

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 10th October, 1895.

Question of Extending Midland Railway to Mullewa

—Public Health Act Further Amendment Bill: Legislative Council's Amendments—Water and Electric Works License Bill: motion for rejection; Bill considered in committee—Projected Railway from Mingenev to Mullewa—Messages from Legislative Council: amendments in Goldfields Bill; concurrence in amendments in Mines Regulation Bill—Leave of Absence to Members (3)—Proposed Termination of Civil Service Commission—Next Sitting of the House—Date of Prorogation—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 4.30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

QUESTION OF EXTENDING MIDLAND RAILWAY TO MULLEWA.

MR. SIMPSON, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier (1.) whether the Government is in receipt of a resolution passed at a public meeting in Geraldton, to the following effect:—"In view of the statement made in the House by the Hon. the Director of Public Works, regarding the contemplated extension of the Midland Railway from Mingenev to Mullewa, we, the citizens of Geraldton, in public meeting assembled, respectfully urge that it would be highly undesirable, in the best interests of Geraldton and the Government Railway already built from Geraldton to Mullewa, for the Government to in any way countenance the proposed extension; and this meeting prays that the Government will take no action in furthering the construction of such railway. (2.) whether it is in contemplation by the Government to in any way aid the project, as indicated by the Commissioner of Railways."

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied:—(1.) Yes. (2.) The matter has not been considered by the Government since a letter dated August 21st., 1894, was received from the Midland Railway Company, and replied to on the 17th September, 1894. Copies of these letters are herewith, as follow:—

"St. George's Terrace, Perth, W.A.,

"August 21st, 1894.

"SIR,

"I have the honor to communicate to you

"that it is the desire of the Midland Railway Company to petition Parliament for a Private Bill for an extension of the Midland Railway from Mingenev to Mullewa. The importance of the proposed extension has been always present to the Directors, and a survey was made, or partially made, in March, 1892, and is shown by a dotted line on the enclosed map.

"For the first 25 miles the line will pass entirely through private lands of the Company, and the remainder through waste lands of the Crown. I believe it will not interfere with any land whatever of any private owner. The length throughout will be about 45 miles.

"It is particularly desirable that, if possible, the sanction of Parliament may be obtained during the present session.

"As the extension would be of great public convenience, I venture to hope that the proposal will meet with the approval of the Government, and to ask the favor of an intimation in this respect.

"I have, &c.,

"(Sd.) W. F. SAYER,

"Attorney for the Company.

"To the Honorable Sir John Forrest, K.C.M.G., Premier, &c., Perth."

Premier's Office,

Perth, 17th September, 1894.

"SIR, I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 21st ultimo informing me that it was the desire of the Midland Railway Company to petition Parliament for a Private Bill for an extension of the Midland Railway from Mingenev to Mullewa, and expressing a hope that the proposal will meet with the approval of the Government.

2. "In reply, I beg to inform you that, under existing circumstances, it does not seem advisable for the Government to promise to assist your Company in the way desired, as it would probably add to the present complications, and might interfere with the position of affairs now existing between the Government and your Company.

I have, &c.,

(Sd.) JOHN FORREST,

Premier.

PUBLIC HEALTH ACT FURTHER AMENDMENT BILL.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

On the motion of MR. JAMES (for Mr.

Traylen), the House went into Committee for the consideration of the Legislative Council's amendments (*vide* Message, page 1308 *ante*.) namely to strike out Clauses 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10.

IN COMMITTEE.

MR. JAMES moved that the amendments made by the Legislative Council in this Bill, as per schedule, be agreed to. He said it was much to be regretted that after these important clauses, dealing with urgent matters affecting the public health, had been discussed in this House, they were thrown out by members of the other House. He hoped that in the next session, or soon after, a Bill for consolidating and amending the Public Health Act would be passed; and, in the meantime, the important matters dealt with in these clauses would have to wait.

MR. RANDALL said it was a great pity the Council had taken on themselves to strike out very important clauses which were urgently demanded in the interest of the public health. The only exception he had taken to the wording of any of the clauses was that the word "owner" was put in where it ought not to be. There had been a general hope and expectation that these clauses would have been allowed to remain in the Bill. However, in having struck them out, the Legislative Council must take the responsibility.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said it was desirable that the Government should bring in a Consolidation Bill, next session, dealing with matters of public health in a comprehensive and practical manner. He was told by those who had studied the matter, that it was impossible to make a useful Act by continually tinkering with the subject. Hardly a session passed without the hon. member for Greenough (Mr. Traylen), or others connected with the City Council, bringing forward an amending Bill; and it would be well for the Government to bring in a consolidation Bill for making the law clear and workable, in relation to the public health.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported to the House.

Report adopted.

Ordered, that a message be transmitted to the Legislative Council, informing them that the Legislative Assembly concurred in the amendments made by the Legislative Council in the Bill.

WATER AND ELECTRIC WORKS LICENSE BILL.

On the order of the day for the consideration of the Bill in committee being read,

MR. HARPER moved "That this order be discharged, and that the following resolution be substituted: 'That in the opinion of this House the question of a water supply from the eastern goldfields is one of extreme importance, and that the interests involved are so enormous that the Government should at once examine into the feasibility of pumping water from the most accessible spot, and prepare an estimate of cost and working expenses of the same, with a view to its being undertaken by the State.'"

He said: Since last night, after thinking over this matter, it seems to mean enormous project to give the Government power to deal with; and as we cannot see the extent of its ramifications, I am confirmed in my belief that it would be undesirable, at this stage, to carry this Bill through. The Government gave us to understand, last night, that there had been no definite proposal to undertake the water scheme for supplying the eastern goldfields, but there had been a proposal for the transmission of electric force. I was not prepared, at the time, to say what was the case in other countries in regard to the transmission of electric force, but I was under the impression that it was impracticable. I have since hunted up a reference to a case in America, where something of the kind had been attempted. I found that there was a project lately under consideration for supplying San Francisco with electric power, from a lake situate about 75 miles distant, at which distance it was said to be possible to render available about 35,000 horse-power, which would be reduced in transmission to about 20,000, horse-power. Thus in transmitting electric force a distance of 75 miles, there would be a loss of one-third of the power by the time it reached San Francisco; therefore it would be impossible to force an electric current of any value at all, from the coast to Coolgardie. I may add that the San Francisco scheme was pending the proof of success of a similar scheme for transmitting electric power from the Falls of Niagara to be utilised at a distance for manufacturing purposes, and there was so little faith in the San Francisco scheme that it was suspended until the other was proved to be a success. That was just a year ago. Therefore, taking all these things into consideration, it seems desirable that nothing should be done by

giving to these parties the right which the Bill proposes to give, over other private companies. It is not likely that anything would be done immediately by the company which has made a proposal, but we must recognise that the matter is serious as it affects the goldfields, and that a panic at any time might cause the loss of a large sum of money to the colony. In these exceptional circumstances it is most desirable that the Government should examine at once into the feasibility of carrying out a large scheme for supplying water to these goldfields, and any such scheme should be under State control, because it might become a serious menace to the best interests of the colony if it were not so controlled. The administration of such an undertaking, when established, would be of the simplest, as the detailed work of supplying water might be carried out by contract, and the reticulation might be managed by local companies or by a municipality. Therefore the means of supply being once established it would be a good thing for the goldfields and for the country; and it is important that the State should have the sole control of the undertaking. For these reasons, I have submitted this motion.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) This is the first I have heard of the motion of the hon. member, and I may say it has taken me somewhat by surprise. The objection I understood the hon. member had to the measure, yesterday, was in regard to the water supply, and not so much in regard to the supply of electric power. I have no doubt that, when all other means have failed, in regard to supplying the goldfields with water, the country will be prepared to deal with the question. I feel it is a little early for us to pledge ourselves at present. If we were going to deal with it as a State matter, we should need a great deal of information before doing so. We should have also to satisfy this House and the country that all means of obtaining water on or near the goldfields had been given up. But we cannot know, at present, whether we shall be able to obtain water by sinking, perhaps not at Coolgardie itself; for it is a generally accepted opinion that the further northward you go from Coolgardie, the more chance you have of obtaining fresh water. I know, for instance, that at the White Feather there is a well that has been supplying fresh water a long time. I believe that the further you go northward, away from the country that

is so much covered with eucalyptus, the more water can be obtained by sinking. It is strange that all the country about Southern Cross and Coolgardie, that is thickly timbered with eucalyptus, is destitute of water, but in the country to the northward, when I went over it in 1869, there was very little eucalyptus in the open, the country being covered with acacia, and the eucalyptus was only in the groves, and then to a limited extent. I think that, at this period of the session, we need not commit ourselves as to what we will do in regard to this matter; but I may say the Government are alive to the question, and I can assure the House that we will make all enquiries during the recess in regard to water supply, both by sinking for water and also considering a scheme by which water may be supplied from a distance to the goldfields. It will be an immense project, which must cost I don't know how many millions of money, for supplying Coolgardie and the whole of those fields with water from outside. It is rather too big a scheme for us to discuss at this period of this session. The only serious objection to this Bill is that, under its powers, the Government might enter into immense liabilities or very large contracts, having perhaps far-reaching considerations. That seems to be the only objection anyone can take to it; but we must remember that for some smaller matters also the Bill will be useful. For instance, in regard to providing water, we have already granted what are called water rights, under the Goldfields Regulations, to some persons on the fields. There is one, I know, at Niagara, and one I think near Mount Burgess; and when these persons get their water impounded, they will have to convey it to somewhere—to towns or to mines which they intend to supply with water—and there is no existing power I know of by which they can lay down a mile of piping, where this would interfere with private or municipal rights. There is no power by which these persons having a water supply could convey it across a leased area, without consent, unless it be under the new Goldfields Act, and I am not sure that the Act provides this power. So that there are difficulties of this kind at present, which will need to be dealt with, because those persons who have embarked capital in impounding water will want some means, by right or license, for enabling them to convey the water to townships or places which they intend to supply with water, and this Bill will enable the Government to

grant licenses of that sort. I am not in favor of rushing into such a big question, as I believe the supplying of water from the coast to the Coolgardie country will be, under a general power of this sort. I do not like it much, myself, and I prefer that the House should be consulted in regard to such an immense project. If the Government were to assure the House that any large project of that sort, such as supplying the Coolgardie goldfields with water from the coast, would not be approved by the Government without first giving this House an opportunity of considering it, I think this Bill would then be unobjectionable. The Bill would, as I have said, be useful for various smaller matters. I expect the hon member for Beverley has had in his mind only this one great scheme which the Bill provides for, and I can well understand that he hesitates to hand over to the Government these large powers by which such a scheme could be carried out without the scheme being placed definitely before Parliament. For my own part, I do not want to have this responsibility cast upon the Government during the recess. I prefer that we should give to this House the opportunity of considering and dealing with it. I should like to assure hon. members that the Government do not want to have this responsibility thrown on their shoulders. I think there is no risk in regard to the electrical parts of this Bill; and, in regard to the general powers, I am quite willing to give a pledge to the House that, with reference to the great question of supplying water to the goldfields, the Government will not take advantage of the powers given under this Bill, but that we will consult the House before entering into any agreement. With that assurance, hon. members may be inclined to allow the Bill to go through, as I am sure it will be useful in many ways.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I do not like the idea of such an important Bill as this being introduced at such a late hour in the session, but, at the same time, I do not like the amendment. I do not think this work is one the Government should undertake at all. To my mind the Government, have done too much already, and if they had not been promising so much, the chances are that private enterprise would have supplied water to the goldfields long ago. If this work had never been started by the Government they would never have been asked to do it. I really think it would

be far better for the Government to postpone the consideration of this Bill until next session, and in the meantime enquire into the possibilities of the scheme.

MR. HARPER: That is what I propose.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: What you propose is that the Government should make enquiries with a view of taking up the work themselves and I do not agree with that at all. This scheme may be all very well with a view of hawking it about and extracting a few more thousands out of the pockets of the unsuspecting English investor.

THE PREMIER: You have had some of it.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: It may be all very well to be hawked about, but I do not think there is anything in the scheme. Of course that is only a matter of opinion, and I have not studied the question, nor do I know sufficient about it to regard myself as being able to speak with authority. I do not believe in letting these company-mongers have these concessions to hawk about the country. The Premier is not in favor of this Bill himself, and has evidently only introduced it out of good nature. I do not think the Government would have brought it forward, if some one of influence was not pulling their coat tails.

MR. CONNOR: The hon. member who has just sat down objects to the Bill because it gives power to private companies to erect certain works to supply the wants of the goldfields in respect of water, and then he turns round and objects to the Government doing anything. I really cannot understand him. I would support the proposal of the hon. member for Beverley, were it not for the distinct assurance of the Government that this question of water is one they propose to take up in a thorough manner. If I thought this was not going to be the case, I would not support the Bill.

MR. WOOD: I cannot myself support the proposal of the hon. member for Beverley, and I do not think the Government should undertake this work at all. The idea of the Government making enquiries with the intention of erecting large pumping stations to supply Coolgardie with water is simply out of all question. It would involve the expenditure of perhaps millions of money, and the Government would take upon themselves a risk they have no right to take. They have no right to take risks with either water supplies or electric power concerns. Both belong to private individuals, and, so far as the scheme referred

to is concerned, the risk will be so great and the capital involved so large, that if there is any profit to it, I say, let them have it. The passing of this Bill can do the country no harm. Care has been taken to prevent anything like monopoly, and, if necessary, there can be any number of schemes at the one time. I certainly shall support the Bill going through.

MR. GEORGE: I am sure if any reasons would make me support this Bill, they would be in the want of reason advanced by the hon. member for Gascoyne, who quite followed his usual style. He was like the historic Balaam, and, as usual, after coming to curse, will be found quite ready to bless. He first knocked the Government down, and then buttered them up, finally sitting down in a most uncomfortable state of mind. I intend to support this Bill because I do not think this or any Government is competent to undertake so huge a scheme as that of properly supplying the goldfields with water. Up to the present every effort of the Government has resulted in failure—most distressful failures.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn): You cannot put your finger on a failure.

MR. GEORGE: What about your dam at Southern Cross? Why, after it was built the races to it would not hold water, and the dam, itself has never had a drop in it.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn): That may be true, but what about the twenty successes?

MR. GEORGE: Yes, but what did they cost? They cost 4s. a yard when, by contract, you could have had it done for 1s. 3d. There are no skilled men in the Government to undertake this work, and I do not think they could get anyone to join them to carry it out. This is a gigantic affair, and to suggest that the Government should take the risk of it would be too great an audacity even for the present Ministry. It is a matter which should be left to private enterprise, because the Government would only spend the money of the country without their doing much good. Nearly every clause will require very careful revision in committee, and I see no reason why this cannot be accomplished, and the Bill passed in an acceptable form.

MR. SOLOMON: I cannot support the motion of the hon. member for Beverley. It appears to me, after what the Premier has said, and the assurance given that no huge

undertakings will be entered into before the approval of Parliament is obtained, that there cannot possibly be any harm in this Bill passing, or in granting such concessions as are thought necessary. The hon. member for the Gascoyne talks of some particular huge scheme, but it is not referred to in any way in the Bill, and we need not fear any such thing after the assurance given by the Premier. The Bill may prove a very useful one, and I shall support its passing.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson): The hon. member for the Gascoyne and others seem to think Governments are very fond of taking great responsibilities upon themselves, but this is not the case. Governments, as a rule, are anxious to place all the responsibility they can upon Parliament. I do not think there was any particular scheme in the mind of the Government when it decided to introduce this measure. The hon. member for the Gascoyne has said it is introduced only because of the good nature of the Premier, but if that is so, the good nature is only in the direction of the goldfields, having a proper water supply. The fact of the matter is that the Government have been pestered with applications for small schemes, which it was very desirable indeed should be carried into effect. The Government could not do it, and they could not give anyone else permission to do it. It was very much like the dog in the manger. The best way to settle a matter like this is to let people who have schemes try them. If they are failures they only hurt themselves, and if they are successes, so much the better for everybody.

MR. HARPER: Some hon. members seem to think my desire is to pledge the Government to carry out the work themselves. Nothing is further from my idea. I can quite see the danger of the Government attempting such a thing. The general idea is that this is an urgent matter, and by this time next year it may be found that the demands have largely increased, and there will be an outcry because the Government have done nothing. People will not be so dissatisfied, however, when they know this House has empowered the Government to make all sorts of enquiries. It will be safer to do this, because then the Government can see where it is possible for private enterprise to be successful. The hon. member for the Murray has said the Government is quite unable to carry out work of this kind. I

believe he once had something to do with an undertaking of this sort, which was not a great success. The Government, however, might have the benefit of his advice in the future. Another great objection to this Bill is that it gives the Government powers to grant concessions, when private companies should be compelled to bring in private Bills, and have them carried in the ordinary way, after going through the ordinary forms, and paying the ordinary fees. This House should not offer these companies special legislation, and I hope the Government will take care that people who want to obtain concessions do so in the proper way.

Question, that the order of the day be discharged, put and negatived.

The House went into committee to consider the Bill.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 1:

Put and passed.

Clause 2—"Interpretation":

MR. LEAKE asked whether the Attorney-General could not discover some more euphonious term than "undertakers." He would suggest the term "promoters."

THE ATTORNEY - GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said this was the term used in all concerns of this nature. The Gasworks Act was carried out by "undertakers." The Waterworks Act referred to "contractors," but that was unusual.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3—"Governor may grant licenses":

MR. GEORGE thought a better definition was required here. He would also like to know what provision would be made as to the land belonging to the Crown, which these people would be empowered to take. At present it looked as if they would have the use of this land for nothing.

MR. JAMES proposed to add to Sub-section 1, the words "within the limits of any goldfield." This Bill was said to be for the goldfields, and he desired to see it restricted to them. He saw no reason why they should extend over municipalities as well. If the restriction was not agreed to, he would certainly have to oppose the Bill. [MR. SIMPSON: That would be terrible.] It would prevent the Bill becoming law this session, at any rate.

MR. SIMPSON hoped the limitation of the operation of the Bill would not be agreed to.

It might be desirable to permit municipalities in country districts to make arrangements with people willing to provide waterworks. There was Geraldton, for example. A water supply was badly wanted there, and, although it had been promised, it had never been given. If municipalities like that could enter into their own arrangements, and then secure a license from the Government, it would probably be largely availed of. There was just as much reason for giving this power to municipalities as to the goldfields.

THE ATTORNEY - GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said the proposed addition might prove very awkward, because it would prevent the supply of water to either stock or works or manufactories along the route of the pipes. There could be no harm in allowing any municipality through which the pipes ran, having their water supply from the same source.

MR. GEORGE opposed the suggestion that the operation of the Bill be extended to municipalities. He said the Bill was introduced for the goldfields, and should only be used for them. If the municipalities wanted water supplies, they should follow the example of Perth, only instead of giving themselves away, let the other people do it. There was danger in allowing the water supplies to be drawn upon too much, and he, for one, thought even the South-Western district should be prepared for droughts.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he saw no reason why people at York, for instance, could not be supplied with water by some person who had sufficient enterprise to do it. He proposed himself to move an addition to the clause which would possibly remove a good deal of the objections.

MR. JAMES said there was no justification for the operation of the Bill being extended over municipalities, and if its operation were limited, there would be little objection to the clause.

MR. LEAKE said he did not see why the storing of water should not be encouraged, no matter by whom the work was undertaken.

MR. HARPER said he regarded the proposal as altering the whole character of the Bill, which, he thought, had been originally designed to assist the supplying of water to the goldfields.

THE ATTORNEY - GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said no harm would be done by allow-

ing any set of people who wished to establish waterworks to do so. They would not be spending the money of the Government.

MR. GEORGE asked the Attorney-General whether syndicates would be permitted to take Crown lands without paying for them.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said they would not get the fee-simple, but only the lease of Crown lands, under the Bill. The lessees would pay rent, and the land which they occupied would revert to the Crown upon the expiration of the lease.

Amendment put and negatived.

MR. GEORGE, referring to Sub-section 2, pointed out that power was given to erect posts and to carry overhead cables along the line of route. He thought that it would be safer to compel all electric wires to be laid underground.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) moved, as an amendment, that the following be added to the clause:—"Provided that no waterworks licenses shall be granted authorising the taking of water from any coastal river to the Yilgarn, Dundas, or Coolgardie goldfields, without the approval of Parliament."

MR. JAMES moved, as an amendment upon the proviso, that the words "any goldfield" be substituted for the words "Yilgarn, Dundas, or Coolgardie goldfields."

Amendment upon the proviso put and passed, and the proviso, as amended, agreed to.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 4—"Undertakers to have powers of Commissioner of Railways for entering upon and taking private lands":

MR. LEAKE drew attention to the fact that the clause gave the undertakers the same powers to take land as those which were vested in the Commissioner of Railways under the "Railways Act, 1878," and he thought that in the case of a private company these powers were too wide. He moved that the words "and without requiring any consent, approval, warrant, or other Act or intervention of the Governor," be struck out, as, under the clause, as it stood, a syndicate might seize upon handy strips of water frontage belonging to private persons, who would be at a great disadvantage if they had only the remedy of suing for compensation.

MR. SIMPSON again expressed the opinion that nearly all the members of this House seemed to be frightened at the huge powers

which were to be conferred by this measure. The correspondence on the subject, which had been laid on the table that evening, threw a little further light on the matter. He found that the first information that the Government had of the projects which were contemplated by the Bill, was a cable from Sir William Robinson to the Premier, as follows:—"Perth, 30th July, 1893. A scheme has been brought under my notice for providing an electric power station at Coolgardie, capable of distributing power to the various mines at a radius of forty miles, and within which an exclusive right is required. In view of the fuel and water difficulties, the scheme is highly advantageous to all mines within radius, especially as a feature of the scheme is fixed charges on the zone system, which will be very much under present cost. A formal proposal is being invited, and as parties here are competent and responsible, I would advise you to await the receipt of proposal before entertaining similar application if made from other quarters. Such a scheme as the proposed one, if satisfactorily carried out, would be of immense value to the colony." The next communication was a cable from Sir William Robinson, London, dated August 16th:—"Westralian Electric Power Supply Corporation, Limited, minimum capital, one million sterling, Colonial Board, Alexander Forrest, Chairman; John Howell, David Lindsay; Electrical Engineer, Professor George Forbes, of Niagara. Installation concessions asked: firstly, site for generating works, wharves, &c., at or near Esperance Bay. Secondly, right to erect overhead cables to Coolgardie, and throughout goldfields; machinery site and cable routes to be selected the company; no exclusive concessions desired, simply rights above specified. I approve undertaking, and may, if possible, join board. Cable reply." On the 23rd August the Government replied by cable as follows:—"Sir William Robinson, London. Electric power.—Government think that before anything definitely arranged, proposal must be written detail. Government also think private Bill necessary." The next cable from Sir William Robinson was dated 5th September, as follows:—"Electric Power Scheme. Private Bill being impossible, hope Bill may be introduced giving Government power to negotiate and act. Matter in first-class hands here, and it would be a great

"pity if scheme fell through for want of necessary sanction this session." Now, this Bill would merely leave in the hands of the Government power to grant licenses wherever they thought fit, and he thought that it would be expedient to report progress, and have the correspondence printed before hon. members further considered the Bill. He had no desire to hamper the Government, or to do anything to interfere with the goldfields getting water; but he thought it would be wise to carefully sound public opinion on the details of the Bill before they were finally adopted. He therefore moved that progress be reported, and leave asked to sit again.

Mr. JAMES said the committee should finish the consideration of the Bill, or knock it on the head.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) reminded hon. members that there was nothing new in the correspondence, the substance of which had already been stated to the House; but as the Government had no interests except the interests of the country to serve in connection with this Bill, he would leave its fate in the hands of the House. At the same time, as the correspondence stated, there appeared to be a *bona fide* intention to carry out a project under the Bill, that would be for the benefit of the goldfields; and it had appeared to the Government that it was their duty to afford, so far as they could, an opportunity for carrying out the work. If it had not seemed to them that it would be a pity to lose that opportunity, the Government would have spared themselves the trouble of framing and bringing in the Bill at so late a period of the session; and as the price at which ore would be treated had been fixed at 10s. per ton, the interests of the mining community were safeguarded to that extent. He could only assure the House that the Government had been actuated by an anxious desire to do the very best for the goldfields, or they would not have moved in the matter by introducing the Bill.

Mr. SIMPSON said there was plenty of fuel and motive power on the goldfields to deal with ore, so that there did not appear to be any urgent demand for the introduction of electric batteries.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said there was a good deal of trouble about the salt water encrusting the boilers.

Mr. R. F. SHOLL said that was no trouble. As long as there was water of any kind, crushing could go on.

Mr. SIMPSON said it would be better to forego the Bill for 12 months, in order that it might be carefully considered; and it was so necessary for hon. members to become thoroughly acquainted with the correspondence, that he thought it would be well for the House to report progress.

Mr. ILLINGWORTH said that as it appeared to be the desire of the House to rush the Bill through in the last hours of the session, instead of reporting progress, he would move that the Chairman do leave the chair.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson) said he did not object to the throwing out of the Bill, but he did not think anything will be gained by waiting until the correspondence was printed. The correspondence merely stated the nature of the proposals which had been made; and had there been no proposals of the kind, the Bill would not have been necessary, and would not have been introduced.

Mr. R. F. SHOLL said there seemed to be some powerful influence behind this Bill; and had it been less powerful, he did not think the Government would have brought in the Bill or troubled themselves about Water or Electric Works for the goldfields. As the Government first heard of the scheme of the London syndicate by cable on the 30th July, there had been plenty of time for them to have placed the matter before the House at an earlier date.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the Government only got the details of the scheme by post ten days ago.

Mr. R. F. SHOLL said the Government might have informed the House earlier that they were waiting for further advices, and hon. members from the country would have been better prepared for the Bill. In order to allow time for perusing the correspondence it would be as well to report progress.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said that, instead of reporting progress, the Bill should be thrown out or be gone on with.

Mr. R. F. SHOLL said it would be better to wait twelve months, rather than make a mistake by passing the Bill too hurriedly.

Mr. JAMES said perhaps he was not altogether in order, but he would like to ask who paid the cost of the replies to those cablegrams from speculators. Did the country have to pay the cost?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Yes.

Mr. JAMES: Well, it had better be stopped.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said that ordinary courtesy demanded that replies should be sent to such communications. In regard to the Bill he thought it would be better to lay it aside altogether, unless hon. members were unanimous about it. As to what the hon. member for the Gascoyne had insinuated concerning the alleged powerful influence that was moving the Government in the matter, he threw it back to the hon. member. The hon. member appeared to think there was no one honest and honorable but himself, but he would tell the hon. member that the Government were quite as anxious to do what was right as the hon. member was. In regard to the Bill itself the Government had no interest but the good of the country at heart. They even had no feeling in the matter, but had introduced the measure, although at a late period of the session, because they thought that the proposals it made would, if carried out, do the country much good.

MR. WOOD said he hoped the Bill would not be shelved after it had gone so far, because all the danger had been removed from it by the amendment to Clause 3, and as it would confer a great boon on the Coolgardie goldfields, he would be sorry to see it knocked on the head.

MR. RANDELL said he also hoped the Bill would go through, because it had been amended in a manner that would perfectly safeguard the interests of the colony, while if passed it would assist the Government in their desire to provide a proper water supply to Coolgardie and the neighboring goldfields.

Motion—that the Chairman do now leave the chair—put and negatived.

Amendment to clause, moved by Mr. Leake, put and passed.

THE ATTORNEY - GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) moved, as a further amendment, to add the following words to the clause:—"No land taken under the powers conferred by this section shall vest in the undertakers until the compensation payable therefor has been paid."

MR. ILLINGWORTH said that although the Commissioner of Railways was empowered by the Railways Act to enter upon and take private lands for railway purposes, he did not approve of private companies being empowered to do so as well.

Further amendment put and passed and the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 5 and 6:

Put and passed.

Clause 7—"Duration of license":

MR. JAMES moved to strike out all the words after the word "years" (providing for an extension of the license), in line 2. He considered that the better course would be to allow an extension to be asked for by way of introducing a private Bill into Parliament, which was the ordinary course adopted in these cases.

Amendment put and passed.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 8—"Purchase of undertaking by the Governor":

MR. JAMES also moved to strike out in line 1 the words "of the original term of," referring to the expiration of the original term of a lease, such words being, in his opinion, unnecessary.

Further Amendment put and passed.

MR. JAMES also moved to strike out the word "existing," in line 3, with a view to inserting the word "actual" in lieu thereof. The word "existing," he said, referred to the value of the buildings, works, etc., at the expiration of the license, at which time the clause empowered the Governor to purchase them. The amendment, he explained, would make the clause provide for the purchase by the Governor of the property at their actual value.

Further amendment put and passed.

MR. GEORGE moved, as a further amendment, to insert after the word "them," in line 6, the following words, "which prices shall be verified at the time of purchase and placed on record by the Government." He said it was advisable that a concise record of the price paid by the promoters of these schemes for the land should be kept, in order to prevent any dispute arising when the Governor purchased the works.

THE ATTORNEY - GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said that such matters as those were always kept on record at the Land Titles Office.

Amendment put and negatived.

MR. JAMES said the clause provided that "The purchase money shall, at the option of the Governor, be paid either in cash or by Government securities bearing interest at four per cent. yearly and redeemable in not more than forty years, such securities being taken at their face value, or partly in cash and partly by such securities." He considered that

three percent. was quite sufficient, and moved, as a further amendment that the word "four" be struck out and the word "three" be inserted in lieu thereof.

Further amendment put and passed.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 9—"Governor may require undertakers, under waterworks license, to supply water for Government railways and other purposes":

Mr. JAMES moved to strike out the words, "by any waterworks license," with a view to inserting the words "from time to time," in lieu thereof. He said the Government should have power at any time to require the undertakers of the water scheme, to supply water at specified spots along the routes of the water mains.

Amendment put and passed.

The ATTORNEY - GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) moved to strike out all the words after "a," in line 5 with a view to inserting the following words: "price not exceeding that at which the undertakers are authorised to sell water to the public."

Amendment put and passed.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 10—"Governor may require undertakers, under electric-power license, to supply electricity to the Government":

Mr. JAMES moved to strike out the words "by any electric power license," with a view to inserting the words "from time to time" in lieu thereof. He explained that the amendment was similar to the amendment made in the preceding clause.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. GEORGE said he considered that the prices which an electric power company could charge for the electricity should be fixed on a sliding scale, according to the amount of profit made.

The ATTORNEY - GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) moved a further amendment, similar to that which he had moved in Clause 9, to strike all the words out after the letter "a," in line 3, with a view to inserting the words "at a price not exceeding that at which the undertakers are authorised to supply electricity for such purposes respectively, to the public."

Further amendment put and passed.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

At 6.30 p.m. the Acting-Chairman left the chair.

At 7.30 p.m. the Acting-Chairman resumed the chair.

Clauses 11 and 12:

Put and passed.

Clause 13—"Deviations may be made by the undertakers, and be required by the Governor":

Mr. GEORGE said the clause provided that, in the case of a deviation being required by the Governor, and not duly made by the undertakers, the Governor might cause the same to be made, after notice given, and the cost thereof was to be a debt due from the undertakers to the Crown. But why should the Governor call upon the undertakers in this way? Such a procedure appeared as if the Government were guarantors that the work was to be done, and, in case of default, were to have the power of doing the work and charging for it.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the intention was that, after the undertakers had laid their pipe and started their works, if the pipe of the undertakers was found to be in the way of some public work, then the undertakers could be called on to move or deviate the pipe: and, failing to do so, the Government could do it and charge the cost.

Mr. RANDELL said the clause placed in the hands of the Governor-in-Council a most useful provision.

Mr. JAMES moved, as an amendment, that after the word "may," in the second line, the words "with the consent of the Governor," be inserted.

Put and passed.

Mr. JAMES moved, as a further amendment, that the words "and until paid shall be a first and paramount charge on the undertaking." This would make the expenses incurred by the Government, in the making of a compulsory deviation, a first charge on the property.

Put and passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 14:

Put and passed.

Clause 15:—"Undertakers may make by-laws":

Mr. JAMES moved, as an amendment, that the words of the fourth line, "Regulating the conduct and duties of their agents and servants," be struck out. It should be sufficient for these employers to have the ordinary remedy under the common law.

The ATTORNEY - GENERAL (Hon. S.

Burt) said this provision as to agents and servants was not material, but the other provisions in the clause were necessary.

Amendment put and passed.

MR. JAMES moved, as a further amendment, to add at the end of the clause the words: "Any such by-laws may be, from time to time, altered, amended, or rescinded by the Governor." He said that when by-laws had been made and approved, the operation of particular parts might not be fully apparent at first, and as circumstances changed there might arise a necessity for modifying some of the by-laws; therefore it would be prudent to reserve this power to the Governor-in-Council.

Put and passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 16—"Regulations and by-laws to be gazetted, and laid before Parliament":

MR. GEORGE said the fourteen days' notice to be given in the *Gazette* would not be a sufficient notice for fully warning all the persons who might be affected by new by-laws, extending over hundreds of miles of bush country where news travelled slowly. 'Three months' notice would be little enough for such purposes, as the appearance of a bailiff to turn a man off ground as a trespasser might be the first notice that a man would receive, under this clause.

THE ATTORNEY - GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said this clause was in almost every Bill giving power to make regulations, and the matters to be dealt with in this Bill were not such as would require the giving of a long notice, in the case of trespass or misuse of water. He did not think any difficulty would arise.

MR. RANDALL suggested that an interval of fourteen days, between the passing of by-laws and laying the same before Parliament, was longer than appeared necessary. Seven or ten days would be sufficient.

THE ATTORNEY - GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said the period usually allowed in such matters was fourteen days.

MR. JAMES moved, as an amendment, that the words in the sixth line, "and shall continue in force until repealed," be struck out. By-laws ought not to operate immediately they were made, but only after they had been laid before Parliament for a certain time.

Put and passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

New clause—"Undertakers not to be exonerated from liability":

MR. JAMES moved that the following be added to the Bill, as a new clause: "17. Nothing in this Act contained shall exonerate the undertakers from liability for any loss or damage occasioned by or arising out of or in connection with the construction, maintenance, or working of the undertaking."

Put and passed.

New clause—"Power to prescribe scale of charges":

MR. JAMES moved that the following be added to the Bill, as a new clause:—

"1. The undertakers shall, from time to time, with the approval of the Governor, prescribe a scale of charges at which they shall sell water or electricity, as the case may be, and may, with the like approval, alter any such scale.

"2. Any such scale may be cancelled by the Governor after three months' notice in writing, to be served on the undertakers, and thereupon another scale shall be prescribed as aforesaid.

"3. No action or proceedings shall lie for the recovery of any charge for water or electricity, as the case may be, except as authorised by any such scale.

"4. In the event of the Governor and the undertakers being at any time unable to agree on a scale of charges, the question in dispute shall be referred to arbitration, in accordance with 'The Arbitration Act, 1895,' as if this Act were a submission."

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the first result of this provision would probably be that, when it was seen that the undertakers were making a fair profit on their outlay, a motion would be made in this House for reducing the scale of charges, and the motion would be carried. It was not reasonable to place these investors at the mercy, not only of the Government, but of this House, at all times. It was also questionable whether the Royal assent would be given to a Bill which contained a power by which injustice might be done to persons (investors) resident in another country. Apart from that, the thing itself did not seem quite fair. Both parties should have some say in fixing the charges. In reference to the charges on the Great Southern and the Midland Railways, the rates had to be approved in some way by the Government, but the Government had not the power of fixing the rates. The company could not act without the con-

currence of the Government, and, on the other hand, the Government could not act without the concurrence of the company, in fixing the railway rates.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) suggested that the Governor in conjunction with the undertakers might make a sliding scale of charges. It would not be fair to leave entirely to the Governor the power of fixing a scale.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) suggested that the company should fix the charges, subject to the approval of the Governor-in-Council.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said it would be better, and not unfair, to put the power in the hands of the Governor, which meant the Government, who might be trusted to act fairly and not arbitrarily. The undertakers would know, before beginning the work, what were the conditions under which they had to carry on operations.

New clause put and passed.

Preamble and title:

Agreed to.

On the question that the Bill be reported to the House,

MR. CONNOR asked whether he would be in order in referring to the Bill at this stage. He would not be in the House when the third reading was taken.

THE ACTING-CHAIRMAN pointed out that criticisms could be offered when the report was under consideration, and amendments could be proposed, but this would delay the measure considerably, because the Bill would have to be re-committed.

MR. CONNOR said he was entirely opposed to monopolies, but if it was necessary to grant a monopoly before water could be given to the goldfields, he would be in favor of it. The present Bill gave the Government exceptional powers, and he was not strongly in approval of the electric power clauses at all. He wanted to see the goldfields have plenty of water, but the question of power was one not of such an urgent character. It appeared to him that the whole principle of the Bill, and the circumstances under which it would be worked, had been altered in committee.

Bill reported, with amendments.

MESSAGES FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

AMENDMENTS IN GOLDFIELDS BILL.

The following message was delivered to and

read by Mr. Speaker:—

MR. SPEAKER.

The Legislative Council acquaints the Legislative Assembly that it has agreed to a Bill intituled "An Act to make better provision for the Regulation of Gold-mining and Management of the Goldfields of the Colony," subject to the amendments contained in the Schedule annexed; in which amendments the Legislative Council desires the concurrence of the Legislative Assembly.

Geo. SHENTON,
President.

Legislative Council Chambers, Perth, 10th October, 1895.

Schedule of amendments made by the Legislative Council in the "Goldfields Bill."

No. 1.—On page 3, Clause 4.—Add the following words to the end of the Clause:—"The expressions 'person,' 'holder,' 'owner,' 'lessee,' include any body of persons whether incorporated or not."

No. 2.—On page 5, Clause 11, line 9.—Strike out all the words after "registrar," and insert the following:—

There shall also be kept in the office of the Minister of Mines in Perth, in respect of each goldfield or district, a register, wherein shall be registered all leases and applications therefor and transfers thereof, and of any shares or interests therein respectively, and all liens, charges, and other dealings and transactions relating thereto respectively.

(2) No transfer of any lease, or of any share or interest therein, nor any lien, charge, or other dealing or transaction relating thereto respectively, shall be valid until registered as aforesaid.

No. 3.—On page 6, Clause 12, line 1.—Strike out "lease."

No. 4.—On page 6, Clause 14, line 3.—After "of," at the end of the line, insert "the manager or."

No. 5.—On page 8, Clause 17, lines 3 and 4.—Strike out "for the purpose of making or accepting transfer of any lease, claim, or other authorised holding."

No. 6.—On page 12, Clause 31, line 2.—Strike out "or joint stock company."

No. 7.—On page 14, Clause 34, line 10.—Between "thereto" and "any" insert "and a lease may be granted notwithstanding that the person applying for the same may not in all respects have complied with the regulations."

No. 8.—Insert the following New Clause, to stand as No. 12:—

Except in the case of fraud, no person contracting or dealing with, or taking or proposing to take a transfer from the registered holder of any lease, shall be required, or in any manner concerned to inquire or ascertain, the circumstances under or the consideration for which such holder or any previous holder thereof was registered, or to see to the application of any purchase or consideration money, or shall be affected by notice, actual or constructive, of any trust or unregistered interest, any rule of law or equity to the contrary notwithstanding; and the knowledge that any such trust or unregistered interest is in existence shall not of itself be imputed as fraud.

No. 9.—Insert the following New Clause, to follow Clause 66:—

Upon the granting of any injunction relating to any lease, as provided in the last preceding sections, the Warden shall at once notify by telegraph, or, if there shall be no telegraph, by letter, to the Minister of Mines, the fact of such injunction being granted and the particulars thereof, and on receipt thereof a note of such injunction being granted shall immediately be made in the Record Book kept in the Minister of Mines' office, and such injunction shall be of no avail until so noted.

C. LEE STEERE,

Clerk of the Council.

10/10/95.

Ordered—That the consideration, in committee, of the foregoing Message, be made an Order of the Day for the next sitting of the House.

CONCURRENCE IN AMENDMENTS IN MINES REGULATION BILL.

The following Message was delivered to and read by the Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER.

The Legislative Council acquaints the Legislative Assembly that it has this day agreed to the amendments made by the Legislative Assembly in "The Mines Regulation Bill."

GEO. SHENTON,

President.

Legislative Council Chamber,
Perth, 10th October, 1895.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) moved "That leave of absence for one week be granted to the hon. members for Plantagenet, the Williams, and the Murchison."

Motion put and passed.

PROJECTED RAILWAY FROM MINGENEW TO MULLEWA.

MR. SIMPSON: By the courtesy of the Premier, there has been laid on the table of the House all correspondence relating to the contemplated extension of the Midland Railway from Mingenew to Mullewa, and therefore, by leave of the House, I desire to withdraw my notice of motion asking for the production of the correspondence.

Notice of motion, by leave, discharged.

PROPOSED TERMINATION OF CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION.

MR. R. F. SHOLL, in accordance with notice, moved "That in the opinion of this House it is desirable that the Civil Service Commission shall complete their labors, and furnish their report to the Governor, before the end of the present year; failing which, it is expedient that the Commission be dissolved; and that during the recess the Government should consider the advisability of introducing legislation dealing with the Civil Service."

MR. GEORGE: Without wishing to interfere with the hon. gentleman, I should like to draw attention to the fact that there is not a quorum present.

While the bells were ringing,

THE SPEAKER said: I wish to point out that it will be a serious matter if a quorum is not made up before the glass runs down, as I shall have to adjourn the House till next Tuesday.

MR. JAMES entered the Chamber, and made up a quorum.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I regret exceedingly that the tactics of the hon. member for the Murray have not been successful. It will be recollected that the Civil Service Commission was appointed about 21 months ago, and last session, as it was not considered that the Commission was making satisfactory progress with its work, the hon. member for Beverley brought forward a motion to dissolve that body. The House then decided that the Commission should confine its attention to the Works and Railways Department, but we find that although that was twelve months ago, the enquiry into the Railway Department has not yet been completed. I do not believe that the majority of the members of this House are of opinion that any good can accrue by the continuation of the labors of the Commission. The hon. member for the Murray is

one of the members most recently appointed to the Commission. The hon. gentleman has probably spoken more than any member of the House, and only on one occasion, when the Attorney-General accepted an amendment from him as being a useful one, has he made a sensible remark.

MR. GEORGE: Is the hon. member in order? It is not right for him to say that I do not speak sensibly. If he has not brains enough to understand what I say or to know the value of what I introduce to the House or put before him, I cannot help that.

THE SPEAKER: I understood the hon. member to refer to the Civil Service Commission.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: If we are to judge of the length of the questions put to witnesses before the Civil Service Commission, of which the hon. member for the Murray is a member, from the length of his speeches in the House, I think it is likely to be 12 months later before the Commission gets through the Railway Department. I do not think that any good will be derived from the enquiries of the Commission, and while it is sitting the Government is precluded from bringing in a Bill for the better management of the Civil Service. What I fear is that, if the House goes into recess before a date is named beyond which the Commission shall not sit, another year may elapse before they have completed their labors, and the Government will not be able to bring in a Civil Service Bill next session. It has not been agreeable for hon. members during the passing of the Estimates to attack individual salaries, which have been rapidly raised beyond those enjoyed by other and older members of the service, and one result of bringing in a Bill would prevent the necessity of this unpleasant criticism by placing promotion upon a regular and proper basis. For the reasons I have given, I ask the support of hon. members for the motion I have tabled, and I think it ought to be carried, as the Government have had ample time to accomplish the work entrusted to that body, seeing that it has been sitting for nearly two years. The cost of the Commission must have amounted to about £1,000, and I think most hon. members will agree with me that it is nearly time for the final report to be presented in order to leave the way open for the Government to bring in a Bill to deal with the Civil Service;

therefore, I commend the motion to the approval of the House.

MR. SOLOMON: I think if the hon. member for the Gascoyne had read the evidence which has been laid by the Civil Service Commission before the House, he would have seen that it was not the fault of the Commission that its final report has not yet been sent in. In the first place, owing to vacancies occurring through the resignation of members of the Commission, and the delay in making new appointments, and further, owing to the members being prevented from attending the sitting, through urgent private business, there has been much loss of time, and the sittings have not been regularly held. Then, on one occasion, much difficulty was experienced, leading to correspondence with the Government, in getting a witness to answer questions, as the Commission desired; and finally, the Engineer-in-Chief has found it so difficult to spare time from his official work, in order to give evidence, that the work of the Commission has been thrown back, because we could not present our report without having heard his evidence. The sittings of the Commission have entailed on the part of the Commissioners a sacrifice of time from their private affairs, and, so far as I am concerned, I should not have any regret if the Commission were dissolved to-morrow. It may be that sometimes irrelevant questions have been asked, but in many cases irrelevant questions have led up to useful information being elicited. I leave the duration of the Commission in the hands of the House, and shall be quite willing to abide by whatever decision may be arrived at.

MR. JAMES: I am sure the House is satisfied that the members of the Civil Service Commission have done so much for the country, and their work has been so admirable, that it is time the Government had an opportunity of relieving them of further exertions, and of bringing in a Bill for the government of the Civil Service—a Bill that will at least give some satisfaction, even if it should also give rise to some dissatisfaction.

MR. GEORGE: The member for the Gascoyne has had most admirable courage to bring forward this motion to suppress the Civil Service Commission, which he had the opportunity of joining, but would not, because it would have given him trouble to devote his time and attention to it. Now he has the admirable courage—I should like to say cheek—to attack the members of that Commission,

although he might, if he had been a patriot, have assisted them with that capacious brain which he is ready to take credit for possessing. But I can afford to pass by the reflections of the hon. member upon myself, for he has so little ballast that his speeches are as light as bubbles in the air which float idly away. When the Commission, after the time and attention we have given to the work it has done, is attacked for alleged dilatoriness, I must point out that the Engineer-in-Chief has caused more than one sitting to close without taking evidence, because he has failed to appear for examination, while on another occasion the railway accountant admitted he had been instructed not to give certain evidence. I am aware that an official denial has been given to this statement, and, of course, I must accept that denial that the accountant was told to block the examination of the Commission; but the fact remains that the inquiry was protracted for several weeks before we could get the truth. In my opinion, I do not believe we got the truth even then. I am indifferent as to whether the Commission is dissolved at an early date or not, at the instance of an hon. member who comes forward to attack a body which he had not patriotism enough to join.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: If there is any good to be got out of this white-washing Civil Service Commission, as I once designated it in this House, I think it is nearly time that we got that good, and quietly laid the Commission to rest, as the members must be giving too much time and working too hard for the country to fairly lay claim to their services in this exacting task any longer. The sacrifice is greater than they should be called upon to make, and no benefit is likely to accrue to the country. I should like to see the Civil Service put on a satisfactory basis, and one step in this direction would be to get rid of the Civil Service Commission, because the Government will not be in a position to formulate their proposals so long as the Commission is sitting.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): The Commission has quite mistaken the purpose for which it was appointed, and is only wasting its time. The object of the Commission was intended to have been to find out upon what lines a Civil Service Bill should proceed, to improve the status and efficiency of that service. The Commission was expected to enquire the age at which can-

didates should enter and leave the service, what preliminary examination should be passed by candidates, whether pensions should be granted, and if so on what basis should be the official hours of duty, what holidays should be granted, the amount of the minimum and maximum pay, the rules to govern promotion, and a hundred other cognate matters dealing with the organisation of the Civil Service; but the Commission has departed widely from its charter. I am sure that it was never contemplated, when the Commission was appointed, that it should spend its time in making elaborate investigations as to why a passenger's portmanteau sent from Fremantle had arrived at Chidlow's Well by the 10 o'clock instead of the 8 o'clock train, and similar petty matters of departmental detail which fill up pages of the evidence, which I have taken the trouble to read without finding a single question relating to the organisation of the service. I am sure the hon. member for the Murray himself has not asked a single question with regard to the reorganisation of the Civil Service; and, further, I would say that not a word of the report of the Commission would assist me in framing a Bill to effect that object. The gentlemen comprising that Commission are all worthy gentlemen, but they are not doing what they were asked to do. No doubt it was very interesting to find out what they are eliciting in regard to a certain department in the Public Service, but I am inclined to think they will whitewash any department they come into contact with, and that they will state that they are utterly surprised at the amount of work that is done, and that the management of the department could not be improved upon. But we (the Government) want to know the basis upon which the Civil Service can be reorganised, and I gave up hope twelve months ago that this Commission would assist us in doing so. I shall, therefore, support this motion with all my heart, and I think the Commission will do well to either resign at once or fix a day for the termination of their inquiries.

MR. CONNOR: Sir, although I think that a little more result might reasonably have been expected from the Civil Service Commission, considering the time it has been sitting, still there is no getting away from the fact that the gentlemen composing it have given their time ungrudgingly to the work. I think, therefore, it would be rather discourteous

to practically pass a vote of want of confidence in them, for, to my mind, that is really what this motion means. I think, Sir, we can very well leave it to the good sense of the members of that Commission to say when their labors will finish, and I have no doubt that this discussion will have the effect of inducing them to get through their work a little quicker. I hardly think, however, that it would be fair, or even just, to pass a resolution of this kind.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Sir, I should like to say one or two words in regard to this matter. I may say, at the outset, that this Commission has sat an unduly long time over the work it was set to do. It was never intended by this House, or by the Government, that members should take a couple of years to do this work, and I agree with the Hon. the Attorney-General that they have misconceived the intention of the House, and certainly the intention of the Government, with regard to the scope of their inquiries. I cannot say that I have read all the printed matter that has been placed before us, but what I have read of it has inclined me to the belief that they have gone too much into detail altogether. What we wanted was some information to assist us in framing a Bill for the organisation of the Civil Service; but at the same time I do not altogether like the motion of the hon. member for the Gascoyne, because it is not courteous enough to the gentlemen composing that Commission. I am aware that last session some condition as to the term of this Commission's existence was made; but to say, as the resolution affirms, that failing the completion of their labors and the furnishing of their report to the Governor before the end of the present year, it is expedient that the Commission should be dissolved, would be to act very discourteously to those who are upon the Commission, and I think that there can be only one result if this resolution is passed, and that will be that the members of the Commission will resign in a huff. Well, I do not think hon. members wish that to occur. While I quite agree that this Commission has been too long in existence, I decline to be a party to offering any insult to the gentlemen composing it, which this resolution assuredly does. I think the members of the Commission know that they must bring their labors to an end as soon as possible, and although I am not going to oppose this motion to the extent of calling for

a division, still I think, at the same time, it is not courteously worded, and I would ask the hon. member for the Gascoyne to withdraw it, having said all he has to say in regard to this body of gentlemen. I am only speaking for myself. My colleagues may think differently from me in this matter. I do not believe in being discourteous to any one.

MR. SIMPSON: Except the Opposition.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Oh, no. Some of the members of the Commission are members of the Legislature, and I, therefore, under the circumstances, again ask the hon. member not to press the motion or to allow it to be placed on the records of the House.

MR. SIMPSON: I hope the hon. member for the Gascoyne will not withdraw this resolution. I think that the whole delay and the whole responsibility for the inutility of this Commission, is entirely due to the Government. It was on my motion that this Commission was appointed. I would not for one moment speak disrespectfully of any gentlemen on that Commission, but I have to speak of them as men who are carrying out a particular public duty, and I am of opinion that the Commission is blanketed by reason of its *personnel*. I sat as a member of that body for some time, and endeavored to get at the basis on which the Civil Service should be organised; but it was a hopeless task to try to induce the Commission to elicit any information other than that concerning the time when John Jones first entered the service, what his age was, when he first got a 10s. rise, and similar unimportant and uninteresting details. I do not think that, as far as the constitution of the Commission is concerned, it has been paralleled in Australia. With one exception, it was composed in the first instance of members of Parliament, and one of its objects was to see that the Civil Service was kept clear of political patronage. Yet, we find that the Government appointed six members of Parliament to act upon it. In another place, when a Civil Service Commission was appointed, Mr. Teece, the general manager of the Equitable Life Assurance Society, the Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce, a leading lawyer, and a gentleman connected with banking, were elected to act on this Commission, in order that men experienced in the organisation of big commercial concerns (and the Civil Service is really a commercial institution) should give their

valuable assistance in deciding on what lines the Civil Service of the colony should be remodelled. The responsibility for the ineffectiveness of the Commission under discussion is entirely due to the Government, and I hope this resolution will be adopted. A great deal of unnecessary waste of time, expense, and irritation has been caused by it. It was never thought that it would do much good, and I was glad to hear the Attorney-General give an almost exact description of the work that has been done by it. In the huge volume of questions which have been asked of the witnesses, not one of them has any reference to the question of the basis upon which the Civil Service should be re-organised. I shall, therefore, for the reasons I have stated, support the motion for dissolving the Commission.

MR. R. F. SHOLL, in reply, said: Sir, I have no intention of withdrawing this motion. Since the Premier spoke, I have carefully studied it, and I fail to see that its language is in any way discourteous to the members of the Commission. It says, first of all, "That in the opinion of this House, it is desirable that the Civil Service Commission shall complete their labors, and furnish their report to the Governor before the end of the year." There is nothing discourteous in that; and then it proceeds: "failing which it is expedient that the Commission be dissolved." I think it is expedient that the Commission should be dissolved, and I think hon. members recognise that the labors of the Commission should come to a close at the end of the year, in order to enable the Government to bring in legislation dealing with the public service. The resolution proceeds: "and that during the recess the Government should consider the advisability of introducing legislation dealing with the Civil Service"; and I think we all agree with that as well. Therefore I do not think that the resolution is discourteous to those gentlemen who have given up their time to inquire into the work of a certain department. I would point out to hon. members that on November 19, 1894, a resolution was passed in this House directing the Commission to confine their attention to the Public Works and the Railways Department, and yet they only began to deal with those departments in May, 1895—six months after the resolution was passed, while the expenses were going on all the time. I am quite aware that the members of the Commission have given a great deal of attention

to their work, and also that my friends, the hon. members for the Murray and for South Fremantle, and also the Hon. D. K. Congdon, M.L.C., have been most earnest in this matter. Still, at the same time, I do not think that any good can result in their continuing their labors any longer. There has not been that unanimity that might have been expected to obtain amongst them. On the contrary, I think there has been a little friction. Now, Sir, before I conclude, I would like to say that I was asked to accept a seat on this Commission, and that I refused on the ground that the Commission should be selected from gentlemen outside of Parliament altogether.* I hope that the members of the Commission will resign as soon as possible, in order to give the Government more time to consider the very important matter of reorganising the Civil Service. The hon. member for South Fremantle has just asked me to draw attention to the fact that the Commission would like to resign, but that they cannot do so in a body.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): They can resign separately.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I dare say they can, or they can absent themselves. However, I think the members of the Commission, even the hon. member for the Murray, deserve every consideration for the time and trouble they have given to the work for which they were appointed.

Motion put and passed.

THE SPEAKER: I think this resolution should be presented to His Excellency, as only the Administrator has power to dissolve or to appoint this Commission. I think an address should be presented to His Excellency informing him that this resolution has been passed.

MR. GEORGE: Sir, would it be competent, at this late stage of the session, to move a vote of censure on the Government in connection with this matter, because I think they have most grossly insulted the hon. members of that Commission?

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member will have to give notice at the proper time.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): The hon. member is not the member of the Opposition who can take action in that respect.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I move that an address be presented to His Excellency the Administrator, embodying the resolution that has been passed by this House.

Motion put and passed.

Ordered, that the resolution be forwarded by Address to His Excellency the Administrator.

NEXT SITTING OF THE HOUSE.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) moved that the House, at its rising, adjourn until 2.30 o'clock, p.m., on October 11.

Motion put and passed.

DATE OF PROROGATION.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I would like to ask hon. members to attend to-morrow afternoon, and I shall be much obliged if they do so. I also wish to tell the House that, as the business of the session is nearly completed, 12.30 p.m. on Saturday will be a convenient time to prorogue Parliament. If hon. members think that time will be convenient, I will advise His Excellency the Administrator accordingly.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 9.25 o'clock, p.m.

Legislative Council

Friday, 11th October, 1895.

Goldfields Bill; Message from the Legislative Assembly—Water and Electric Works License Bill: first reading; Goldfields Bill: Legislative Assembly's Amendments—Appropriation Bill: third reading—Water and Electric Works License Bill: second reading; Bill laid aside—Walth of Tires Bill: messages for the Legislative Assembly—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton) took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock, p.m.

GOLDFIELDS BILL.

MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton) reported the receipt of the following message from the Legislative Assembly.

Message No. 52.

Mr. President,

With reference to the Legislative Council's Message No. 41, the Assembly has agreed to Amendments Nos. 3, 4, 5, 6, and 8 made by the Council in the Goldfields Bill, without amendment; has amended Nos. 1, 2, and 9; and has disagreed to No. 7 for the reasons indicated in the annexed Schedule.

The Assembly returns the Bill, herewith, and desires its reconsideration.

JAS. G. LEE-STEERE.
Speaker.

Legislative Assembly Chamber, Perth, 11th October, 1895.

Schedule of Amendment made by the Legislative Council in "The Goldfields Bill."

No. 1.—On page 3, Clause 4.—Add the following words to the end of the Clause:—"The expressions 'person,' 'holder,' 'owner,' 'lessee,' include any body of persons whether incorporated or not."

No. 2.—On page 5, Clause 11, line 9.—Strike out all the words after "registrar," and insert the following:—"There shall also be kept in the office of the Minister of Mines in Perth, in respect of each goldfield or district, a register, wherein shall be registered all leases and applications therefor and transfers thereof, and of any shares or interests therein respectively, and all liens, charges, and other dealings and transactions relating thereto respectively."

(2.) No transfer of any lease, or of any share or interest therein, nor any lien, charge, or other dealing or transaction relating thereto respectively shall be valid until registered as aforesaid.

No. 3.—On page 6, Clause 12, line 1.—Strike out "lease."

No. 4.—On page 6, Clause 14, line 3.—After "of," at the end of the line, insert "the manager or."

No. 5.—On page 8, Clause 17, lines 3 and 4.—Strike out, "for the purpose of making or accepting transfer of any lease, claim, or other authorised holding."

No. 6.—On page 12, Clause 31, line 2.—Strike out "or joint stock company."

No. 7.—On page 14, Clause 34, line 10.—Between "thereto" and "any" insert "and a lease may be granted notwithstanding that the person applying for the same may not in all respects have complied with the regulations."

No. 8.—Insert the following New Clause, to stand as No. 12:—"Except in the case of fraud, no person contracting or dealing with, or taking or proposing to take a transfer from the registered holder of any lease shall be required or in any manner concerned to inquire or ascertain the circumstances under or the consideration for which such holder or any previous holder thereof was registered, or to see to the applic-