

ADJOURNMENT.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) moved that the House, at its rising, adjourn until half-past seven o'clock on the morrow evening.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at 11:33 o'clock p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 13th September, 1894.

Loan Bill: in committee—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

LOAN BILL, 1894.

IN COMMITTEE.

The consideration of items in the Schedule was resumed.

Item 4—*Railway to Collie Coalfield (exclusive of rolling stock), £60,000:*

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he desired to again inform hon. members as to the precise intentions of the Government in regard to this railway. They fully believed that there is a most valuable coalfield at the Collie. The reports laid before hon. members, from Dr. Robertson in the first instance, and later from the Government Geologist and others, set forth in no uncertain way the views formed by those gentlemen in regard to this coalfield. In the beginning, he had been himself somewhat incredulous in regard to this coalfield, and was not easily convinced that we had this great and rich deposit so near to the metropolis; but, as time went on, and information came in to the Government, he became convinced there was no doubt whatever

that there was a rich and immense deposit of coal at the Collie. The Government had experiments made, perhaps to some extent for the purpose of convincing himself, because he had had doubts about this coal; but these experiments, which were made as tests on the Government railways, in a flour mill at Bunbury, and in a blacksmith's forge, had been reported on, as hon. members would have seen, and had, at any rate, convinced him and convinced the Government; so much so that they had placed this item in the Schedule for constructing a railway to the coalfield. The Government were so satisfied about this coalfield that they were quite prepared to construct this railway at the present time; but, in order to meet the views of hon. members, and of many whose opinions the Government held in respect as not being unreasonable in this matter, the Government were prepared to make certain promises in regard to this item; and, in making these promises, they did not think there would be practically any loss of time, because it would be impossible for the Government, with the means at their command, to put all these works in hand at once. Notwithstanding their desire to hurry on these works, the Government felt that a considerable time would be necessary for the completion of surveys, plans, specifications, and the necessary contracts; therefore the attitude taken by the Government on this matter would not really delay this work any more than if the House passed it now without any promise in regard to it. The Government proposed that, if this item were passed by the committee, it should be on the distinct understanding that nothing whatever should be done, in the way of constructing this railway, until after a special Bill for authorising it had been placed before the House next session. In the meantime they proposed to go on with the surveys and the boring to test the coal, in order to obtain fuller information to be laid before hon. members. He would like, if hon. members concurred with him as to its desirability, to have the permanent-way material for this railway indented for; because this material would be "earmarked" until issued in due course for use in this work, and would be in the General Stores Department as a credit in lieu of cash in the Treasury, until

issued and debited to the particular vote.

MR. ILLINGWORTH said the colony would be paying interest on the money.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said that was so; but his idea was that it would be in the interest of the country that the railway material should be indented for, because if even next year it was decided not to construct this railway, after fuller information was obtained concerning the coalfield, the permanent-way material could be utilised in some other part of this immense country, and the outlay would be no loss to the colony. The Government intended to submit a special Bill for the construction of this railway, next session; and he thought hon. members should be satisfied with this assurance, and should allow this item to stand in the Loan Schedule. The construction of this line was part of the policy of the Government, who desired to develop an important local industry; and he did not think they were asking too much, even from those members most opposed to the Government, upon the undertaking that this House should have an opportunity next session of deciding whether the railway should be constructed or not. The Government had made up their minds upon it, but they had to bow to the decision of the House. It would be unreasonable for the Government to unduly press this item, or that they should stake their existence as a Government upon such a small matter. They believed the construction of this railway, for developing the coalfield, would be a great benefit to the country. Reference had been made to the comparatively small quantity of coal now imported for use on the Government railways and other purposes, being about 16,000 tons during the twelve months ended June last; but a greatly increased quantity would be required when the railway extensions and other developments were taken into account. The heating power of the Collie coal, as tested, was found to be very great, and the Government hoped the coal could be produced at a price which would induce its use on the goldfields, where fuel was not readily obtainable. And of course it would be in the interest of the colony that the locally-raised coal should be carried over the railways as cheaply as

possible, even at a very small profit, because by reducing the amount of coal imported and inducing the use of the Collie coal, a local industry would be supported and a large number of people be employed in carrying it on. If the coal proved as good as he believed it to be, there would soon be a large population engaged in coal mining; and if this was likely to come about, he thought they were justified even in being rash in regard to this important matter, when such a small amount of money was required, and having such a great future in expectancy. The report of the Government Geologist almost staggered one with the immensity of the figures he brought out as showing the estimated quantity and value of the coal deposits; for though the calculation must be a mere estimate, Mr. Woodward stated his belief that there were eight hundred million pounds' worth of coal in that locality. There was also the information supplied by the Engineer-in-Chief, as to the immense quantity of coal that had been taken out of a small area of some fifty acres in New Zealand; so that a few acres of coal land were capable of yielding a vast quantity of this fuel. If, upon such estimates, this coalfield was capable of supporting a large mining population, then what a great future there was in store for this industry; and, having this in view, they might even be rash in dealing with this matter. But he, for one, intended to be cautious in regard to these undertakings, and for that reason he did not wish the House to do more than pass the item that night, on the understanding that the Government would afford another opportunity, next session, for the House to deal finally with the proposed railway. He might also say that if this railway branched off at the Brunswick from the South-Western line, which probably was the nearest route, and likely to commend itself to the judgment of hon. members, as being the nearest connection with Perth and the centres of population, it would go through fairly good soil and through some of the finest timber in the colony. If this item were passed, it would enable the Government to borrow the money before the next session, if the state of the market was found to be favourable; and this was a discretionary power which the

House might fairly leave with the Government, because the raising of money at the most favourable time required great caution, and the Government could not always, even with the authority of an Act of Parliament, place a loan in the market advantageously. They had to consult their financial advisers in London, and it was practically impossible to act contrary to their wishes. It might be found advisable to place the whole of this loan on the market at one time, and although he did not think this was probable, still, if the London financial advisers of the Government strongly recommended this course at a particular opportunity, a premium of £100,000 might be secured for the colony by the transaction, because the market price of this colony's bonds at present was higher than ever before. Therefore, although there was not the slightest idea in his mind that the Government would raise the whole of this loan at once, still, there was no knowing what might be done under strong advice from London. Very few hon. members appeared to be opposed to this railway in itself, their desire being for more information before undertaking it. He did not suppose that any hon. member, if he could be satisfied that coal existed at the Collie to the extent which the Government believed it did, would hesitate a moment to vote for this railway, or for a larger sum, if necessary; and the only hesitation was as to whether this coalfield could be really as good as it was reported to be. To these hon. members he made the concession which he had already stated; and, in doing so, the Government would not, in any way, be going back from their programme placed before the country. The Government had not expected, in any case, to be able to commence the construction of this railway before the next session of Parliament; and, that being so, he now most willingly acceded to the wish expressed by some hon. members, that this House should have a further opportunity of dealing with this matter in the form of a special Bill next session. If the further investigations which were to be made for testing this coalfield did prove that the Government had been too eager in this matter, he promised the House they would not go any further in it; that they would not propose a special Bill for this work next

session, unless they were then more convinced than at present that this was a necessary and justifiable work in the interests of the country. His hon. friend the Commissioner of Railways was prepared to give a good deal of information to the committee in regard to the item; and, in conclusion, he (the Premier) hoped the committee would allow this item to pass on the assurance he had given.

MR. RICHARDSON said he was glad to have the assurance that the Government did not intend to make a hard-and-fast question of this item, and that they were willing to concede, in a great degree, to the wishes of the House. Notwithstanding all that had been stated in favour of the Collie coal, every hon. member must admit there was a good deal about this coalfield which required confirmation. Hardly any members, except, perhaps, the Ministry, felt sure that this was a good marketable coal, and fit to compete with imported coal. If the coal was of only medium quality—say a household coal—and not suitable for steamships on account of the extra bunker space required for the larger proportionate quantity, or if it was not a gas coal, or was not suitable for railway locomotives, then the consumption of such a coal must be very limited. In the report of the Engineer-in-Chief, the total consumption on our railways at present was about 8,000 tons a year; and, taking a favourable view of the estimated steaming value of the Collie coal, as compared with that from Newcastle (N.S.W.), the saving in cost by using local coal would not be more than half-a-crown per ton, net; although he thought the working result would be more likely to be a loss of half-a-crown per ton. Still, reckoning this as a net gain by using local coal, the total saving would be £1,000 a year; therefore, he did not think that even the Premier would allege that this was a saving sufficient to warrant the House in incurring a large expenditure on a railway to this coalfield. If the local coal would not serve all the purposes required, how could private persons be compelled to use a kind of coal which would not suit their purpose? The total consumption of coal in the colony, for all purposes, was estimated at something under 20,000 tons per annum; and even if the local coal were used to the entire exclusion of imported coal, the

quantity required would not be sufficient to warrant this large expenditure in making a railway. So that the whole question of utilising this coal seemed to lie in the distant future, and not in the present. He only desired a cautious procedure. On the whole, he thought this item should be struck out of the Schedule, or be amended; and he suggested that the item be amended by adopting such a form of words as would not commit the House to an expenditure of money on a railway to the Collie coalfield. He approved of the coal being tested to the utmost. A syndicate of capitalists might be willing to make the railway if the coal proved to be good enough. If this was a true carboniferous deposit, there might be other discoveries of coal made in places more accessible, possibly near Perth or Fremantle.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Where is it?

MR. RICHARDSON said if true coal existed in one place, there was a presumption it might be found also in other places. Delay in dealing with this question was more likely to result in good than in harm. He asked what amount would be required for rolling stock on this line?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the estimate was about £20,000.

MR. RICHARDSON said that was an important sum of money. In estimating the advantages of a railway, he admitted that, besides the actual paying of this railway, there would be also a saving to the community of the difference paid for conveyance by road.

THE CHAIRMAN said the hon. member should conclude a speech of that kind by moving an amendment.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Why?

THE CHAIRMAN said it would be impossible to give effect to the speech without an amendment. The speech was one for transferring the amount of this item to some other head, or to some other item, and no good could come of it unless the hon. member or some other member would move an amendment.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the hon. member could please himself, surely?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn), referring to

the item, said if the hon. member for the De Grey had waited a few moments, he might have modified his opinion after hearing the information which he (the Commissioner) was about to lay before the committee. He had never approached a subject with greater confidence than he did this one; and, in order that members might be led, step by step, from the first discovery of coal in the district, some six or seven years ago, up to the present stage, he would draw attention to the fact that when the discovery was first made it was regarded as one of the "marc's nests" of Western Australia. But the existence of coal was brought forcibly to the notice of the Government by the fact of Mr. David Hay bringing down some coal to the agricultural show ground at Bunbury, where a large heap was burnt as a test. Soon after the present Government came into power they engaged the services of Dr. Robertson, of New South Wales, who happened at the time to be visiting this colony, and Dr. Robertson was an experienced expert, whose opinion might be relied on, for he had been called in as an adviser in connection with many of the most important mines in the Newcastle district of New South Wales. He (the Commissioner) had not a great deal of faith in the Collie coal at the time, but the subject was considered an important one, and the Government instructed Dr. Robertson to report on it. He did so, and after inspecting the Collie district, the first thing he said to him (the Commissioner) was: "You have the real article." That remark was made in true Scottish style, for the doctor was very much in earnest; and, in conversation, he explained that he had not breathed a word to indicate his conclusion on the nature of this coalfield to those who had accompanied him. Dr. Robertson also handed in his written report, which had since been presented to Parliament. He would quote a passage from that report, as follows:—

"Still, considering the length of railway required to develop this coalfield, it would be highly desirable that the thickness was found to increase over three feet, and that more than one workable seam be found. Judging from what I was able to remove from the shallow trench which exposed the coal seam, and considering that, where it is exposed, it has been water-logged and weathered, I con-

sider the quality as a coal seam superior. It is a bright splint coal, with a slightly conchoidal fracture, and will be found suitable and adapted for all purposes for which coal is applied. It is, without doubt, a good all-round coal."

Dr. Robertson had also said to him, "I will stake my reputation that you have got the real article, and it is for you to prove what quantity you have got." After Dr. Robertson returned to New South Wales, he sent here a practical coal-miner named W. B. Pendleton, with a boring apparatus such as the doctor had recommended in his report. Mr. Pendleton was accordingly engaged by the Government to test the Collie coal-field, and during several months he bored in various places where there were outcrops of coal. Afterwards it was arranged that he should bore along the outcrop of the 16 feet seam of coal, to test the area over which it extended. He did so, and after drilling into certain strata at different parts of the field, he was satisfied with the test, and ceased from going deeper at that point, but bored at another point. This method of testing the ground would account for no thicker seams being found; but the borings actually made showed that the same strata existed at different portions of the outcrop over a considerable area. Mr. Pendleton, who was occupied more than twelve months in making these bores, stated in his report:

"With regard to the quantity of coal to be won, I am of opinion that there is far more than sufficient to warrant the construction of a railway. The only thing of which there may be any doubt is the evaporative value of this coal, in comparison with that of sea-borne fuel. I am glad to hear that the Government are deciding the only doubtful question in a most authoritative manner."

At the end of his report of the work done from time to time, Mr. Pendleton said:—

"Coal per acre.—In the seam we are now working, I compute there are 25,938 tons in one acre of coal; thickness of clean coal being 16½ feet, and specific gravity 1.3."

This estimate meant that, in the one seam of 16½ feet thickness, over the area which had been tested by bores, there were 830 million tons of coal. Mr. Pendleton also tested another seam, 6½ feet in thickness, and estimated that in this seam alone there were 300 million tons of coal. These were the best practical proofs of the existence of coal which the Govern-

ment could obtain. But, not being fully satisfied, the Government Geologist was instructed to report on the coalfield; and in his report Mr. H. P. Woodward said:—

"Should these seams prove to extend over the whole 100 square miles of area, small as it seems, we should have an enormous quantity of this most useful and valuable mineral; for when we consider that every square yard of a 3-feet seam would yield something like a ton of coal, or say 5,000 tons to every 4-feet seam per acre (allowing for columns and waste); therefore, if the 20-feet of workable coal extend over this 100 square miles, as they probably do, we should have about 1,600 million tons of coal, which, valued at 10s. per ton, would mean £800,000,000."

Now could hon. members realise the vastness of these figures? This was the opinion of the Government Geologist, which hon. members were bound to respect. Members required a great deal of proof if they wanted more than was furnished in these reports. But, after receiving these reports, the Government were not quite satisfied even then. They determined upon other practical tests, and they got 50 tons of the coal raised and carted from the field. He (the Commissioner) determined to see the coal tested on a locomotive, and watched it himself rather than trust to anyone else. The engine worked splendidly, the coal keeping up a good heat. When the South-Western Railway was opened, the train conveying invited guests from Perth to Bunbury was driven with Collie coal in the furnace, not an ounce of other coal being used on the trips to Bunbury and back. That trial was a complete success, and the load was a heavy one. The coal was afterwards tried in a blacksmith's forge at Bunbury, and it answered all the purposes of a first-class coal. It was tried also in a flour mill at Bunbury, and the verdict was that the coal was of first-class quality and could not be better. Even that was not enough, for the Government tried it further by a comparative test in a railway journey up the steep grades of Greenmount. The coal used on that occasion had been raised nine months before, and after this long exposure to the atmosphere it was tested on one of the largest engines in a journey up Greenmount—this test being, in his opinion, most unfair. But the result was a most favourable comparison indeed, for although the coal had been so long exposed since being taken

from the pit that it had become broken up small, as was usually the case after long exposure, yet it answered this severe test admirably. That being so, hon. members could not say the Government had been hasty or rash. The coal had been tried in various ways, and its value ascertained in comparison with imported coal. Under these circumstances the results of these tests, made unfavourably, were marvellous—absolutely marvellous. This was proved to be a true and genuine coal; and if the Government were not satisfied that it was a true coal of marketable quality, they would not ask hon. members to support this item in the Schedule. This patient investigation had been going on all the time the present Government had been in office, thus showing that the Government had not been in a hurry to ask for a large expenditure of money for developing this coalfield, until satisfied that it was in every way justified. Could hon. members realise what was meant by £800,000,000 worth of coal? Mr. Pendleton's estimate, made before that of the Government Geologist, was very nearly the same. Did not the quantity and the value of that coal deposit, so far as tested, sound more like a fairy tale than a practical fact? And if hon. members believed this evidence, and he did not see why they should not believe it, then there could be no doubt in their minds as to the justification for this railway. If, having this vast treasure at their feet, the Government had done nothing to develop it, what would hon. members have thought of them? He did not care if a railway to this coalfield cost even £200,000, he affirmed it would be justifiable to make the line for developing an industry representing such an enormous value as £800,000,000. In view of these figures, the sum of £80,000 for the railway and rolling stock would be a mere peppercorn, by comparison. Could anyone—could even the hon. member for West Kimberley with his "Wealth of Nations"—say there was in our goldfields £800,000,000 worth of gold? Yet the best authority which this colony could obtain had estimated the value of this coal at that immense amount. The accusing angel might say: "You have been very tardy in recognising the value of the great treasure at your feet, because you have been taken

up too much with your gold." The long and patient investigation which had been made showed how careful the Government had been to weigh every tittle of evidence before proposing any large expenditure for the development of this great coalfield. The question might be asked: Would the line pay? He replied that, if it would not pay, could anything pay in Western Australia? The consumption of coal on the Government railways at present was about 8,000 tons a year—say, roughly, £8,000 in value. The total consumption of coal in the colony, for various purposes, including the railways, was about 16,000 tons a year. At present there were 945 miles of opened railways, including all lines in the colony, but in the year 1896 there would be 1,476 miles open, and that would be about the time for commencing the construction of this railway to the Collie coalfield. The consumption of coal for railway purposes would then be about 18,000 tons a year, and the probable consumption for all purposes in the colony would be about 30,000 tons. Assuming that 20,000 tons, out of the total required, would be carried yearly over the Collie line, at 3s. a ton for freight, the revenue from that source would be about £6,000 for the year; while the interest payable on the capital borrowed would be about £3,200. Then, as another source of revenue, there was a splendid timber station about eight miles up the railway, owned by the successor of the late Mr. Honey, and the timber carried from that station alone would pay for this railway, without reckoning the coal. He affirmed that the line would pay from the coal traffic, and from that alone; also, that it would pay from the timber traffic alone; and it would certainly pay from these sources together. Then, as to the cost of this coal in the market, take the Newcastle (N.S.W.) coal as costing 6s. a ton at the pit's mouth; the Government had made a contract for raising 1,000 tons of Collie coal at 9s. a ton, and after that contract was made another person, a practical collier, tendered to raise the coal at 7s. 6d. a ton, as he said it was an easy coal to work. Probably the coal might be raised at 6s. a ton in course of time and with proper appliances. Say, therefore, that the Collie coal could be raised

at a cost of 6s. to 7s. a ton at the pit's mouth, and could be sold in Perth, with railway charges added, at a cost of 7s. or 8s. a ton more; then at that selling price the Collie coal would beat the imported coal out of the local market. The lowest contract price ever paid by the Railway Department for imported coal was £1 a ton, this price being exceptionally low; and he reckoned that the Collie coal could be delivered at Fremantle for something like 17s. a ton. That being so, he thought hon. members should be satisfied as to the comparative prices. He was sorry to hear the hon. member for the De Grey (Mr. Richardson) hesitating to vote for a railway to develop this enormous wealth of coal so near to the centres of population, for he and the hon. member had together seen the slow progress made by this colony in times past, and yet the hon. member now saw £800,000,000 worth of coal at their feet and hesitated about making a railway to it. There should be no "ifs" about this question. He thought the construction of this railway might be commenced in about two years, for the Government first desired to see the result of the deep boring for testing the coal at greater depths, although this further test was not really necessary to satisfy the Government, but rather to satisfy other persons. He thought hon. members should trust the Government in this matter by giving a cordial support to this item.

MR. ILLINGWORTH said he had pleasure in supporting this item, for the possession of a thoroughly good coalfield was one of the brightest features in the colony's prospects. The resources of a coalfield were such as could hardly be over-estimated in their effects upon the requirements of this colony. The utility of the coalfields of England would show what was involved in this question. There was in this colony abundance of ironstone of the first class, within easy distance of the coal, and he looked forward to a time when a large number of manufacturing factories would flourish here as a result of coal being so accessible and cheap. This question also had an immediate and direct influence upon the gold discoveries in the colony, for on the Murchison goldfields especially fuel was scarce and would have to be conveyed there, so that there could

be no greater boon than to have a coalfield in a position so accessible as this field promised to be, being at no great distance from the central port of Fremantle, and thus costing little for carriage by railway. Fuel could, in this way, be conveyed cheaply from the Collie to the Murchison, and to other goldfields. Having been anxious about this question, he had studied every report produced upon it, because he had been afraid that this coalfield might not prove to be all that was desired, and that the early reports concerning it might have been too good to be true. But he had satisfied himself, from the reports published, that there was an excellent quality of coal at the Collie; and, as to the vastness of the estimated quantity, he was content to take it at even 1 per cent. of the whole estimate. The Premier had often said that members on that (the Opposition) side of the House had no faith in the future of the colony; but he (Mr. Illingworth) believed that, at bottom, he had more faith in its future than even the Premier himself. With this coalfield, and the immense timber supply behind it, there should be no doubt about this railway being a justifiable work. He thought that, upon the evidence, it would pay from the day it was opened. This coal would mean a considerable traffic also on the existing lines, along which fuel could be conveyed to the centres of population and to the goldfields. Some hon. members would know what the coal question meant so far as Victoria was concerned, where the coal discovered in Gippsland was very inferior. He had been afraid this Collie coal might be of the same kind, but he regarded the reports of experts on this coal as reliable and satisfactory; and, upon the whole evidence, he thought it would be a cruel shame, it would be a wrong to the colony, it would be an injustice, not to construct this railway proposed by the Government. He also affirmed, as a further point, that there was no need whatever for delay.

MR. JAMES said he was going to oppose this railway, because, if there was such enormous wealth in this coalfield, why should they hand it over to some one else to enjoy, and why should they construct a railway for enabling other persons to reap the profit by working the mines? Why should not these

mines be worked as a State industry? If the Government had pluck enough to adopt that policy, and would propose to work the coal as a national industry, he would gladly support them as long as he had a seat in the House, and would, on that condition, and that only, vote for this railway. The principle for which he was contending had often been discussed elsewhere, and this was a grand opportunity for trying it as a State experiment in this colony. If the coal was to be worked by private capitalists, after the construction of a railway with public money, how did the Government know that those capitalists would be content to sell the coal at the pit's mouth for 6s. a ton? It might be said that competition would keep down the price, but there were such things as combinations among capitalists to keep up prices. Suppose the coal owners were to say, after opening mines on the field, that the coal must be 10s. a ton; the Government would then have to take the coal at that price for their railway requirements, or there would be no traffic for this railway. In fact, the Government must pay whatever price the coal owners might choose to demand.

MR. RICHARDSON said the Government would have control of the railway, and the mines would be useless without it.

MR. JAMES said there was no scheme before the committee to show how this coalfield was going to be developed; and this mode of treating the question was like putting the cart before the horse. As to sending coal to the Murchison goldfields, there would be the expense of a double handling if the coal was to be shipped at Fremantle, and again put on a railway at Geraldton for the mines. If this enormous wealth was to be handed over to private persons who would lease coal areas from the Government, such persons should surely find it worth their while to build a railway.

MR. LEAKE said he intended to oppose the item, because it was difficult to treat this matter seriously. The Premier was evidently not so sure of his ground as he would like hon. members to believe, when he promised that nothing should be done on this work until after a special Bill could be passed next session. Evidently there was some reason for delay

which the Ministry did not think fit to divulge. The only proof before the House was that coal existed at the Collie, but there had been no sufficient test yet as to the quantity, extent, or quality. The main consideration was the quality of the coal. But did not hon. members believe that there was coal in other parts of the colony?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Where?

MR. LEAKE said there had been numbers of reports, and the Government Geologist would tell them of many places where it would pay for the Government to bore for coal. Mr. Woodward had expressed an opinion that it would pay to bore for coal at Albany.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he did not think so, and he had asked him.

MR. LEAKE repeated that the Government Geologist had expressed that opinion, and his (Mr. Leake's) word was as good as the Premier's. It would pay to put down bores closer to the seaboard, so that the coal mines might not be too far inland for profitable working. It would pay to put down a bore at Bunbury, or at Perth, or at the Cannings, for it was a pity that the strata near the coast had not been tested for coal. Besides the initial cost of this railway, there would be the upkeep, and loss from want of freight, and loss from bad management; so that the country might lose not only the interest on capital, but further sums. He would criticise this item as strongly as he possibly could. He did not blame the Government for what they had done in testing the coal, but they had not gone far enough. The reports laid before the House lacked confirmation. In this, as in many other instances, the Government policy overlapped their resources. The information given to the committee by the Commissioner of Railways—and it was not much—was such as should have been furnished before; but this was the old way of keeping information up the Minister's sleeve, for burking criticism and squelching debate. The Commissioner, knowing he had a weak case and had to catch some wavering members, tried to get them by a humorous imitation of Dr. Robertson's native dialect, in describing what the coal was like—"the

r-real ar-ticle"—and in that imitation the Commissioner had excelled himself; but the weakness of the argument was shown by the resort to this method of tickling the weakness of members. Did these reports show that coal existed at the Collie in payable quantity and in marketable quality? Mr. Woodward's report did not prove that coal existed over the 100 square miles of country, but merely said that "if" this were so, then something else would follow.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the Government Geologist put it stronger than that, by saying it was probable. The hon. member should put stress on that.

MR. LEAKE asked how the Ministers could quote these reports as positive proof of quantity or quality. They certainly should not do it. The other reports upon the trials made in locomotives were all conditional, and sought to make excuses for the coal. These tests by boring and otherwise were not proper tests, and the Government should go on making further tests by boring to a greater depth, and raising coal from that depth. If these further tests were found satisfactory, this railway might then be justified. He would not vote for this fancy item in the Schedule.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said he was prepared to believe there was true coal at the Collie; but the Government, before bringing in this proposal, should have been in a position to inform the committee that they had tested the coal to a depth, and had framed a scheme for working the coalfield by which the coal could be raised and sold as cheaply as the imported coal. Surface scratching over this 100 miles of country would not satisfy him. The coal should be tested to a depth. The working test of the coal made on a locomotive going up the heavy grades at Greenmount had been a failure, and further tests should be made. Every one must recognise the importance of the discovery of a coalfield, and great care should be taken to test the coal by raising it from a depth before constructing a railway. He did not think the House would sanction an experiment in working this coalfield as a State industry. It would be bad policy for the Government to attempt it, and he must disagree with the member for East Perth on that point.

There was good reason to believe that coal would be discovered near the coast, especially at the Vasse. There were also, he was told, indications at Albany and at Wyndham, the latter being too far away for use in the central parts of the colony. It might be better to build a railway, in the future, to some coalfield near the coast, and the likely localities should certainly be tested to the utmost before a project like this was entered upon, as the Collie coal might cost more than the imported coal. He objected to this proposal because it was premature; the information was meagre; the quality of the coal had not been proved; the tests made were not satisfactory; and the coalfield had not been tested to sufficient depth. The Government were so confident of their big majority that they did not take trouble to place the necessary data on this question before hon. members; and, after the Premier's excited speech on the previous night, the sequel should have been a respectable public funeral, for the hon. gentleman had nearly gone into a fit. He would support the striking out of the item.

MR. CONNOR said personal criticism was not in accordance with the dignity of the Assembly. If what the Commissioner of Railways had said of the supposed wealth in this coalfield were true, the national debt of England or of the Australian colonies would be wiped out in one act. He, however, was not satisfied with the information before them, and would oppose the item. It was an injustice to the North that all these items in the Schedule were for the South; and until the rights of the North were recognised in this House, he would oppose every measure which did not give a certain amount of benefit to the North, which had to contribute towards the taxation for these loans.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marnion) said that if the hon. member who had just spoken fancied he was likely to benefit the constituency he represented by seeking to do injury to the Southern districts, that was a mistaken idea, because the true method of benefiting the North was to assist the growth of every industry in the South so as to employ more population, and in that way increase the demand for those products which the North could

send to the Southern markets. The present appeared to be one of those occasions on which some hon. members had made up their minds to vote in a certain way, no matter what fresh information or arguments might be brought to bear on the question under discussion. The Government only asked that this item should be passed in the Schedule for the present, pending the introduction of a special Bill next session, and that in the meantime further information should be obtained, although he considered that the information before the committee at present was sufficient to justify this railway. It was not too much to ask hon. members to repose sufficient trust in the Government for this purpose.

MR. LEAKE: Not while you are in it.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmon) said the people would have as much faith in this Government while he had the honour to be a member of it, as they would have in any Government with which the hon. member might be connected. He believed that hon. members had faith in the good sense of the Government to spend money carefully and wisely. As to the further evidence required, he did not know what evidence some hon. members opposite required. It was not to be expected that any large quantity of the coal would be produced until there was the means of conveying it by railway. What would be the practical use of raising ten thousand tons of coal to the surface, without having the means of bringing it to market? Unless it could be proved that this coal was of exportable value, he believed that even his hon. colleague the Commissioner of Railways, who was so anxious to develop this industry, would not hasten on the building of this railway simply for supplying the consumption of coal within the colony. His own opinion was that, in order to make the industry a success, it was absolutely necessary that it should be proved that the coal was an article of exportable value in the foreign markets of the world, and able to compete with coal from other places.

MR. SIMPSON said the Commissioner of Crown Lands had treated the committee to a panegyric on the merits of the Government. This wasting the time of the committee was a question of good taste. For himself, he had taken

an intense interest, for some years past, in the development of this coalfield, and was now inclined to censure the Government for delay in its development. It would be noticed that each of the reports placed before hon. members was dated subsequent to the Premier's announcement to his constituents, in May last, of the intention to build this railway.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said Dr. Robertson's report was dated long before.

MR. SIMPSON said that Mr. Woodward's report, the engine-drivers' reports, and that of the contractor for the boring, were all subsequent. If the Government had a strong faith in Dr. Robertson's report, why was not some action taken by them since the date of that report, made in 1891? The Government had sat still and done nothing. He, with others, had had occasion to spend some money in connection with this coalfield, and he was persuaded that the coalfield was a valuable one, though whether this would be the most cheaply worked of the coalfields in this colony the future must determine. But, while all members were fairly satisfied as to this being a valuable coalfield, yet the Government could not say there was a single lease of coal land taken up, and the only development was the contract made for raising 1,000 tons of coal.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said there was not the means of transit yet.

MR. SIMPSON said the idea of the Government was to build a railway first, and the applications for leases were supposed to come in afterwards. The Government had recently accepted a tender for the sinking of four deep bores; but why was not that done years ago?

MR. A. FORREST said there was no railway to the South then.

MR. SIMPSON said there had been neglect on the part of the Government. As to constructing this railway, he did not think the time had arrived for it, and he intended to move an amendment. He had information that the calorific value of this coal was high, making it a valuable coal; but he had no hesitation in saying this was not an exportable coal—that it would occupy a larger bunker space than the Newcastle coal—and this fact would put the Collicoe coal out of the

market for export purposes. He moved, as an amendment, "That the item be struck out, with the exception of the amount, with a view to transferring the latter to the item 'Development of goldfields and mineral resources.'"

POINT OF ORDER.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I rise to a point of order: that is, whether it is competent for the hon. member to move to alter the appropriation of money in the Schedule.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes; whilst he does not increase the total amount in the Schedule.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Then how is it that a salary on the annual Estimates cannot be increased without a Message from the Governor?

THE CHAIRMAN: An item cannot be increased without a Message; but this is a transfer from one heading to another, and the total amount in the Bill will not be increased by the transfer.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I think you are in error.

MR. SIMPSON: It is not for the Premier to dictate. We must take the Chairman's ruling.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): That ruling is different from the Constitution Act, and different from the practice. I take my stand on the Constitution Act.

THE CHAIRMAN: My ruling is that it is possible for any member to propose to transfer a sum from one item to another in the Schedule, so long as he does not increase an item or does not add to the total sum of one-and-a-half millions.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I would like to ask for the Speaker's ruling to be taken on the point. It is a very important one.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: It will be convenient to report progress. Several members have left the House under the impression that a division would not be taken to-night.

MR. A. FORREST: There are other members who intend to leave the House for a fortnight, and they would like a division taken to-night.

THE CHAIRMAN: My point is that the hon. member cannot add to the item "Railway to Collie Coalfield;" that he

cannot increase at all the total amount of the Loan Bill; but I know that, in the English Parliament, it has been competent for members to transfer, so long as they do not increase the taxation.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): You rule that hon. members cannot increase the item of £60,000, but you rule, at the same time, that Item No. 8, "Development of goldfields and mineral resources, £70,000," can be increased by transferring the £60,000 to it. That is inconsistent.

THE CHAIRMAN: No; because the transfer does not increase the total amount in the Bill. An item can be increased by transfer.

THE SPEAKER (who had been previously sent for) took the Chair, and the Chairman having reported to him the point of order, His Honour said: I am of opinion the committee cannot increase any item in the Schedule of this Loan Bill, without a recommendation from the Governor.

DEBATE RESUMED.

The committee resumed.

MR. SIMPSON asked: Will the Government consent to report progress?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): No.

MR. SIMPSON asked: Will the Premier be prepared to bring down a Message from the Governor?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I am not prepared to do it.

MR. SIMPSON said the Premier had told the Opposition that he would carry this railway, and would not divide this sum. It amounted to this: that this Bill was to be rammed, *holus bolus*, down the throats of a Parliament which desired to give a generous support to the Government. He, for one, would distinctly resent it. [The hon. member went on to speak further in opposition to the railway.]

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) assured the Chairman that, in questioning his ruling, he had no personal feeling, and hoped the Chairman did not think he had done it out of disrespect to him.

THE CHAIRMAN replied: Not in the least.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest), referring to the remarks of the hon. member for Geraldton, said that hon. member, before the session began, had

described this railway proposal as one of the maddest schemes ever propounded by a Minister. As to that hon. member giving a generous support to the Government, it was a strange fact that, while professing to be a supporter of the Government, he was really leading the Opposition. He (the Premier) did not want such support as that.

MR. SIMPSON: You like sycophants; you don't like men.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said that was not so; he liked men to be consistent. If a member was not a supporter of the Government, that member should say so straight out. He did not think that private individuals were prepared to build this railway. There had been a proposition before the Government, but they were of opinion it was not a genuine one, and had good reasons for that conclusion, derived from persons who were interested in the matter. He had not the slightest hesitation in saying that the persons referred to were not prepared to put money into that railway. They said they would do it, for the old game—to try and sell the concession. The hon. member for Geraldton now charged the Government with having delayed action for the development of this coalfield, yet, now that the Government proposed to build a railway for developing the field, the hon. member would not vote for it.

MR. SIMPSON said his complaint was that the Government had delayed the development of the coalfield; not the building of a railway.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the hon. member would still delay the development by not making the means of transit, because everyone must know that it was absolutely impossible to develop a coalfield unless the means of transit were provided. The hon. member was not consistent, and not in earnest, in this matter. The hon. member's idea was to act in accordance with his statement at Geraldton, when he said this was one of the maddest schemes that any Minister ever propounded.

MR. SIMPSON: That is consistent.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he had heard the hon. member say he would be prepared to build a railway and work the coal himself. That being so, had the hon. member any faith in this

coal, to make such a statement as that? If he had faith in it, why not assist the Government to build the railway? As to what the Government were going to do with the coal, if a railway was made, there was provision in the Mineral Lands Act for leasing areas of coal land, and that was similar to the law which existed in New South Wales, where coal lands were leased from the Crown, and a large revenue derived from royalties. If that legislation was not found sufficient for the circumstances of this colony, it could be amended. At any rate, it was reasonable that, when the Government leased coal lands at a small rental, a royalty should be payable on the amount of coal raised. One point missed by most speakers in the discussion was the advantage of having a large industrial population working this coalfield. The hon. member for the De Grey had said all the profit to the country he could see was a possible 2s. 6d. per ton as the difference in selling value between this and the imported coal; but, in producing the coal, there must be a mining industry carried on and people employed in it; so that if there was a margin of even 2s. 6d. a ton profit, as compared with the price of imported coal, there would also be a considerable gain in having a large number of persons employed in coal mining. He (the Premier) did not see there would be any great advantage to the country in having the coal mines worked by the Government, as advocated by the hon. member for East Perth. The Government might as well work the gold mines, the timber industry, and other industries in the country. If the present was a great opportunity for nationalising the coal mines, there was the same opportunity for working the pearlshell industry, the gold mines, the timber industry, and every other industry in the country. That hon. member had not had great experience, and was not able to show that this nationalising of industries had been adopted in any part of the world. The idea was altogether new and untried, and was against the experience of other parts of the world. The Government were not prepared to enter into competition with private enterprise in these industries, but wished rather to do all that was practicable in encouraging private enterprise in our industries, so long as the State got its

fair share in the matter. If the same information concerning this coalfield had been laid before the Legislative Council, under the old form of Government, say twenty years ago, would they have hesitated to vote for this railway upon such reports as those now before this House? He thought not. And, as to the reliability of these reports, he would take his stand on that of the Government Geologist. Was it to be said that those who represented the people in this House now, in a time of progress and development, were going to show less energy and less enterprise than those who sat in the Chamber years ago, when everything in the colony was in a small way; and were hon. members now to be afraid of spending £60,000 in trying to develop one of the greatest industries that any country could have? He said now, deliberately, that if the old Legislative Council, before there was any of this great new development of gold-mining settlements to the Eastward in this colony, could have had such reports as these on the Collie coalfield, many years ago, this railway would have been voted for unanimously. As to the objection that there was not enough information before hon. members at present, the House would see, by and by, when another Ministry occupied those benches, and when the hon. member for the Gascoyne—though he (the Premier) did not really think that hon. member ever would, and hoped he never would, sit on the Government benches—at any rate, when other Ministers occupied those seats, the House would see whether as much information would be given as the present Government had given on questions before them. The hon. member for the Gascoyne, who particularly urged this objection, had not himself got the intelligence, industry, or energy to get the information.

MR. ILLINGWORTH said that remark was unkind.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said it was, and he intended to be unkind, too. The hon. member for Albany seemed to desire to gain a reputation in that House for saying funny things, in order to make members laugh. He (the Premier) could not laugh at such jokes; he felt rather tired of them; but they seemed to amuse some hon. members. But he might give this advice to the hon.

member, that if a member wished to have any weight in that House he should deal seriously with serious matters, and not aim at making jokes or saying smart things. The hon. member's remarks on this question were not enlightening, and, whether serious or not, were made in a half-and-half mood.

MR. LEAKE said the Premier took them seriously enough.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he was pretty well disgusted by this time with the levity of the hon. member. He was prepared to meet the hon. member for Albany in that House, at any time, and he could bit as hard as the hon. member could do. The hon. member for the Gascoyne had only the old cry—objection, objection, objection. That hon. member opposed everything the Government proposed to do. He had said there was no scheme for working the coal mines, but the hon. member had himself assisted in passing an Act, about two years ago, for the working of coal mines and other mineral deposits in this colony. Perhaps the hon. member did not now remember anything about it. That Act provided a scheme for working these coal lands. The Government did not propose to work the mines as a State industry. The hon. member's argument, that this coal would be useless unless produced at a less price than imported coal, had been answered by the Commissioner of Railways, who showed that the local coal could be produced at 2s. 6d. a ton less cost. But even if it were not cheaper than the imported coal, there would still be an advantage to the colony in having a coal mining industry within the colony affording local employment. He (the Premier) was a protectionist to this extent, that it was better to employ our own people in producing necessary articles in the colony, rather than employing people in other parts of the world to produce what this colony required. If the local coal could be produced at the same rate, or even at a little higher rate, he would advocate that it should be done. As to trying to discover coal nearer to Perth, the Government might do so, but they could not go scratching about. Would the House delay the building of a railway to Cue or to Coolgardie, because a goldfield might possibly be found nearer home at some

future time—perhaps in the Darling Range? As to the advice to delay this work for a few years, if such advice as that had been followed in the past there would not have been any extension of the railway system.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I started the Yilgarn railway—your salvation!

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the speech of the hon. member for East Kimberley (Mr. Connor) was a foolish one, because the more the Southern districts progressed in population and industries, the more produce would be required from the North for supplying the Southern requirements. And, after all, what wants were there in the North that the Government had not endeavoured to supply? If there were any class of people whose wants and claims he listened to more than others, they were those represented by the Northern members, because he felt they had not such a large share of the public expenditure as those in the South, where the people and the wants were more numerous. Could the hon. member for East Kimberley say he (the Premier) had ever refused to listen to reasonable requests made for his constituency? He (the Premier) hoped hon. members would not refuse to pass this item. He had tried his best to meet the wishes of both sides of the House, in giving the assurance that the Government did not intend to do more on this work than prepare the surveys for the line, and that the House would have an opportunity, next year, of deciding this question upon a special Bill to be then brought in. If, in the meantime, anything should happen which showed that this coalfield was not so good as the Government Geologist anticipated, and as the Government believed it to be—though he did not think anything so adverse would occur—then no one would be more eager or more anxious to stop the project. The Government did not intend to rush into this project and build a railway that would be a monument of failure. Were they lunatics? He hoped not. Were they doing this under some deep scheme for deceiving hon. members and the people of the colony during a few weeks or months, and then bringing ruin on themselves? The idea was absurd. If the work was not successful in its operation, the disgrace must come

back to the Government, and the work would remain as a monument of failure. He was sure those hon. members who had given the Government a general support would acknowledge he had tried to meet the wishes of every member in regard to the Loan Bill. He did not expect hon. members to swallow the Bill, *holus bolus*, against their wishes, but to accept it on conviction. It was pretty hard work, trying to urge forward a measure for developing the country against the opposition of persons, some of whom were only bent on opposition, and against the opposition of some persons from whom he had expected something different. Members who sat on the Government side of the House were sometimes more critical than members who sat on the Opposition side. How were the Government to carry on, if their own supporters were trying to oppose measures which the Government brought forward for developing the country? Persons had said, in the Press and elsewhere, that the Government had no Opposition to check them, but, in fact, the Government had not only to meet the views of the more prominent members of the Opposition—and to them he would say he had only thanks to give, because they were more generous than some members sitting on the Government side—but the Government had also to meet the objections of members on their own side. He did not know that this was a disadvantage, but, at any rate, it was very troublesome. There had been an Opposition in this House ever since the Government took office—an Opposition opposite and an Opposition in their own family—and he found it pretty hard work to get measures through this House with opposition all round. However, the Government must do the best they could, but it was hard work while trying their best to promote the interests of the country by developing its resources in all directions. He must thank the hon. member for Nannine for the generous support given to this item that night, and this support only showed that persons who had had experience elsewhere had seen the great benefit that a coalfield would be to this country. Parties in this House were not very much divided, generally, but he thought the proposal he had made should meet the views of any-

one who took a really lively and generous interest in the welfare of this country and in the development of this important industry.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said there was no factious opposition in this House. He denied being in Opposition. He was one of the members who required a little information before he could support this scheme. He suggested that progress should be reported.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the last desire he could have was to force a division on the item against the wishes of hon. members. He would like to hear from the leader of the Opposition his views on the item, and on the proposal of the Government. He renewed the pledge that the Government would not spend any money on the work, except for surveys, and that the House would have another opportunity of dealing with the work, upon a special Bill next session. By passing this item, they would show that the Parliament and the people had faith in the colony's resources, whereas to strike it out of the Schedule would show they did not believe in the existence of this coalfield.

MR. RANDELL said he did not wish the debate to be adjourned. The Government had made a distinct promise that nothing should be done till next session; he agreed also that the item could not now be struck out of the Bill without causing such an impression outside as the Premier had mentioned; but the reports of the engine-drivers as to tests of the coal were so damaging that he thought the item should be withdrawn from the Bill, and hon. members would scarcely be justified in voting for it. The remarks of the Commissioner of Crown Lands also were rather damaging, when he said that unless this coal was of sufficient value for export the railway ought not to be constructed. His own opinion was that the coal was unfit for export in competition with Newcastle coal, and that the tests were eminently unsatisfactory; but what the coal might be like when the field was developed further they could not know at present. The testimony of specialists was that coal improved invariably the deeper it went. Probably that would be the case here; and they should be content to go on ascertaining its real value

before they committed themselves to the construction of a railway. If they found, twelve months hence, that the coal would not be of sufficient value or sufficient extent to justify this expenditure, those members who were opposed to the item would, perhaps, be in a worse position then than if they voted against it now. He was sorry he could not support the item after the eloquent appeal the Premier had made. He realised the anxious desire of the Premier and colleagues for developing the resources of the colony, and to the best of their ability pushing it ahead; and he desired to support them in that policy, according to his judgment.

MR. HARPER moved that progress be reported and leave asked to sit again.

The committee divided on the motion, with the following result:—

Ayes ...	...	...	7
Noes ...	...	...	13
Majority against ...			6

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Harper	Mr. Burt
Mr. Illingworth	Mr. Cookworthy
Mr. Leake	Sir John Forrest
Mr. Moran	Mr. A. Forrest
Mr. H. W. Sholl	Mr. James
Mr. Simpson	Mr. Lefroy
Mr. R. F. Sholl (Teller).	Mr. Marmion
	Mr. Paterson
	Mr. Pearce
	Mr. Piesse
	Mr. Randell
	Mr. Wood
	Mr. Venn (Teller).

Motion negatived.

MR. A. FORREST moved "That the item be now put."

MR. SIMPSON rose to a point of order, and said he wished to speak on the item.

MR. RANDELL protested against the closure of the debate, and said there were other hon. members who had not yet spoken and wished to do so.

THE CHAIRMAN said the effect of the motion for closure would be the same as in the case of the motion to report progress, on which the committee had just divided.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

MR. SIMPSON said he was sorry to see the Ministry would not fall in with what was practically in the interest of fair play, but were seeking, by the power of a brutal majority, to suppress debate.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the hon. member was generally one of them.

MR. SIMPSON said he was never one of a brutal majority. He was astounded to see the absence of fair play from the action of the Premier that night.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said the leader of the Opposition had stated he did not wish to adjourn.

MR. SIMPSON said the Premier might have gracefully acceded to the wish of the weaker party, that the division on this item should be adjourned. It had been decided that the House would not adjourn. It would be well, if that was the position, that the Premier's speech in introducing the Bill, and his subsequent speech on each of the items, should be re-discussed in committee. That would be the most practical way of arriving at a reasonable decision on this item.

THE CHAIRMAN said the hon. member must confine his remarks to Item No. 4.

MR. SIMPSON said he could only arrive at No. 4 by going through Nos. 1, 2, and 3. With regard to Item No. 4, there was one particular report which had not been sufficiently impressed on the intelligence of the committee, and that was Appendix I, the report of the Government Geologist. The hon. member proceeded to read the report at length, slowly and with an occasional sentence of comment.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) asked: Where is the "iron hand" now?

MR. SIMPSON said he was speaking in the interest of absent members.

MR. H. W. SHOLL, after the hon. member had been reading the report about twenty minutes, called attention to the absence of a quorum.

THE SPEAKER took the chair, and the bells were rung. A quorum having been formed, the committee resumed.

MR. SIMPSON proceeded to read further portions of the report, with occasional comments.

MR. R. F. SHOLL called attention to the presence of strangers in the galleries, the time being a few minutes past midnight.

Motion, "That strangers be ordered to withdraw," put and negatived.

MR. SIMPSON proceeded with his reading of the report, and comments on it.

MR. A. FORREST asked: Is the hon. member in order in reading from a paper continuously?

THE CHAIRMAN replied: Yes; he is in order.

MR. SIMPSON proceeded to read, and make comments, as before.

MR. ILLINGWORTH called attention to the absence of a quorum.

A quorum having been formed, the committee resumed.

MR. SIMPSON proceeded to read and make comments, as before.

MR. R. F. SHOLL called attention to the presence of strangers in the galleries.

Motion, "That strangers be ordered to withdraw," put, and division taken, with the following result:—

Ayes ...	...	...	5
Noes ...	...	...	12

Majority against ... 7

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Illingworth	Mr. Cookworthy
Mr. R. F. Sholl	Sir John Forrest
Mr. H. W. Sholl	Mr. A. Forrest
Mr. Simpson	Mr. Lefroy
Mr. James (Teller).	Mr. Marmion
	Mr. Paterson
	Mr. Pearce
	Mr. Piesse
	Mr. Randell
	Mr. Venn
	Mr. Wood
	Mr. Moran (Teller).

Motion negatived.

MR. SIMPSON proceeded to read and make comments, as before.

MR. JAMES called attention to the presence of strangers in the galleries.

Motion, "That strangers be ordered to withdraw," put, and division taken, with the following result:—

Ayes ...	...	...	12
Noes ...	...	...	4

Majority for ... 8

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Cookworthy	Mr. Illingworth
Sir John Forrest	Mr. James
Mr. A. Forrest	Mr. Simpson
Mr. Marmion	Mr. Lefroy (Teller).
Mr. Paterson	
Mr. Pearce	
Mr. Piesse	
Mr. Randell	
Mr. R. F. Sholl	
Mr. Venn	
Mr. Wood	
Mr. Burt (Teller).	

Strangers accordingly ordered to withdraw.

MR. RANDELL (having crossed the floor and conferred with the Premier) moved, "That progress be reported, and leave asked to sit again."

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said: Certainly, I will consent at the request of the leader of the Opposition,

but I would not do it for the member for Geraldton.

MR. SIMPSON said: You never asked the member for Geraldton.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said: I would not do so.

Motion put and passed.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 12:40 o'clock, a.m., of Friday, 14th September.

Legislative Assembly,

Monday, 17th September, 1894.

Importation of Coal into the colony—Droving Bill: first reading—Minister for Mines acting as Director of Mining Companies—Publication of Speeches of the Premier in pamphlet form—Trial Surveys of Railways, &c., between Marble Bar goldfields and the coast—Loan Bill (£1,500,000): further considered in committee—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

IMPORTS OF COAL INTO THE COLONY.

MR. SIMPSON, in accordance with notice, asked the Colonial Treasurer,—

1. The total number of tons of coal imported into the colony for the year ending June 30th. 1894.

2. The number of tons discharged at each of the ports of the colony for the same period.

3. The value of the total coal imports.

4. The existing contracts for the supply of coal to the Government, and the particulars of said contracts.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied as follows:—

1. 16,535 tons.
2. At Fremantle ... 10,078 tons
At Albany... ... 5,849 „
Other Ports ... 608 „
Total ... 16,535 „
3. £15,024.
4. Particulars are now laid upon the table.

DROVING BILL.

Introduced by MR. BURT, and read a first time.

MINISTER FOR MINES ACTING AS DIRECTOR OF MINING COMPANIES.

MR. SIMPSON: Mr. Speaker—In rising to move the motion of which I have given notice, “That in the opinion of this House it is undesirable that the member of the Cabinet entrusted with the administration of the Goldfields Act and the Mineral Lands Act should occupy the position of director in any companies or syndicates which are lessees or claimholders under the provisions of the said Acts”—in submitting this motion I feel I have a duty to perform that requires much delicate handling, and, perhaps, it would be well for me to state, in initiating the matter, that I—and I believe the House and the country—have the most perfect confidence in the integrity of the gentleman who at present administers these two Acts. But members know that under both these Acts large deliberative and discretionary powers are left in the hands of the Minister. One of the regulations under the Goldfields Act provides that the Warden's recommendation with regard to certain matters coming before him shall be forwarded to the Minister for his decision and confirmation.

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

MR. SIMPSON: Recommendations for forfeiture is one,—

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The Governor-in-Council.

MR. SIMPSON: And recommendations as to the granting of leases.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The Governor in Executive Council.