 for improvements to existing lines for 1901-2. Then the workshops were to be taken in hand. It was reasonable to suppose that a lot of the trouble in connection with the rolling-stock was due to the want of proper workshops, and it was not proposed to let this state of affairs go on longer. He believed a vote would be placed before the House this session for commencing the workshops, and he had put down the moderate sum of £150,000 all told, although hon. members were informed that the amount would be more like £180,000 or £200,000. That ought not to be spread over more than two years; if the work was not completed by 1902 it ought to be. There was not the slightest reason why it should not be.

THE PREMIER: It would not be; that was certain.

MR. MORAN: Anyhow, there was an urgent necessity for this work, and he had put down £150,000 for it. The £100,000 added to the £150,000 gave a quarter of a million extra. Add that to the foregoing total of £1,228,000, and that brought a total, which must be expended inside the next two years, of a million and a half of money, which would be added to capital account. Mr. Davies said that the time had come

when the department could not run the traffic any longer on gravel. The Western Australian lines were the only railways in Australia which were run on gravel; blue-metal or hard rock was generally used. From Fremantle to Menzies and right on to Leonora blue metal would have to be used, and the Great Southern line would have to be ballasted with blue metal. He did not know what would be the cost of a mile of blue metal; he supposed it would be spread 3ft. 6in. wide, and about 8 inches deep. What was it worth per yard?

MR. GEORGE: About 7s.

MR. MORAN: The question of cost he would leave to someone else to say. Mr. Davies said the work ought to be commenced at once and spread over a number of years. There were 1,355 miles of lines; would the ballasting cost £300 a mile or £400 a mile?—give him a quotation. We were going to the electors soon; let them know the truth. We were going to let some other party, some other Premier, somebody else at any rate, take over the position of Treasurer of the country; therefore let the people know the truth. He believed there were men in the country who would make a fair "fist" in the position of Treasurer. He believed it was not impossible to find men in the country who were acquainted with public works and financing, and the railway service, who would be of good service in the position of Treasurer of the country. Why despair? There were as good fish in the sea as were ever caught. Here was the plain truth, £1,500,000, besides £2,000,000 for the Coolgardie water scheme, and £500,000 for the Fremantle harbour and appurtenances thereto; besides all the other public works which were in hand—the Leonora line, the duplication of the Boulder line, the Brown Hill loop line—the Government would have to borrow two or three million pounds for these works. It was a trifling matter, light as air at the present time. There was no denying the fact, still we did not want to be down-hearted. Never in his life had he been down-hearted for more than half a day.

MR. KINGSMILL: That was in the morning.

MR. MORAN: After the Katanning show; it was barometrical. There was

no occasion to blind ourselves to the plain truth. In order to give proper facilities to the 1,535 miles of railway line, besides providing a million for the purchase of the Midland railway line which the Government would have to do some time or other; we must not forget that.

**THE PREMIER:** The hon. member should not forget it.

**MR. MORAN:** There was no need to remind him (Mr. Moran) not to forget it. The Government would have to provide a million for the purchase of the Midland railway line, to buy it at their price. If we could not buy it, we would have to see what we could do. If the Government could not buy the line, a little judicious absentee land taxation would have some moderating influence, he thought, on the Midland Railway people. This line was not going to be the property of the State under three-quarters of a million at any rate, and that amount would have to be added to the capital cost of the railways.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** Another quarter of a million.

**MR. MORAN:** Without this, we would have to add one-and-a-half millions to cost of the railways, which would bring the capital cost up to £6,000 per mile, a reasonable and low amount, when in his opinion, with the present management and the present rate of traffic, the service would be a magnificent one, and would pay the interest and the sinking fund on the increased capital of £1,500,000.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** Add it to the national debt.

**MR. MORAN:** Certainly, add it to the national debt. That had to be done. It was no good tinkering with the question. The public wanted it, and the railway necessities needed it. We should put our railways once and for all on a proper basis, then we should come down with the strictest supervision possible and make chargeable to capital what was justly chargeable to it, and make revenue pay what was justly chargeable to revenue. If the railways would not pay the interest, sinking fund, and the upkeep, with the present rates, by all means let us increase the railway rates. Never allow the railways to bring a loss on to Western Australia. Those were his firm opinions, and he was going to stick to them. We had

lost the custom duties; they were gone beyond our control; we could no longer afford to lose on the railways, and make the amount out of the customs. Let us make the railways a commercial concern, and in doing so we should be studying the best interests of Western Australia and those who came after us. Interest and sinking fund on £1,500,000 would mean an extra £67,500; and he would like to give a *résumé* of what he considered the position might be, ought to be, and would be, he hoped, in a year or two. The present capital was £6,856,000, which, with £1,500,000 added, would, in two years, amount to £8,356,000.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** Did that include the Leonora line?

**MR. MORAN:** No; it would not be fair to include the Leonora line, which, however, he was sure would more than pay its way, though it would mean another £70,000. Interest at  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. and sinking fund at 1 per cent., meant a total interest of  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.; and it must always be borne in mind that, though we were nominally paying 3 per cent. on money borrowed, we were really paying  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., or 3·45 or 3·46 on loans up to date. Interest and sinking fund altogether would in two years amount to £376,026, which would have to be extracted from the earnings of the railways in that time. The Premier estimated that the earnings of the railways this year would be £1,292,000, while the working expenses would be about £922,000, so that a profit of £371,284 was expected. But neither the Premier nor anybody else could estimate correctly in this matter, because the summer was coming, and it was impossible to judge a month ahead. On the basis he had taken, with the lines thoroughly equipped, we should in two years' time, after paying interest and sinking fund, find ourselves with a deficit of £4,736. It might be asked why he took next year's earnings, when he was taking the capital cost of a year ahead. But with the increased facilities for traffic which the expenditure of £1,500,000 would give, the work could be done in half the time, and more economically, and give twice the despatch and satisfaction. The population was increasing, and in two years it was possible some water would have been pumped to Southern Cross; and if the loss were only £4,000 on this year's return,

estimated on the increased capital, he was safe in saying the railways would pay a handsome profit, as well as interest and sinking fund in the future. Unfortunately we could not get much rolling-stock this year. Mr. Davies reported that he would pay £53,000 for engines and rolling-stock, and for various works £345,000, while the railway workshops would cost about £50,000; so that the capital cost would be increased at the end of the year by £448,000, or probably half a million of money, with contingencies. At the end of this year we should have a railway capital of £7,356,000, on which, interest and sinking fund at  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. combined, totalled £331,020; and as the profit estimated was £371,284, the net profit above interest and sinking fund, would be £40,264. He earnestly believed we would get that £40,000 next year, notwithstanding all the difficulties; but, of course, if there were an exceptionally bad season, and the condensing plant at Kalgoorlie should happen not to work so well as expected, that amount would not be obtained, though in his opinion the Premier's estimate would be found correct. But how much of the profit would be swept away if replacements were debited to revenue instead of loan? There was a stern task ahead of the next Parliament, because £1,500,000 would have to be borrowed and applied judiciously to our railways, in conjunction with other moneys which would have to be borrowed to complete public works. That Parliament would have to closely watch, and see that our railways were well and economically managed. He said nothing about change of system, which was a matter for another debate; but the task ahead was to him a most hopeful one. Until he had carefully read through Mr. Davies' report, and the previous reports, he had not been so hopeful, but he was now candidly and sincerely of conviction that we had a noble heritage in our railways, which, however, would have to be worked with caution and care. At present the population meant only 103 people per mile of opened railway, and to be on a level with any other colony we required another 200 people to the mile. Thanks to the invitation of the late Commissioner of Railways (Mr. Piesse) he had enjoyed a view of Katanning and the surrounding country recently, and he said fearlessly that country was cap-

able of supporting 500,000 people. It was magnificent grass country, with splendid crops, and excellently adapted for fruit growing; and all the way down to Albany there was a flourishing population. Incidentally, he thought there was a magnificent future for Albany, with that good back country and a climate superior to any in Australia. Without building another mile of railway and thereby increasing the capital, a population of a million could be served by the present system, which, though only a framework, could all along the coast between Geraldton and Albany, provide transit for a thrifty and happy population all producing from the soil. If a wise policy were followed, he felt certain that in our lifetime the goldfields would not diminish in splendour, but even if they did, in 30 or 40 years we should have got back our capital cost. If we watched carefully the capital cost, and stuck to the sinking fund, and did not sacrifice the country to the clamour of one section or the other, there was nothing to fear ahead. He owed an apology to the House for the length of his remarks, but that was a sort of apology which was always readily accepted from anybody who honestly and fearlessly went into matters, and endeavoured to do his best in letting the people know the good and the bad in the public life of the colony. We would have to borrow a lot of money, and we were losing the popular figure that had led in the past. We would have to go to the London market without the advantage of the present Premier's name, and nobody could say that name had not been worth a lot to Western Australia. We should have none of the *éclat* of new public works for many years to come, because there was years of work ahead to fulfil the promises of the present Government and Parliament, and to bring public works up to date and perfect our railway system; and when that had been done, we must wait for the population, which he was perfectly certain would come.

MR. HOLMES: No apology was needed for addressing the Committee at this stage, nor was he going to take any blame, at all events to himself or to hon. members on the Opposition side of the House for having allowed the existing state of affairs in connection with the



Railway Department to go on so long. For the last two or three years he had pointed out from time to time the difficulties he saw looming in the distance, and now the department were in greater difficulties than ever before. A return which he had moved for, and prepared by the Railway Department, was laid on the table a few evenings ago; and he must say that if a return of a similar kind had been laid before the members of any other Parliament, the effect would have been to wreck the Ministry of the day. The Premier, the Commissioner of Railways, and the ex-Commissioner spent a whole afternoon in endeavouring, without success, to explain away this Jobson syndicate transaction, and they descended to personal abuse, as they always did when argument failed. The Commissioner of Railways, having moved the adjournment of the debate, said when he met the House next day that no explanation was necessary, for his (Mr. Holmes's) speech was a repetition of one made twelve months previously, which had been answered by the ex-Commissioner. Such could not be the case, because the swindle referred to took place in January, February, and March of this year. The Commissioner had said he hoped to have heard the last of the matter; but he (Mr. Holmes) could assure him he had not heard the last of it. The ex-Commissioner said that he (Mr. Holmes) stated the Government bought 16 million gallons of water from this syndicate.

MR. PIESSE: No; that the hon. member had stated there were 16 million gallons in the tank.

MR. HOLMES: *Hansard* would prove he had said the Railway Department had bought six million gallons of water from the Jobson syndicate.

MR. PIESSE: No; 16 millions, according to *Hansard*.

MR. HOLMES: The ex-Commissioner went on to say that had the tank contained 16 instead of six millions, the department would have been justified in building the line.

MR. PIESSE: Not "it would;" but "it might."

MR. HOLMES: Had it dawned on the intelligence of the ex-Commissioner or the department that this tank had been built to hold water, and that if it would not hold more than six million

gallons at a time, it would be filled from time to time by the rainfall, so that in a reasonable time 16 million gallons could be taken out?

MR. PIESSE: By what method of calculation could the hon. member get 16 million gallons into a tank which could hold only 2,700,000?

MR. HOLMES: If that were the capacity, it proved jobbery; for the department bought six million gallons of water which it now appeared did not exist. The ex-Commissioner had said that at that time the department were paying £1,000 a day for water, or £6,000 a week. The report of the General Manager showed that, apart from purchases from the Jobson syndicate, the department had bought only £4,750 worth of water; yet the ex-Commissioner said they had been paying £1,000 a day for water at that period.

MR. MONGER: Water had to be purchased at many other places.

MR. HOLMES: The return referred to the total purchases in the Kalgoorlie district. Again, while the Jobson syndicate were paid £2 per 1,000 gallons, other companies received only 7s. per 1,000.

MR. PIESSE: Nonsense!

MR. HOLMES: The Committee could judge between the ex-Commissioner's statement and the General Manager's report.

MR. PIESSE: The cost was 7s. per 100 gallons.

MR. HOLMES: Page 8 of the Report showed that, in round figures, 17 million gallons of water was purchased during the year; that 5½ million gallons of that was purchased from the Jobson Railway Company for £11,340; and 12 million gallons from other companies for £4,785.

MR. PIESSE: But the water purchased at a lower rate was bought at the dams—an altogether different thing.

MR. HOLMES: That his figures were correct was proved by their agreement with those given by the last speaker (Mr. Moran). The Jobson syndicate had been paid £2 per 1,000 gallons, and other companies 7s. Referring to what he had said in connection with this matter a few evenings ago, the Premier said he (Mr. Holmes) made abominable statements, devoid of truth. The statements were, no doubt, abominable; but they were abso-

lutely true, and he was now substantiating them. He had charged the Premier with "cooking" the national accounts, and he would prove that charge. In the Colonial Treasurer's balance-sheet on the 30th June last there was an amount in the hands of the Railway Paymaster of £16,400, salaries due for the month of June, which appeared as an asset. Had that amount been paid away to railway servants as it should have been, instead of a surplus of £12,000 there would have been a deficit. In the balance sheet there was nothing shown on the debit side for any salaries due to public servants; and the Premier, on the 4th September last, said he had always carried forward a portion of the June salaries to the next year. But if the Premier had been provided with ten years' salary, and if after being ten years in office he was one month's salary short, someone must have misappropriated that amount. On the 12th September he (Mr. Holmes) asked were the June salaries included the balance-sheet? and the reply was in the affirmative. On the same day, not being satisfied with that answer, he had moved for a return showing the amounts outstanding for salaries and wages on 30th June, and the amounts due to "sundry persons." The reply was that the salaries due amounted to £120,000, and the amounts due to sundry persons, payable out of revenue and loan, to about £4,000,000. The Premier blamed him for the ambiguity of the question; but he denied that it was not clear, because the Under Treasurer, after consultation with the Premier, wrote asking him (Mr. Holmes) to call at the Treasury, as the Premier and Under Treasurer could not agree as to what was wanted. An explanation was given, and the Premier, the Under Treasurer, and the Commissioner of Railways then understood the query, the object of which was to ascertain what liabilities were not included in the balance-sheet of 30th June last. When such questions were asked and returns moved for, fictitious figures were given to mislead the questioner and the public. He would later deal somewhat severely with the railway estimates and railway officials. We had the report of the select committee which inquired into the Ice Company's frauds, and recommended that certain officials should be dismissed, and the

conduct of higher-grade officials inquired into. That report came down at, he thought, half-past four in the afternoon. Two hours later the Premier introduced the Estimates, and those Estimates showed that, with very few exceptions, the whole of those high-grade officials whose conduct the select committee thought should be inquired into, were recommended for increases of salary. He thought that showed what little knowledge Ministers had of departments under their control. The evidence taken before the select committee was published from day to day, so Ministers could not contend that they did not know what was going on; and consequently they should not at this stage, at all events, have recommended the increased salaries to the officials whose conduct was under consideration. The least penalty at this stage was to let the salaries of those officers remain as at present.

MR. GEORGE: Would not that be condemning the officers unheard?

MR. HOLMES: It was proposed to pay increased salaries to these officials, because the railways were paying; but he intended to show that the railways were not paying, and were not likely to pay. They were not paying, except on paper, and anyone who had anything to do with figures knew figures could be manipulated in any way one liked; they could be made either to pan out at a profit or a loss, as one thought fit. The estimated expenditure for last year was £810,800, while the actual expenditure was £884,800.

MR. MORAN: The earnings were greater, too.

MR. HOLMES: Yes; the earnings were greater, but the expenditure was £150,000 more than the previous year's expenditure, and no new lines were opened during the year. Last year was the first year since 1892 in which there were no new railways opened, and doubtless the officials who made up the estimates at the beginning of the year made them out on the principle of the railways carrying all the traffic they could, and also provided for the new expenditure, yet the expenditure exceeded the estimate by £74,000. The Railway Department had no difficulty about securing freight. We knew that the Eastern line was jammed from one year's end to another. The freight was waiting, and all the

department had to do was to get it away as quickly as they could. He joined with the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) in complimenting the General Manager upon the report submitted to the House, but complained of the delay which had taken place in connection with its presentation this year. The report only came into the hands of hon. members a few days ago, after the Estimates were laid upon the table, and one found that some of the reports contained in it were dated as far back as August last.

MR. PIESSE: A great deal of time was required to revise the report.

MR. HOLMES: The figures had been analysed by him, and he found that during the year the loan expenditure on opened railways amounted to about £320 per mile, and the net revenue of the railways, not allowing for sinking fund, was £100 per mile, or, if allowance was made for sinking fund, about £70 per mile. In other words, for every pound of net revenue earned by the railways we had spent £4 of loan. That could not be considered satisfactory, because the expenditure was not in purchasing rolling stock, as there was only an increase of two locomotives and 136 wagons for the 12 months. If there were no prospect of increasing the capital cost of our railways he would not mind, but he proposed to show there was to be a considerable increase in the capital cost, and to confirm the figures of the last speaker (Mr. Moran). The only railway that had paid was the Eastern goldfields railway. While there had been a profit of £210,000 on that line, there had been a loss of £25,000 on the South-Western line.

MR. GEORGE: That was carrying coal and timber too cheaply.

MR. PIESSE: Coal and timber.

MR. HOLMES: That was the excuse now given. He was responsible, in a sense, for timber being carried so cheaply, because he proved last year that the Railway Department were carrying timber more cheaply for Millar Bros. than for anyone else, and the result was that the rate was reduced in regard to others.

MR. PIESSE: There had been no change in the rates.

MR. HOLMES: There was a loss of £25,000 on the South-Western line, a loss of £15,500 on the Great Southern, a loss of £9,000 on the Northern, and a loss on

the Cossack Tramway of about £2,000, showing a total loss of about £51,000 on the railways, excepting the Eastern railway, which showed a profit of £210,000, leaving a net profit of about £160,000. The House should insist that the railways should be built and equipped by the department under the control of the Engineer-in-Chief, and then handed over to the management.

MR. PIESSE: That was right; they should be equipped.

MR. HOLMES: They should be handed over to the management, who should be responsible for the upkeep, and the upkeep should be made good out of revenue, and not out of loan. The General Manager said in his report: "I am strongly of opinion, for many reasons, that *all* expenditure debited to Railway Capital Account should be administered by the Railway Department." That suggestion he, for one, did not agree with, for the expenditure of the loan money should be in the hands of the Engineering Department, and the working of the railways in those of the General Manager. As long as the General Manager had the loan money to manipulate in such a way as he thought fit, it was easy for him to make the railways appear to pay. The Premier had been boasting that our railways had paid, and that they justified extension in all directions; but he (Mr. Holmes) had shown that last year the loan expenditure was £320 per mile, and the net revenue £70 per mile. If the proposal contained in the General Manager's report was to be carried out, £1,500,000 would be expended out of loan in the next 18 months in bringing our rolling-stock and present railways up to date. If that were figured out in the same way, it would be seen that during the current year, instead of spending £320 loan money per mile on our railways we should be spending £750 per mile. Assuming that the expectations were realised, and that we obtained £100 of revenue per mile, we should have a loan expenditure of £750 per mile, and a revenue of £100 per mile. If we went on increasing our capital account to this extent, with the probability of reducing our revenue, difficulty and disaster must follow. The million and some odd thousand pounds it was proposed to expend on opened railways during the next year did not include anything for workshops

at Midland Junction, nor did it include anything for rails and fastenings, which we were told were necessary for the relaying of the Eastern goldfields line, and he understood the cost of rails and fastenings would be about £200,000. Neither did the amount include anything for that which the hon. member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) estimated at £200,000, and which some members on that (Opposition) side of the House, who perhaps had a better grasp of the question than the hon. member for East Coolgardie, estimated at about the same amount. Then, in addition to that, there was a suggestion to remetal the whole of the railway line from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie with blue metal, the cost of which the member for the Murray (Mr. George) estimated at about a quarter of a million. He would put that at another £200,000. If we added £200,000 for metalling the line, and a quarter of a million for the relaying of a portion of the line, where would the capital cost of the railways be in the next year or two unless some one "took the bull by the horns" and handled this spending department in a proper manner? He did not blame the management of the Railway Department for this: he blamed the House and the present Administration for allowing it to go on. At this late stage it was due to members to say what should be done to stave off the evil that was staring us in the face. There was one item of loan expenditure representing £210,000 to furnish the whole of the existing rolling-stock with the continuous brake. It seemed that the brakes on the goods rolling-stock were not as they should be, and the report of the Mechanical Engineer went to show that it would cost £210,000 to put a continuous brake on to the trucks. The General Manager said this expense was in the nature of an addition or improvement to rolling-stock: it should be debited to capital account and paid out of loan. He (Mr. Holmes) disagreed with the General Manager there. If a certain sum was written off every year for depreciation of the rolling-stock, there would be something in the argument. If the rolling-stock that it was proposed to furnish with a continuous brake was in a satisfactory condition, there would be

something in the argument; but he proposed to show the rolling-stock was not in a satisfactory condition. The Mechanical Engineer showed that. The rolling-stock was in such a condition that unless proper workshops were erected forthwith the greater portion of it would have to be condemned. Immediately the workshops were constructed, and the Railway Department were in a position to effect the necessary repairs, the working expenses of the railways would increase, because to-day, instead of repairing the old stock, the department bought new rolling-stock out of loan. As soon as the workshops were completed and the department had to repair the old stock out of revenue, the working expenses of the railways must increase.

MR. PIESSE: That had been stated by him every year.

MR. HOLMES: On one point we agreed, then. The General Manager, on page 16, had something to say on this subject. He said:

Owing to the want of adequate workshops accommodation, the operations of the Locomotive Branch are severely hampered. The lack of space and facilities for dealing with locomotive, carriage, and wagon repairs at Fremantle exists to such an extent that unless new shops are provided we shall shortly be in the position of being compelled to purchase a further supply of new stock to replace that thrown out of traffic.

MR. PIESSE: That was known to him.

MR. HOLMES: If the late Commissioner knew that the department was knocking rolling-stock to pieces, and damaging it to the extent of some hundreds of thousands of pounds per year, he had no right to come into the House and contend that he was making the railways pay. If the department was damaging rolling-stock, as the Commissioner admitted, to the extent of some hundreds of thousands a year—

MR. PIESSE: Say millions.

MR. HOLMES: Not millions, hundreds of thousands according to the report of the General Manager, and not writing-off anything for depreciation, the late Commissioner had no right to deceive the House. Perhaps it was a good thing for the country that the late Commissioner had resigned.

MR. MORAN: It was a pity he was not Commissioner now.

**MR. HOLMES:** The new man had not the ability or energy to do any harm. The Mechanical Engineer in his report dealing with locomotives said:

A large proportion is unsuitable for traffic requirements. The diameter of the wheels is too small for the speeds they have to run. It is evident that more locomotives must be provided as early as possible, inclusive of the thirty now under order.

In addition to that he (Mr. Holmes) found that the General Manager, on the advice of the Mechanical Engineer, recommended the purchase of 45 Class W locomotives, to cost £3,000 each, or a total cost of £135,000. The Mechanical Engineer said further on:

Until reasonable facilities are available, the cost of operating this branch must increase in a most abnormal degree.

**MR. MORAN:** Unless the workshops were retained at Fremantle.

**MR. HOLMES:** The retention of the workshops at Fremantle was not advocated by him (Mr. Holmes). He advocated that the workshops should be erected in the right place, and he argued that an independent commission was the right body to decide where the right place was. He never argued in favour of Fremantle, but he argued that it was necessary in the interests of the country and the Railway Department to construct the workshops on the best possible site, in the interests of the country and the Railway Department. The chief Mechanical Engineer had something to say about the draw gear of the rolling-stock, and this brought him back to the Seabrook battery purchase. The late Locomotive Engineer was dismissed from the service because he refused to submit to the dictates of the General Manager on this and other matters. The late Locomotive Engineer pointed out that the draw gear of the trucks purchased from the Seabrook battery was not fit to travel by, and the General Manager insisted that it was, and the Locomotive Engineer insisted that to alter the draw gear would bring the cost of the trucks to more than they were worth. The department bought second-hand rolling-stock with defective draw gear, and on this the new Locomotive Engineer says:

The employment of heavier types of locomotives accentuates the urgent necessity for

bringing the draw gear up to the proper standard.

By the Estimates he found that the late Locomotive Engineer, whose services were dispensed with, was paid six months' salary for six months' holiday, and given £1,000 to leave the service.

**MR. PRESSE:** Three months on full pay.

**MR. HOLMES:** Here was a capable officer, and the fact of the Government having paid him £1,000 to leave the service proved that he was a capable officer. His services were disposed of, and the Government had to pay £1,000 to him in addition to giving him three months' leave.

**MR. PRESSE:** The Government paid £800, and £200 three months' salary; £1,000 altogether.

**MR. HOLMES:** That would be dealt with when we came to the Estimates. He understood the Estimates, and he calculated that the late Locomotive Engineer received £1,000 to leave the service, and £400 as six months' salary. He would want to know why that amount was paid, and why the officer left the service in the way he did? The man who had been imported was to receive a much larger salary than the late Locomotive Engineer received. The new officer had a far greater staff than the other man had or ever would have had if he had remained in the service for any number of years. There were 14 foremen and clerks of every description provided for on the Estimates.

**MR. MORAN:** Those foremen got no more wages.

**MR. HOLMES:** Most of them were new appointments.

**MR. MORAN:** Temporary hands put on the staff.

**MR. HOLMES:** If they had been temporary hands put on to the staff he would not mind, but the evidence went to show that the staff had to be imported from New Zealand, where the new Locomotive Engineer was obtained from, and a number of railway clerks were being brought from New Zealand. It was an insult to the intelligence of the country and to the people who had come here in recent years, that we could not produce railway clerks here, but had to send to New Zealand for them. There were men in this country who were capable of doing

the work, men who had come from all parts of the world with all kinds of experiences. These men had done good service in the past, and they should have been allowed an opportunity to qualify under the new administration. The trouble had been that the new man had introduced a new system, and it was too much trouble for him to initiate the clerks into that system, therefore he dispensed with the clerks who had done good work under the old system, and had brought clerks from New Zealand to take their places.

MR. PRESSE : All the clerks who were dispensed with were of short service : none of them had served over a year.

MR. SOLOMON : They had been in other services for a long time.

MR. PRESSE : Not in this service, though.

MR. HOLMES : The Government had some difficulty in obtaining a successor to Mr. Campbell, the late Locomotive Engineer, and it seemed that the only way they could secure an officer to take the position was to give him a free hand in every way possible. He was allowed to make his own appointments, to bring his own chief clerk with him, or do anything he thought fit. He brought his chief clerk, who had taken the place of the chief clerk who formerly occupied the position and was a capable officer. In order to overcome the difficulty an appointment was made for the old chief clerk, and he was now storekeeper to the Railway Department. The Railway Department had control of the loan expenditure and of their own audit, and now they proposed to start a store with a capital of £200,000, with the late chief clerk of the Locomotive Engineer in charge. But the expenditure by the management should be reduced rather than increased, and the audit taken out of their control ; and the day would come when he (Mr. Holmes) would be in the position to tell hon. members that he had prophesied what the result of the present system would be. It was his duty to warn the late Commissioner and the Committee that unless the railways were handled differently, they must bring disaster on the country, which, if properly administered, had a great and glorious future. The General Manager had come round to his (Mr. Holmes's) way of thinking, because in the report there was quoted a conference of railway experts at Brisbane, which

conference had arrived at the opinion that loan expenditure should not be charged to capital account in the way it was charged in Western Australia.

MR. PRESSE : What should it be charged to ?

MR. MORAN : Loan expenditure should be charged to capital account.

MR. HOLMES : Loan expenditure on existing loans for improvements should not be charged to capital.

MR. MORAN : To what should it be charged ?

MR. HOLMES : It should not be loan expenditure at all.

MR. MORAN : That was the point ; it should be done out of revenue.

MR. HOLMES : All improvements to the railways and the rolling-stock should be done out of revenue. The conference at Brisbane held that improvements to opened lines should be paid out of revenue and not out of loan.

MR. MORAN : The hon. member was wrong.

MR. HOLMES : The General Manager in his report said that all this loan expenditure was money practically borrowed from capital account and should be repaid out of revenue. But he (Mr. Holmes) could not get anyone to admit that, last year. The General Manager went on :

The preceding paragraph points to several heavy charges to be borne by our working expenses in the future, to which we have been unaccustomed in the past.

The difficulties were getting more and more severe, and the figures of the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) and his own compared almost to a few pounds, and proved them to be correct. It was proposed to increase the salary of the General Manager from £1,250 to £1,500, and that was an item which, in the face of recent developments, he (Mr. Holmes) would at the proper time move should be struck out. Mr. Short, the Chief Traffic Manager, who was taken over from the Great Southern Railway at £600 a year, was also down for an increase of £100 per annum. When Mr. Short was taken over from the Great Southern Railway Company, the House was led to believe that his salary was £750 a year, and voted him a £50 increase the following year ; and as the salary was really only £600 a year,

hon. members were led into voting an increase of £200, instead of £50 as they then thought. He (Mr. Holmes) had heard the late Commissioner say that he, when Commissioner, "had worked that"; but if the late Commissioner had "worked that" and misled the House, what else had he and his chief officers "worked"? In addition to the increase which was then voted to Mr. Short, that gentleman received a bonus of £100 for leaving the service of the Great Southern Railway Company; and so long as he (Mr. Holmes) had a voice in the affairs of the country, he would oppose the proposed increase to the traffic officers of this mismanaged Railway Department. Mr. Evans, the Interlocking Engineer, was evidently thought to be a good man by the late Commissioner, because that Minister gave Mr. Evans six months' holiday and sent him to the Paris Exhibition to collect information on railway management and railway working.

MR. PIESSE: Mr. Evans got his leave and £20.

MR. HOLMES: Mr. Evans was now at the Paris Exhibition representing the late Commissioner, and according to the Estimates this officer was to receive an increase of £50 per annum. It was only very recently that this officer was the local representative of the company which supplied the interlocking gear to the Railway Department; but it was decided that it was necessary he should be taken over into the service of the State and made the head of the interlocking branch.

MR. PIESSE: Mr. Evans was strongly recommended by the late Commissioner of New South Wales.

MR. HOLMES: It was highly probable Mr. Evans was strongly recommended by the company who supplied the interlocking machinery, and possibly it paid the company to recommend Mr. Evans. Not only had new interlocking gear been supplied by this company, but second-hand machinery had been obtained through their office, as was shown by the fact that some of the machinery was branded "N.B.," meaning "North British." This machinery had been manufactured for the North British Railway Company, but as gear of that particular class had gone out of date, and the North British Railway Company

would not accept it, the manufacturing company could not get rid of it except by getting their representative appointed the officer in control of this branch in the Western Australian railway service.

MR. PIESSE: "N.B." meant "newly bought," not "North British."

MR. HOLMES: If the late Commissioner was not satisfied of the truth of the statement he (Mr. Holmes) had made, the matter could be pursued further. Would the late Commissioner deny that second-hand interlocking gear had been used on the Western Australian railways? He put that question to the late Commissioner, who was trying to mislead the House and the country as he admitted already having done in the case of Mr. Short's salary. The letters "N.B." meant "North British," and proved that second-hand gear had been supplied at full cost.

MR. PIESSE: An inquiry could be held into that by a Royal Commission.

MR. HOLMES: It was proposed to increase the salary of Mr. Paterson, the Chief Accountant, by £50. This officer had just returned from six months' leave, and came out in the same steamer as Mr. Teesdale Smith, of the Jobson Railway Company, though of course this might be a coincidence.

MR. PIESSE: It should be seen that they travelled in separate ships next time.

MR. HOLMES: No doubt these people had a right to travel together if they thought fit; but he (Mr. Holmes) would object to this officer receiving an increase of £50 to his salary. The Premier, who would do anything for revenue, was under the impression that the heads of the Railway Department were responsible for the railway earnings, and should be rewarded by increases of salaries. He (Mr. Holmes) had proved the Premier did not know the debtor from the creditor side of an account; and anyone conversant with figures, who would examine the railway accounts for last year and the Estimates for this year, would find the railways were not paying; therefore these salaries should not be raised. The Chief Traffic Manager, whose salary it was proposed to increase from £800 to £900, said in his report that the time had arrived when the department should make their own ice. This officer was not

satisfied with getting his ice from the Perth Ice Company; and he further recommended the establishment of a railway printing office under the control of the department. All these facts showed an intended increase in railway expenditure, in railway works, and an increase of the capital accounts, but very little prospect of increased revenue, because the only new railway was the Leonora line, now in hand; and the further the railways were extended, the greater the difficulties of working and the less the profits. On working the railways these officers spent last year £74,000 above the authorisations, and if the expenditure were this year in the same ratio, there would be an unauthorised expenditure of £100,000, being a total expenditure out of revenue of about one million in working the railways this year. It would be no satisfaction to him (Mr. Holmes) to say at some future time, when the country was face to face with difficulty, that he had prophesied disaster. Let the Committee face the position now, introduce a new system, reorganise the whole of the service so that the position of the railways should be clear, and Parliament no longer misled with fictitious figures. In conclusion, he urged hon. members to put the Railway Department on a satisfactory footing before it brought financial disaster on the country, as it otherwise would do at no distant date.

MR. PIESSE moved that progress be reported.

Motion put and passed.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

At 10:36 o'clock, the House adjourned until the next day.

## Legislative Council,

Thursday, 1st November, 1900.

Papers Presented—Motion: Public Service, to grade and classify (adjourned)—Land Resumption Amendment Bill, second reading—Noxious Weeds Bill, second reading—Killing of Kangaroos for Food Bill, second reading—Streets (Victoria Park) Closure Bill, second reading—Coolgardie Exhibition Lands Repeal Bill, first reading—Exportation of Arms Bill, first reading—Loan Bill (£790,000), second reading—Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Bill, select committee (extension)—Adjournment.

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

### PRAYERS.

### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the COLONIAL SECRETARY: 1. Metropolitan Waterworks Board, Annual Report; 2. Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board, Annual Report; 3. Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Bill, Cablegrams from Agent General.

Ordered to lie on the table.

### MOTION—PUBLIC SERVICE, TO GRADE AND CLASSIFY.

HON. A. JAMESON (Metropolitan Suburban): I beg to move:

That, in the opinion of this House, a Royal Commission should be appointed to grade and classify the members of the Public Service, and to fix their status and remuneration in the various classes.

As hon. members are aware, a Public Service Bill has already passed, and is about to become law. Clause 13 says:

The Governor shall, according to the work of each department, annually determine—(a.) The number of public servants required for the efficient working of each department; and (b.) the work to be done and the pay to be received by each.

It is the duty of the Government to do this, but it is quite impossible for them to do the work unless some material assistance is given. The whole of the civil service should be thoroughly investigated so that the Government may have some grounds and data to go on. I believe I am correct in stating that there is no public service in the world where the appointments, promotions, and dismissals of public servants are left to the haphazard method which exists in the service here. It is our duty to see that this is remedied, and particularly now when a large number of