

Assembly, and was read a first time.

CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

THE PRESIDENT announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Assembly, covering a memorial proposed to be forwarded to the Right Hon. the Secretary of State on the subject of the Abolition of the Aborigines Protection Board, (*vide* pages 1185 and 1186 *ante*).

ADJOURNMENT.

The Council at 6:15 o'clock, p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, October 8th, 1895, at 4:30 o'clock, p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 3rd October, 1895.

Motion for Adjournment: "Hansard" reports—

Duplication of Telegraph Line to South Australia—Assent to Bills: Message from the Administrator—Building Act Amendment Bill: third reading—Constitution Act Further Amendment Bill: Memorial to Secretary of State for the Colonies—Collie Coalfields Railway Bill: second reading; committee—Donnybrook-Bridgetown Railway Bill: second reading; committee—"Hansard" Reports: personal explanation—Insufficiency of Rolling Stock: message from Legislative Council—Parks and Reserves Bill: amendments of Legislative Council—Crown Suits Bill: Message from Legislative Council insisting on amendment—Stock Diseases Bill: committee—Mines Regulation Bill: committee—Explosives Bill: second reading; committee—Engine Sparks Fire Prevention Bill: second reading—Fencing Bill: order of the day for the second reading discharged—Minimum Wage in Government Contracts—Adjournment.

The Speaker took the chair at 4.30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

HANSARD REPORTS OF PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

MR. MORAN: Sir, In referring to some of the reports appearing in *Hansard*, of debates in this House—

The SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot do that, without a motion.

MR. MORAN: Can I do so upon moving the adjournment of the House?

The SPEAKER: Yes, you can do that.

MR. MORAN: Then I will do so. For a good many reasons I have found that I should call attention to some of these reports. I find, on reading some of the *Hansard* reports through, that they are not correct. Some of the speeches are not reported as they are given. Not only do the reports not agree with what members said, but they do decidedly disagree in the distortion of statements. I notice, in the report of Tuesday's debate on the Goldfields Bill, published in to-day's *Daily News*, in the *Hansard* report, statements alleged to have been made by me which I know I never did make; and several other hon. members will have noticed that in many cases their speeches are not reported correctly. I think that when we agreed it was desirable, in the interest of the colony, that we should have a *Hansard* report of the Parliamentary debates published in a newspaper, we understood, and were led to expect, and do expect—and as far as I am concerned I shall have it carried out—if not a *verbatim* report on all occasions, at any rate a correct report, and one in which our statements are not distorted—whether by carelessness or otherwise, I am not prepared to say. I notice, in the same newspaper in which the Goldfields debate is reported, a paragraph referring to the discussion which took place in this House, last evening, on the Electoral Bill upon the question of doing away with the restriction on candidates as to addressing electors within a certain time of the nomination. Here is the paragraph as it appears in to-day's *Daily News*:—"When the Electoral Bill was being considered in committee last night, Mr Moran moved that the clause regarding the prohibition of personal solicitation by candidates be struck out. He urged that the clause was a useless piece of legislation, and gagged the mouth of candidates for days, thus prohibiting them, in large districts like the goldfields, from addressing many of the electors." I do not think I moved that, nor did I make any such statements. The paragraph goes on to say:—"The House

"was against Mr. Moran, and the clause "was passed with one or two verbal amendments." I never mentioned personal solicitation, even once, in my address to this House. I proceed now to the *Hansard* report on another thing that occurred. It is in connection with the wages men [Goldfields Bill], and I suppose the few lines taken down here, from my remarks, will not be one quarter of what I actually did say on that occasion. I do not object to the condensation in the report so much as I do object to what I said being misreported. The report says:—"Mr. Moran agreed that it was desirable there should be ample protection for the wages man, but he should not be permitted to let his wages run on to such an extent without having pursued his claim in the manner laid down under the Act." I never made use of such words, nor was it my intention to say anything of the kind, because I do not know of any procedure under which a wages man can do that. I say that is not a correct report; and the fact of such a misrepresentation of what I did say, appearing in the *Hansard* report, may create a wrong impression outside this House. And, what is worse, I have corrected *Hansard* many times, but it is impossible for members to watch the publication of *Hansard* every day, and look over every speech they make, to see if corrections are necessary. It is time we should have a correct *Hansard* report, or no *Hansard* report at all. I do not claim that every speech I make should be reported *verbatim*. I do not require the assistance of any pressman, but would much rather my speeches were reported absolutely *verbatim*, than be cut down to one half of what I say, and not only that, but distorted in fact. I have seen statements in *Hansard* which were directly contrary to what I had said. If you do not watch carefully, something will go forward in *Hansard* which may be brought against you at any future time, as being a correct report of something you are supposed to have said, but did not say. These reports are not satisfactory; and I know many hon. member of this House who will bear me out.

THE SPEAKER: Do you intend to conclude with a motion?

MR. MORAN: Yes; I beg to move the adjournment of the House.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I rise to second the motion, for exactly the opposite reason to that for which it was moved. I have spoken a good many times in this House; I have read, for the

most part, the *Hansard* report of the speeches I have delivered; and I have never had occasion to alter the report of a speech yet. I do not know how it comes about, but I have never had occasion to correct a speech yet, either before or after the report appeared; consequently I do not think there is much cause of complaint. Of course it is quite possible that, now and then, a sentence may be misreported; but I do think it is taxing the reporters too much to expect they should be absolutely accurate in every detail mentioned in committee discussions, because that is really the point,—that, as the reports of speeches in committee are not *verbatim*, but condensed, hon. members should not expect that all they have said in committee will appear in *Hansard*. I want, however, just to state that, though I try to speak as correctly as I can, I am very anxious that our friends in the Reporters' Gallery should not report me *verbatim*, because I am conscious of the fact that I make quite enough mistakes. I think the members of this House have a good deal to be thankful for in the careful revision of their speeches by the reporters, and I desire to express my gratitude in this particular, and only hope that if the reporters should be irritated into reporting certain members *verbatim*, they will leave me out altogether.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): In regard to what the hon. member for Yilgarn said, respecting Clause 107 of the Electoral Bill, my memory may be at fault, but certainly my recollection is that the hon. member moved very often to strike out Clause 107, which deals with personal solicitation. I remember distinctly that, on sitting down after his speech, he moved that the whole clause be struck out.

THE SPEAKER: As I have been entrusted by resolution of this House with the supervision of the reporting of the *Hansard Debates*, I can state that the supervision of this work during this session, in connection with the new contract for publishing the reports, has given me a great deal of trouble and anxiety. Everything was going on satisfactorily until the principal *Hansard* reporter was taken ill. He has been off duty again, through illness, nearly a fortnight past; and I feel confident that if he had been in his place in the gallery, there would have been no occasion for the hon. member for Yilgarn to make such a complaint as he has made. There have been probably some mistakes occurring during the principal

reporter's absence through illness; and it being his chief duty to revise the reports and prevent the occurrence of errors in the printed report—I believe he returned to duty to-day—I do not think that there will be again the same cause of complaint.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): There is this advantage to members now, as compared with the former method of producing the *Hansard* reports, that during this session, under the new system of publication, hon. members can see their speeches in print, and may make necessary corrections before the reports are finally published for reference, if they will take the trouble to do so; whereas under the old system the reports were published after the close of the session, without members seeing them for revision. I do not read my own speeches in the *Hansard* reports as now published in a newspaper, unless on an important subject; but members of this House are in a better position under this arrangement, as we have an opportunity of seeing the reports in the newspaper, and of sending corrections to the contractors, when necessary.

MR. LEAKE: So far as I have read the *Hansard* reports of debates during this session, they have struck me as being particularly accurate; regard being had to the conditions of time and other circumstances under which the reporters do the work; and I think they are to be congratulated rather than blamed for the result of their labors. Upon any occasion when I have compared my remarks with the report as printed, I have always been satisfied with the result as it appears in the *Hansard* report printed in the *Daily News*. I really trust that the observations of the hon. member for Yilgarn will not exasperate the reporters to such an extent as to report any of our speeches in absolutely *verbatim* form; and if the hon. member for Yilgarn will have regard for his own interest and his feelings, I am sure he will not again venture to suggest that the reporters should deal with him so hardly as to report him exactly as he speaks on all occasions. This is hardly a question to bring before the House by moving the adjournment, and, in opposing the motion, I repeat that I think we have every reason to be satisfied with the way in which the *Hansard* reports of our proceedings are now placed before the country.

MR. MORAN: I am pleased that some explanation has been given by the Hon. the

Speaker, and I was not aware that you, Sir, supervised these reports.

THE SPEAKER: I will not go so far as to say I supervise the reports, in the sense that I correct them. It is my business to see that reporters do their work to the best of their ability, and that the reports are carefully revised.

MR. MORAN: After what you, Sir, have been pleased to explain to the House, that something has happened which may have affected the proper reporting of the speeches, I am satisfied. With regard to the remarks of the hon. member for Nannine on this subject, it is scarcely necessary to say that he could not possibly lose this opportunity of ingratiating himself with the reporters; and of course he has a pull against us, and may expect to be gently treated by the reporters in the future. I do not see what any particular member has to be afraid of. As I said before, I do not look for *verbatim* reports, but I certainly do expect that I will not be misrepresented, and, no matter what hon. members may think about the matter, I consider I have done my duty in bringing this question before the House. I may tell the House frankly that I have heard very many of the members, some of them now being present, make the very same complaint which I make here now. I have heard them generally express, all round, particularly of late, that there have been things in *Hansard* that were not exactly as they should be; and though I may be a scapegoat in bringing this matter before the House, I will take the blame, because I will say I have never got anything more than I deserved from either of the newspapers of the capital city of Perth.

MR. WOOD: The hon. member for Yilgarn has thrown out a sort of challenge to other hon. members, in saying there have been complaints generally as to the *Hansard* reports. I have heard complaints from members, but as far as the reports of my remarks in the House are concerned, they do not matter much, as my speeches are not very long. I think that when a member does speak, whatever he says should, at all events, be reported correctly as to the sense, if not always reported fully. I have noticed that the whole course of a member's remarks may be turned by some interjection from some other member, and unless the interjection is noted by the reporter, so as to account for what the member says in reply, the report of his remarks may make them appear quite irrelevant to the subject. Generally

speaking, the reports are all right and satisfactory, so far as I am concerned; but very often an interjection turns the current of a debate, and unless that interjection is put in the report, it may appear as if the member were speaking away from the question before the House. I have heard several of the hon. members now present complain of the *Hansard* reports; but after the explanation given by the Hon. the Speaker, I feel sure there will be nothing to complain of in the future.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson): It is just possible the *Hansard* reporters are human in their preferences, and may have their favorites among members of this House; in which case the reporters may take a little more trouble with certain speeches than with others.

MR. MORAN: I now ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

DUPLICATION OF TELEGRAPH LINE TO SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

MR. MORAN, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier (1.) Whether the Government have any knowledge whether it is the intention of the South Australian Government to run two wires in connection with the proposed new telegraph line to this colony, which is about to be undertaken immediately by South Australia. (2.) If so, whether the Government would be prepared to do likewise at this end of the line.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied that the Government had no knowledge that it was the intention of the Government of South Australia to place two wires on the proposed new telegraph line, but should the Government of South Australia find it necessary to do so, this Government would be prepared to join with them in doing the same.

MESSAGE FROM HIS EXCELLENCY THE ADMINISTRATOR.

ASSENT TO BILLS

The following Message was delivered to and read by MR. SPEAKER:—

ALEX. C. ONSLOW,
Administrator.

The Administrator has the honor to inform the Legislative Assembly that he has assented, in Her Majesty's name, to the undermentioned Bills:—

"An Act for imposing Duties on the Estates of Deceased Persons."

"An Act to authorise the Construction of a Railway from Coolgardie to Kalgoorlie."

"An Act to make provision for Incorporation of Religious and other Bodies."

"An Act to amend 'The Loan Act, 1894.'"

"An Act to amend 'The Married Women's Property Act, 1892.'"

"An Act for the Termination of the Parliamentary Ecclesiastical Grant."

"An Act to Consolidate and Amend the Law of Partnership."

"An Act to Regulate the Law of Copyright, and for other purposes."

Government House, Perth, Western Australia, 3rd October, 1895.

BUILDING ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

THIRD READING.

On the motion of MR. RANDELL (for Mr. JAMES), the Bill was read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

MEMORIAL TO SECRETARY OF STATE re CONSTITUTION ACT FURTHER AMENDMENT BILL.

Consideration resumed of motion tabled by THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest), respecting the memorial to the Right Honorable the Secretary of State for the Colonies (*vide* pages 1185 1186.)

MR. RANDELL rose to say that the memorial was very forcibly, very respectfully, and very cogently worded, and that, after it had received the approval of the Legislative Council, it ought to enable the colony to deal—in the concluding words of the memorial—"in a just and humane manner with the aboriginal natives of Western Australia."

Motion put and passed.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) moved that the memorial should be sent to the Legislative Council with a message requesting the concurrence of that House.

Motion put and passed.

COLLIE COAL FIELDS RAILWAY BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn): I beg to move the second reading of the Collie Coalfields Railway Bill. I do not think that the Bill will require much explanation on my part to recommend the measure to the members of the House. The proposal to construct this railway has not been hurried by the Government as hon. members know that, since the House met last year, and

discussed this question so fully, they have or many of them have, visited and personally inspected the coal deposits of the South. They had had an opportunity of seeing for themselves, and of forming their own judgment as to the quantity and quality of the fuel that is at our disposal and the means of tapping it, and of bringing it to the populous centres. There have been many routes suggested for tapping the coalfield, namely by way of Preston, the Ferguson, Brunswick, and the Collie. These routes have been thoroughly examined, and we have finally concluded that the most economical route will be the one known as the Brunswick route. It is the shortest and the least expensive. I have no doubt that, when the final survey is made, the cost of the line will be very much lower than the estimate presented to the House, and which is based upon the trial survey. At any rate, should there be no saving, I am sure that the House should agree to the construction of the line, and enable the Government to go on with the work. Hon. members have before them the various reports upon the Collie coal, which have been obtained from various experts. In addition, I have taken some trouble to have samples of this coal sent to those companies and foundries who are consumers of coal, and hon. members will be able to read in the papers which have been circulated, what has been done with the coal, and what is thought of it. We have also a report from England, and also a report of assays as to actual quality of the coal from two of the greatest experts in the world—Professor Etheridge and Professor Woodward. These reports alone would justify the Government in making a railway to the Collie Coalfields. There can be no doubt about it that we have extensive and most valuable deposits of fuel in the Collie coal. Although I may be told by some hon. members that it is not equal to some coal, still we have the very best authority for saying that the Collie coal is a genuine coal, but whether it is coal or whether it is lignite, does not enter so much into the question at the present moment, for we know that lignite is extensively used as coal in many places. As to the difference between lignite and what is called by scientists an anthracite coal, I do not think there has been any discussion whatever. All that we have to ask is—“Have we at the Collie an abundant supply of a valuable steam-producing

coal, and a coal fit for domestic and manufacturing purposes?” And there can be no doubt, from the reports before us, that this is a fact. That being so, I do not intend to discuss the question so far as the quantity or kind of coal is concerned. I think I rather astonished the House last year by calling attention to the number of millions of tons of fuel which we had at our disposal at the Collie; and since then, the Government, thinking that further information would be satisfactory to the House, have had other bores put down at the Collie coalfields, and these bores have turned out to be most satisfactory, inasmuch as we have found, at a depth of 650ft., a seam of coal of superior quality. The Government are continuing the bore to a depth of 1,000ft., as they are desirous of ascertaining whether there are any other seams underlying the large seam. We also intend to remove the bores ten or twelve miles nearer to the South-Western Railway line, to what is called Hamilton's Flat, in order to test whether there is not a further large deposit of coal at that place, as the result of the continuation of the Collie seam. It is admitted that this latter seam is rather small, but, as hon. members saw for themselves on the occasion of their visit, the coal in this neighborhood is superior for gas-producing purposes to the Collie coal. But I need not speculate upon what may be the result of the borings in that direction, for, whatever may be the result, I can say that the coal which has already been discovered, and which is in sight, is ample to justify the construction of the proposed railway to the Collie. In conclusion, I may say that the Government have given to hon. members every information in their power; but if there is anything I can add to that information, I shall be glad to do so. As some hon. members will probably ask what the Government intend to do with the coal deposits when the line is made, I may say that it is our intention to invite tenders for the raising of the coal necessary for the carrying on of public works, for the various Government Departments, and for the use of the railways.

MR. SIMPSON: The Government are going to work the fields?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn): No. We are going to call for tenders for the raising of the coal, and I am advised that there are many firms who will be glad to contract to do so at so much

per ton. And I anticipate that there will be a more substantial return from the line than the contract system would give, inasmuch as we have had many careful enquiries from several large English syndicates, with a view to working this coalfield, as soon as the railway to it is made, and for the further development of the country; and I have no doubt that we shall have more than one colliery started at the Collie. This being so, I have every possible confidence in recommending the measure to the House. The proposed railway has received the anxious investigation of the Government, for the last four or five years. As I have said, we have not attempted to rush on with the work, but have waited until we had evidence before us, which we believe fully warranted us in proposing the Bill, and I have now much pleasure in moving that the Bill be read a second time.

MR. LEAKE: I do not suppose that there will be any motion to read this Bill this day six months, but I cannot congratulate the Government upon the way in which they have dealt with the measure that is now before the House, and I think we have a right to complain of the difficulty we have experienced in getting information with regard to the Collie Railway. The Hon. the Commissioner of Railways has said that the Government has given anxious care to the Bill; that they have not hurried on with the work. That being the case, I think we should have received the report of the Engineer-in-Chief upon the prospects of the field, a little earlier than it came to hand. It is only when we are within three or four days of the recess that all the reports upon the field have come down to the House, and we are asked to pass this Bill with very slight information before us, and I do not think that any attempt has been made, as was suggested last session, to put down bores in other places than on the Collie coalfield, and no attempt has been made to test the country in any other way; and I think it is of paramount importance that this should be done, if we are to know whether along the existing lines of railways there is any probability of finding fuel as good as that of the Collie coal, nearer to the coast, and where it could be taken out without the cost of a special line. That has not been done, and the Government have evidently set their minds upon developing this particular part of the country without, as I say, properly testing other portions. I do not know that I will move to read the Bill this day six months,

but I must protest against the lack of information that has been furnished to the House. It would have been far better if, during the recess, the Government had fully considered the matter, so that they would have been able to tell us whether they had any scheme for the development of the Collie country, whether they intended letting it on mining leases, or to work the deposits generally. We do not know whether they intend to rely upon the existing mineral leases, or whether they propose to make special provisions with regard to the granting of leases. If we had some information or assurance from the Government that these leases would be taken up, and would be worked by private companies, it would be far more satisfactory. I enter my protest against the methods of the Government in regard to this railway, and I sincerely hope that other hon. members, if they agree with me, will also express themselves upon this subject. I say it is not right, at the end of the session, within a few days of the prorogation; that a Bill such as this should be brought down upon such meagre information; and I say that it is idle for the Commissioner of Railways to tell us that, because we had a hurried visit to the Collie—a picnic excursion, in fact—hon. members were in a position to have informed themselves upon the extent or quality of the fuel deposits which are to be found on the coalfields. I cannot say that I protest against this Bill, but I regret that measures have not been taken to test other localities, in order to satisfy this House and the country as to whether or not valuable fuel can be obtained in more accessible localities.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I should like to remark in regard to what the hon. member for Albany has just said upon what he calls the lack of information, that no measure has ever been submitted to this House upon which hon. members have been more fully informed than upon the Collie Coalfields Railway Bill. We have been engaged upon this subject for years. Last year we submitted data showing the results of the experiments made at the Collie up to that time, and now we present to hon. members additional reports upon the quality and value of the coal to be found there, as shown by tests made by the Locomotive Superintendent, engine drivers, and by scientific men. In fact, I do not think anyone can desire more full information, and if we went on investi-

gating for a year, it does not appear that anything more could be learned as to the character and quality of the coal. With regard to the actual examination of the country, we have been putting down bores since last session. It may be that the bore did not take quite the proper direction, and other bores have been made since, and this work has not been finished yet. We have bought a new bore, which is now at Georgetown, and which will do excellent work in testing the ground for coal. The borer is specially adapted for soft strata like coal, and it will bring up a core four or five inches in diameter. It is a very valuable machine, very perfect in its work, and it will be used for making bores throughout the country, so that we shall be able to continue our researches in many places as time goes on. As I said last year, because we have found a good fuel, we are not going to stop trying to find another and possibly a better coalfield, but, in the meantime, we should develop the one we have. I think that hon. members need have no doubt that the coal can be raised very cheaply, and that, as soon as the means of transport are provided, we shall be able to work the railway under similar regulations to those which are in force in Queensland and New South Wales, and which were passed under the Mineral Act of 1892. These regulations are, I believe, quite applicable to our present circumstances, but should they be found to be not applicable we can amend them. We have the Mineral Leases Act and we have besides other means of raising coal. I do not think that there need be any doubt of the means of working the coal deposits at the Collie as soon as the railway is made. I cannot agree with the hon. member for Albany that we have not given this matter full consideration, or that hon. members have been kept in the dark, although it is true that some of the reports upon the coal have only just been tabled, because they have only now come to hand. But we have lost no time in placing the reports before the House. I hope there will be no difficulty in passing this Bill, because I really believe that the railway in question will do a great deal of good to the country, not only in providing fuel within our own borders, but also in opening up a trial of very fair country in which there are immense mineral deposits.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I do not think that we are any further ahead now than we were last year in the matter of this railway, for, in pro-

posing to make the line, the Government have no scheme for working the coal mine. We have been told by the Commissioner that he intends to invite tenders for the raising of the coal, but what I want to know is whether the working shall be done systematically and scientifically, with proper timbering, otherwise the contractor may do a great deal of injury, which it will cost a great deal to repair. I hope that, during the recess, the Government will give attention to the leasing of the mine on terms that will provide for its proper working, and naming a certain price upon which the coal will be supplied, for I am satisfied that the Government cannot do the work as cheaply as it would be done by a private company. I did hope, by the time we were asked to pass this Bill that the Government would have formulated a scheme for the working of the mine, for I do not think that the Government will be able to raise the coal at a price that will enable it to compete with the imported article, which is a superior fuel to the lignite that is found at the Collie. There is another feature in connection with this railway, namely, in regard to the harbor works at Bunbury. If, as some people appear to suppose, the Collie coal is going to cause the expenditure of half a million of money upon harbor works at Bunbury, I think the discovery of this coal will prove to be a curse rather than a blessing. On this subject I notice an extract from the *Bunbury Herald*, which appears in the *Daily News* of last evening, and which reads as follows:—"The *Bunbury Herald* is informed that pressure is being brought to bear on the Government to afford better facilities for shipping in Bunbury. Messrs. Millar Bros., who have opened up an extensive timber mill at Mornington, and have also secured an extensive forest near Cookernup, wish to ship their timber at Bunbury, it being the nearest port. Another wealthy firm, Messrs. Sadler and Baxter, propose opening up a similar industry near the Collie on a very extensive scale. Added to this, we have had for some time in active operation four mills on the Donnybrook line, the proprietors of which are anxious to make Bunbury their shipping port for timber. It is to be hoped the residents of Bunbury will assist those gentlemen in their efforts to have a suitable harbor made here, and we feel sure the Government are fully alive to the advantage

"the colony will derive by developing an "industry second to none in the colony."

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): That only applies to moorings.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: If it only applies to moorings I do not know that I would object to every facility being given, but I would object to a huge sum of money being expended on a scheme for harbor works.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): We have had two schemes for Carnarvon.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: They are not harbor works. They are shipping facilities.

MR. A. FORREST: They cost £25,000, at any rate.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: As for that we have had £20,000 expended on the railway station at Bunbury, or rather on the railway station and the approaches. If any one had moved that this Bill be read this day six months, I should have supported the proposal. I think the Government should have come to this House prepared to say there was a syndicate willing to work the coal mines if a railway was constructed to them. There is no use in building a railway before we have someone ready to work the fields. The coal, I believe, is of an inferior character. It is a good steaming coal, and that is the only benefit it would be to us.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson): It has good gas qualities.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: There seems to be very little gas in it indeed, although it might be better later on.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: There is 20 per cent. of gas in it.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: That may be the case. At any rate, Sir, I do not think there is much probability of this coal being used by the shipping community. It would take up too much room, even if its steaming qualities were assured. Of course it will be of some value to the railways, and it may also be useful to local consumers. The whole thing is a trial, and I am not convinced that we would be justified in building this railway until we have had submitted some practical scheme for working the mines. I am aware of the fact that there is a very, strong feeling on the part of some members of the House that the line should be built, but while I have no intention myself of moving that the Bill be read this day six months, I should certainly support such a proposal if any other hon. member brought it forward.

MR. A. FORREST: Sir, I am very pleased indeed to be able to support the second reading of this Bill. It is somewhat strange to me to be able to find hon. members of this House crying out against what we have in this colony. That we have good coal is proved by the reports of the very best authorities in the old country and yet we find an hon. member of this House stating that the development of the industry will be a curse to the colony. [MR. RANDALL: He hardly said that]. The hon. member said that if it led to the construction of harbor works at Bunbury it would be a curse. For myself, I shall be very pleased if it is found the coal deposits are of such great value that we will have to spend a lot of money in harbor works at Bunbury, to keep pace with the industry. If it is going to be such an important industry, no one will more heartily support the erection of wharves and jetties than myself. I hope we shall have to build these harbor works. Nothing can be of such great benefit to this colony as the successful opening up of coalfields. It benefits everyone. In fact, we can never thoroughly prosper in this colony until we have some such aid as this to our manufactures and have other resources at work than the gold industry. We can take New South Wales as an example, and I think we will find that her coal supply forms the leading article of export for the colony [MR. R. F. SHOLL: Oh no]. Well, I have visited Newcastle, and I do not think any one who has been there and has seen the large amount of shipping, the bustle and the trade done at that port owing to the coalfields, can fail to recognise what an important industry it is. I only hop the day will come when large expenditure, in the way of wharfage accommodation at Bunbury, becomes absolutely necessary. Even if the construction of this line leads only to the supply of local wants, it will be worth building, and will employ men on the railways and open up a great industry in the coalfields. It will do more—it will be of great assistance to the timber industry; in fact, it would pay the people of this country to build the line for the timber trade alone. This is one of our great exports, and we must foster our exports if we want the colony to last long and the people to continue to prosper. We must produce more than we do now. It will show our faith in this country if we build this railway, and it will be a great thing for us to have our own coal. I do not agree with the policy of any hon. member who says this is not good

coal, when the reports are all against such a contention. It has been proved to be good coal, and it should be the last thing for hon. members to cast doubts upon the true value of these fields. The hon. member for Gascoyne appears to think that the great point against the construction of the railway is that the Government have not got someone who is prepared to work the mines as soon as the railway is built. I think, Sir, that, for the present, at any rate, the Government itself should work these mines and prove them, so that the people of the colony would be those to reap the benefit, instead of any syndicate. If the mines were let to anyone at the present time they would have to go for a mere song. If we work the mines for twelve months,—and that would not cost very much,—we would have so proved these fields that English experts, financiers, or whatever class you like to name them, would be prepared to step in and carry on the work. They would have to contribute such a revenue to the country that it would be equal to almost all other sources of revenue. I do not think the Government should let anyone work these mines, excepting themselves, because the full benefit to be reaped from the opening up of such valuable mineral wealth, should go to the people themselves. I trust the Government will not, under any circumstances, let such a valuable asset go out of their hands. As I have said before, the timber itself is sufficient to warrant the building of the line, and there should be no opposition to a line which will be of so much benefit to the whole of the people in the colony. I most heartily support the second reading.

MR. SIMPSON: I am glad to have the opportunity of supporting the second reading of this Bill. I need hardly say now that it is proved to have been of no disadvantage to have delayed this measure until now, while, at the same time, I certainly fail to see any advantage from further delay. I am sure we can pass the second reading on the facts that have been placed before us. We have not had these facts before, but now it is proved that the deposit is one of serviceable fuel, and it is a good steaming coal, and that it is of great commercial value. All this was not ascertained before. The Engineer-in-Chief, in his report on this subject, makes the following statement:—“As regards the value of Collie coal for local purposes, and especially for railway purposes, as compared with New-

castle coal, the various tests which have been made from time to time (*vide* Parliamentary Papers No. 9 of 1894, and No. 18 of 1895) differ from each other to some slight extent, but, to put the matter in the briefest possible language, the result, on the average, is practically as stated in my memorandum of 30/7/94 (Parliamentary Paper, No. 9 of 1894) namely: The result is, that the value of Collie coal so far obtained, as compared with Newcastle coal, for steam raising purposes, may be assumed to be, on the average as 70 is to 100 while, on the other hand, the cost of getting and carrying the Collie coal to a central point on the railway system, as compared with purchasing and conveying Newcastle coal to same point, is somewhat less than as 70 to 100, the result being that the Collie coal (of even the quality obtained up to the present time) would be somewhat cheaper to us than Newcastle coal; and, in addition to this, it has to be borne in mind that the Collie coal is probably better at lower depths than any which has hitherto been obtained, and also that, even if it were not any better, there would still be the advantage of establishing a local industry of considerable magnitude, without any cost to the colony.” Now, Sir, that is a positive statement. It is a positive reason which we have to-night, and which we had not before. The statement is a very satisfactory one. The Engineer-in-Chief says further—“the Collie coal measures have been further proved, to an extent which can leave no doubt whatever, in the mind of anyone, as to the coal being thoroughly suitable for steam and household purposes, and also as to its being of sufficient extent to last for many generations.” With regard to the arguments that have been adduced by the hon. member for West Kimberley, I would draw attention to the fact that provision has been made in the Mineral Lands Act whereby the Crown reserves the right to a royalty on all coal produced, so that it would still be largely to the interests of the colony if private people worked the mines; however, if the Government determine to carry on the work itself, I hope it will be in a less extravagant manner than the way in which the work connected with these coal fields has been done up to the present time. It has been perfectly ludicrous, the way in which the boring has been carried out. I do not know who is to blame for this, but there appears to be a divided responsibility

between the Mines Department, the Public Works Department, and that of the Premier. I do not think the way in which Government work on these fields has been carried out up to the present time, will be a too pleasant history to look back upon. I hope that the construction of this railway will open up a very useful industry. The reports are all satisfactory, with one exception, and that is the one of Johnson and Sons, who say, "we do not think that it would be suitable for locomotive engines, as "it disintegrates so rapidly when burning, "and, for the same reason, it would not be a "good heating coal." This is the only unsatisfactory report of the lot, and I altogether fail to see how it is possible for these gentlemen to have arrived at such a decision. I think we may safely rely on the other reports, and these are so satisfactory that I have great pleasure in supporting the second reading.

MR. LEFROY : I think it will now be admitted that the delay in passing this measure has been of great advantage, because the result of it is going to be that a unanimous vote will be secured. Some hon. members did not think they were justified, last session, on the information before them, in voting for the passing of this Bill. The information which we did not have last session, we now have before us ; while what has taken place during the past twelve months has fully justified every hon. member in voting for the second reading. I certainly cannot agree with the hon. member for Gascoyne that the Government should look out for people to work the coal measures before they build a railway. That would be a most unusual course to adopt, while the Government and Parliament will only be showing their faith in the resources of the country by building the railway first, and then letting people come in to work the mines and develop the fields afterwards. They certainly could not be expected to open up the fields before a railway was built. Certainly, we have one report which is not too satisfactory, but, for myself, I am quite satisfied to accept the opinions of Professor Etheridge and Dr. Woodward. Professor Etheridge, in his report says, "The present samples of the coal appear to be denser and more compact than the series examined some years ago." This shows they had samples before them previously and therefore they are in a better position to

pronounce on the coal now. Their reports show that the developments have been most satisfactory, and, generally speaking the hon. members who opposed the construction of this line previously are now able to support the second reading of the Bill. If there was nothing else we have our timber, which, in this part of the country, is quite sufficient to justify us in building this railway, and I am not an expert, nor is any hon. member of this House an expert, but, on the information before us, and taking into consideration the jarrah forests it touches, with the present circumstances and present prosperity of the colony, I think we are fully justified in authorising this work being undertaken.

MR. WOOD : I think, Sir, both the House and the Government have to be congratulated on the debate-to-day, compared with the storm which took place last session over this line to the coalfields.

MR. SIMPSON : That was not a storm.

MR. WOOD : I think it was. The delay in passing this Bill has been advantageous. It is said that delays are sometimes dangerous, but they are also sometimes advantageous, and that is the case in this instance. I supported the construction of this line last year, and I am now very glad to find there is a good chance of this railway being completed within the next few months. The hon. member for Geraldton has referred to the report of Messrs. Johnson & Sons. For myself, I think the facts are all in favor of the coal and they practically demonstrate both its quality for steaming, and for use as ordinary fuel. What is more satisfactory even than the reports of the experts, are the reports of local people. I had the pleasure of reading these reports in manuscript. The Commissioner of Railways kindly gave me the opportunity of reading them, and they were most satisfactory. They are from such gentlemen as Messrs. J. & W. Bateman, H. G. Barker, C. E. Stoneman, Bunning Bros, Wright & Gibb, Mumme, R. Honey, Neil McNeil & Coy., A. J. Diamond, E. Mayhew, J. J. Green, and many others. In fact, everybody who has used the coal has been fully satisfied, and those who have reported are the class of gentlemen who would not say any thing unless it was perfectly true. There is another point about the matter, and that is that the coal will be available for household use. At the present time, it is most difficult to get firewood, and even

then, not at a reasonable price. I have been trying for four days, and have not been able to get it, and, therefore, I hope the time is not far distant when we can have this coal for use in our own houses.

MR. SOLOMON: I think the reports now before us justify the belief that an unanimous vote will be taken on the second reading of this Bill. The excuse of the hon. members who refused to pass it last session was that sufficient information was not before the House. It has now been proved that this coal is of a most valuable character, but this was not so when the matter was last before the House. There can be no question that there is a likelihood of a most valuable industry being opened up, no matter whether it is going to bring a trade to Perth, or Fremantle, or Bunbury. The opening up of this industry will be of great advantage to the country generally. The reports before us are from the most eminent scientific men, and there can be no doubt as to the validity of them. We have reports from ship masters of all grades including those carrying on the coast, as well as those trading to other parts. Personally, I would say hon. members should take the statement of Captain Pitts as one of great value, and one which may be depended on. It is not necessary to go fully into the matter of the coal supply, but it is admitted it will be very useful for household purposes, if for nothing else, and I agree with the hon. member for West Perth when he says it is almost impossible to get firewood at a reasonable price. If coal can take the place of firewood, it will be most beneficial to the community. I do not think it is necessary to say anything further, because the House appears to be unanimous. I agree with the suggestion that the Government should find someone to work these coal mines, because they will be worked cheaper, possibly, by a syndicate, or private people. We know that these mines would be more economically worked outside of the Government. In an industry such as this, proper knowledge is required, and that is best obtained by private people. I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading.

MR. CONNOR: I feel I cannot allow the opportunity to pass without agreeing with what has been said on this subject, or without complimenting the Government on their determination to build this railway to the Collie Coalfield. Without going into details, and without posing as an expert, I think it will be

agreed by all those hon. members who have visited the site of the mine, that their own common sense was sufficient to tell them there is an immense body of coal there. There is no question whatever that there is such a deposit of coal at the Collie as to amply justify the construction of this railway. During the debate some hon. members have expressed the belief that the Government should not work these mines themselves, but that the aid of some wealthy syndicate should be called in. When the Government have developed the mines to a certain extent, and proved the coal there, I think it will be found most advisable for the Government to work the mines for the benefit of the country. I was very glad to hear the views expressed by the hon. member for West Kimberley on this subject. I am very pleased, indeed, to find that his views on political economy have somewhat changed from what they used to be, and that he is now an advocate of State ownership for important properties like this is likely to develop into. I hope, Sir, he will continue to advocate the same views in other directions, and I shall be pleased, at all times, to support him and compliment him. I cannot compliment the hon. member for Gascoyne as a critic. No doubt he is an expert on coal, and had he been in the House now, I should have liked to deal with his statements somewhat stringently. I heartily support the second reading.

MR. RANDELL: I think, Sir, we have now sufficient facts before us to justify the step that is about to be taken in authorising the construction of a railway to the Collie coalfield. The hon. member for East Kimberley has said there is a great deposit of good fuel on the field. There can be no question about it. I was more satisfied as to the great value of this mine when I visited the place, and found the stationary engine so hard at work hauling up the coal. My examination of the work being done, led me to the conclusion that we have at the Collie a large deposit of most serviceable coal. The reports made by Dr. Robertson had been fully borne out by the later tests made of the coal. The only suggestion made with regard to the coal was that, while there was little smoke, there were a great many sparks flying from the funnel during its use.

THE ATTORNEY - GENERAL (HON. S. BURT): We have a little Bill to stop that.

MR. RANDELL: With regard to the future

prospects for coal, I do not think it is worth while to prophecy just now. I hesitated last year before expressing any opinion in favor of constructing a railway to the field, because the information concerning it was insufficient. Now, there is the fullest information at hand, and, although it has not yet been proved that the field will be a permanent one, still I think we are justified by the circumstances in building a railway to it. With regard to the point as to whether the Government should work the coal mine, or should allow private individuals to do so, I am in favor of the latter course being adopted, and I think the Government should receive a royalty on the coal secured from the mine. At the present time, however, I think the Government should work it in order to prove its extent and permanency. As to the proposed route, by way of the Brunswick, I am perfectly satisfied that that is the best available, and I sincerely hope that the construction of the railway will so develop this new and very important industry, as to make it of lasting benefit to the country. I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Sir, it is almost superfluous for me to attempt to add one word to what has been already said upon this Bill. I was one amongst a very few members on this side of the House (the Opposition side) who, last session, gave a decided opinion that it was desirable to build this railway, and, from the enquiries I have made since that time, I am more confirmed in the attitude I then assumed towards the proposal. I had not the pleasure of accepting the Commissioner of Railway's kind invitation to inspect the coalfield, and I do not think I would have been much wiser if I had gone, nor could I have satisfied myself more fully that it was desirable to build this railway. I was always emphatically of the opinion that we had true coal on that field, although the question seems to be in dispute at the present time. Well, I remember that in Victoria there was a similar divergence of opinion as to the nature of the coal which was first discovered in the colony, and that the dispute lasted for something like 25 years. The consequence was that a vast amount of money was sent out of the country in the importation of coal, while large districts were held back from development. Now, those districts are being rapidly developed by the coal industry, and are proving to be great sources of wealth to the

State. I therefore think that we, in this colony, should take a lesson from the failings of our neighbors, as well as from their successes, and that when we see that they have made great mistakes, we should endeavor to avoid making them as well. Now, I think the gravest error we could possibly commit would be to neglect the development of this coalfield at the Collic. I think, with other hon. members, that, apart from the presence of coal in that district, there is enough to justify the construction of a railway to that district for other reasons; but if we find that a good serviceable description of coal is available there, we shall not go far wrong in building this railway. I only desire to make one more remark, and that is to express the hope that the Government will not allow this coalfield, or indeed any other native industry, to fall into the hands of a monopolist syndicate. I am finally of opinion that the beneficial results of these industries should be fairly distributed amongst the people, and I think if a centre of population were established on this coalfield, the people of which could, under the guidance of the Government, establish this new industry on a sound basis, much good to the country would be the result. I do hope, therefore, that the industry will not be allowed to pass into the hands of a monopolist syndicate, who would only take away the wealth that lies at our very doors.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE.

The Clauses of the Bill were agreed to without amendment or discussion.

Bill reported without amendment.

ELECTORAL BILL.

The amendments to this Bill which were made in committee, were agreed to, and the report was adopted.

DONNYBROOK TO BRIDGETOWN RAILWAY BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Sir, I rise to move the second reading of this Bill, "to authorise the construction of a railway from Donnybrook to Bridgetown." A year has passed since this House approved of this railway being constructed, and voted £100,000 for the purpose. As hon. members are aware,

the Government undertook on that occasion, not to introduce the Bill for the construction of the Railway until this session, and that they also promised that they would not do anything in connection with the matter at all, except to make the surveys and prepare information for the guidance of the House. Of course we all know that there was some opposition—not only in this House, but in another place—to the construction of this railway. Well, a year has passed, as I before stated, and the Government have kept their promise not to take any action towards constructing the line, except to have the surveys made, and collect all necessary information, especially in regard as to which was the better route—the Preston or the Thompson's Brook route,—upon which there was a considerable division of opinion. The fullest investigations have been made, and acting upon the advice of the professional adviser, the Engineer-in-Chief, and also after giving the matter a very great deal of consideration, the Government have come to the conclusion that the route from Donnybrook to Bridgetown via the tinfields, which is known as the Thompson's Brook route, is the more preferable one for the railway to take. It has a great many advantages over the Preston route, the most important of which is, that it is 11 miles shorter, and anyone who has considered the *pros.* and *cons.* of the matter, must come to the conclusion that the Government have chosen the best route available. I think I may say, for the information of those hon. members who are not acquainted with the district in the immediate vicinity of Thompson's Brook route, which this railway will serve, that it is a very fine district, possessing a large extent of fairly good land, which is capable of much cultivation, a good climate, and a very good rainfall. Added to this, the railway will pass close to the tinfields, which are proving to be an important industry in that part of the colony, and which I think are capable of much further development. The construction of this railway, Sir, will be to further the object we all have in view, and that is to open up those portions of the country which are capable of producing. We have our mineral resources to the eastward, and the goldfields which are being very quickly and extensively developed in accordance with the approved policy of the Government, but, at the same time, we should do all we can to encourage

the agricultural districts to produce food supplies, by giving them railway facilities to send their produce to the goldfields' markets. I think we are all agreed that it is our duty to give facilities of transit to all producing centres, and I am sure that no one will deny that the Blackwood district, of which Bridgetown is the centre, is an important agricultural district. It only wants a railway to make it of still greater importance. Without a railway, a district like the Blackwood cannot compete with other agricultural districts which have this means of transit, and the only result that can follow, if Parliament declines to sanction the construction of this railway, will be that the district will go backward, instead of forwards and that it will revert to the condition it was first found in, when the wild dogs and the eagle-hawks were in possession of it. Possibly the old settlers would remain if the railway were not sanctioned, but I am positive that no new settlers would go there. But I feel sure, Sir, that there is no hon. member who would like to see such a fertile district as the Blackwood go backward, and, that being so, I am certain that hon. members will not hesitate to give the district the one thing that is wanted to make it leap forward, and that is a railway. And we must remember that this railway will establish a new centre of population, and that will be Bridgetown, which will be the terminus of the railway, and to which all the settlers to the south-east and south-west will take their produce for conveyance to the markets at the metropolis, while it will stimulate the settlers all round that district to greater efforts in cultivating their land. But, Sir, there is something more than that to be said in favor of this railway. I look forward to the time (and I wish to impress this strongly upon hon. members) when this railway will be extended beyond Bridgetown into that beautiful karri country beyond. I entertain the most sanguine hopes for the future of that portion of the colony to which I have referred as the karri country. The soil there is of a splendid character, and it is 7ft. deep, and is capable of producing anything that we require in the country, while the land is covered with a thick undergrowth and magnificent timber; and I repeat that I look forward hopefully to the time when this railway, which I am now advocating, will be run through that country, and beyond it, even as far as the magnificent port of Albany. It

may be said that I am looking too far ahead, but I do not think I am. The distance from Bridgetown to Albany is not more than 150 miles, and, in view of the rapid strides which the colony is making, I do not think that my hopes will remain unrealised for any lengthened period. Now, with regard to the railway which this Bill proposes. I would like to point out to any hon. member who may not be in favor of its construction at all, that it must be constructed some time or other, but that the only question is whether the present is the most opportune time for carrying out the work. My advice to hon. members is that the work should be done at once. A sum of £100,000 has already been voted for the purpose, but the Engineer-in-Chief estimates that the total cost of the line will be £170,000. If the House approves of the construction of the railway, the Government propose to call for tenders for the construction of the whole of the line, in preference to building it bit by bit, and to proceed with the work in the recess. Then the balance of £70,000, for the work could be voted next session, as it is not likely that the whole of the £100,000 which has been already voted, will be spent before next session. I would also like to point out to hon. members that, as far as the present Government are concerned, our desire is to do all we can towards giving extra facilities of transit to the agricultural communities, and, personally, I hope and believe that this railway will be but the first of many more agricultural railways in this colony. We have no cause to regret the policy we have adopted in the past of extending railway communication to agricultural centres, and, in support of what I say, I would inform hon. members that for the financial year which ended on June 30 last, the railway revenue was £295,732, and the expenditure £183,940, showing a credit balance, therefore of £112,792. And this source of revenue is still increasing, for, during the 12 months ended September 30 last, the revenue was £322,341, as against £171,995 for the corresponding period which ended on September 30, 1894, thus showing an increase of £150,346. Then the whole of the revenue of the colony is going up by leaps and bounds, and we can find equal cause for congratulation in perusing some of the figures. The revenue for the financial year which ended on June 30 last was £1,125,940, whereas the revenue for the year which ended on September 30 last

was £1,235,903, showing an increase for the twelve months ended on September 30, 1895, over the revenue for the twelve months ended June 30, 1895, of £109,963; and if we compare the revenue for the twelve months ended on September 30, 1895, with the revenue for the twelve months ended on September 30, 1894, we will find that while for the former period it was, as I have before stated, £1,235,903, for the year ended on September 30, 1894, it amounted to £780,287, showing an increase of £445,616. Surely then, Sir, in the face of these facts, we should not be afraid to open up such a district as the Blackwood, which we believe is capable of producing so very prolifically.

At 6:30 p.m. the Speaker left the chair.

At 7:30 p.m. the Speaker resumed the chair.

HANSARD PARLIAMENTARY REPORTS.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

MR. MORAN: Sir, kindly allow me to explain, before the business proceeds. When I referred to a paragraph in the *Daily News*, this evening, in reference to my remarks in a previous discussion, I thought the matter I referred to had some connection with the *Hansard* reports, as it appeared in the same paper. I have since found that this paragraph had no connection with *Hansard*, and is simply a newspaper paragraph, and that any misrepresentation that might occur there has no connection with *Hansard* at all. I also acknowledge that the passage I referred to, in the *Hansard* report of a discussion on the Goldfields Bill, may be considered a fair report of what I did say on the occasion. Of course I did not lay much stress on that matter, in referring to it this evening, as it was the newspaper paragraph I objected to most strenuously. I have much pleasure in stating I was laboring under an error in supposing that this paragraph in the same paper was connected with the *Hansard* reports; and as I am always the first to acknowledge a mistake, I do so now.

THE SPEAKER: When the hon. member mentioned the paragraph in the *Daily News*, I thought he was making a mistake; because I have read that paragraph myself, and it has no connection with the *Hansard* reports at all.

DONNYBROOK TO BRIDGETOWN RAILWAY BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest), in

resuming his speech on the motion for the second reading, said: When we adjourned for an hour, I was referring to the large increase in the revenue from railways, as showing that this House has no reason to regret anything it has done up to the present time in regard to its authorisation of the construction of railways; and I went on to say the railway revenue was increasing largely. I showed also that the revenue of the colony was increasing at a rapid rate, and that we have received £455,616 more revenue for the twelve months ending on the 30th September, 1895, than we had received for the twelve months ending on the 30th September, 1894. My object in referring to these figures was to show that the colony is in a thoroughly prosperous condition, and that there has never been a time in our history when the colony's finances were so thoroughly satisfactory. That being so, I do not think this is a time when this House should have any fear, or any desire, to delay a public work which I think all will admit will greatly facilitate production in this colony. I think hon. members of this House cannot be accused, as a general rule, at any rate, of not having faith in the resources of the colony, or of not having faith in the future of the colony; I think that what we have done during the last five years will certainly prove that we have not been half-hearted or afraid, but rather that, if we have been bold, we have at the same time been careful and cautious. There is no doubt that if the people who live in this country have not faith in it, how can we expect those who live out of it to have faith in it? I have no doubt that in the past there has been amongst us—even amongst those who have been our best colonists—a feeling that we have been going too fast under the new form of Government, and that we were not justified in the large works we were undertaking. That feeling was natural enough as coming from them, because they have had such a long career of hardship and difficulty under the old system that they could not realise the change that has come over this colony as compared with what they had experienced in the past. There is no doubt that a great many people in this colony, who have borne the burden and heat of the day under the old conditions, have had a feeling that we ought to be very careful lest trouble may come upon us as the result of going too fast. But, while we respect this feeling, we have got into a new order of things, and can realise

now that the conditions in this colony are not what they used to be; and I am glad to be able to say now that many persons who opposed the policy inaugurated by this Government, and the policy approved by this House, in the last few years, have come to believe we are thoroughly justified in the course we have taken. I thoroughly believe this colony cannot lose by building a railway into a productive part of it. If it can be said that this colony, in its present position, cannot afford to build a railway into a district that is highly productive, that has a good climate, an abundant rainfall, and a large quantity of excellent timber—if it can be said we are not justified in building a railway into a district such as I maintain the Blackwood district is, then I say there is something I cannot understand. What is to be the end of this country whose affairs are entrusted to us, unless we can open it up and utilise it? It is no use leaving it without the means of communication, and expecting it to develop without effort on our part. We cannot go on as we have done in the past, because people in these unopened districts cannot now compete, in sending produce to market, against those producers in other districts who have the advantages of railway communication; therefore, a producing district like the Blackwood, that is not opened by railway, must be deserted by the agricultural producer—it is almost deserted now by the agricultural producer, and will be absolutely deserted and be used only for stock-raising purposes, unless it is to be connected by railway with the markets of the colony. No other use can be made of it, because agricultural production will not pay in that district without means of conveying the produce cheaply to market. The producers there cannot compete without railway communication, against the producers in other districts that are favored with railway facilities.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Can they compete when they get a railway?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir. J. Forrest): I believe they can; and, if they cannot, the only thing to be said is that the country is no good. There is no doubt that that district is productive. It has good soil, a good climate, and a plentiful rainfall, and it is capable of large development. I would like to make one or two observations in regard to the report of the Engineer-in-Chief, which report is very clear, and deals with the matter from an engineering point of view. It will be seen

he proposes to use 60lb. rails, which will slightly increase the cost. I think that in making this recommendation he is very wise, and I regret we have not used this heavier class of rails on all our lines, as we can by this means get better speed, and they are altogether preferable. The curves and grades on this line are not so good as we could desire. The grade of 1 in 45 will not be a bad grade, however, when we consider that it is the same grade as that on which we have been spending £145,000 in making, as an improvement, on the Eastern Railway up the Darling Range, through the tunnel deviation that is now being constructed. In regard to curves, I certainly have had a great objection to the 8-chain curves on this line, and for a time, I went so far in my objection as to favor the Preston Valley route for this railway in order to avoid the curves; but I have been convinced by the Engineer-in-Chief that these 8-chains will not, after all, be very bad for traffic; and as he says that by using 60lb. rails there will be no difficulty in running trains 30 miles an hour on the 8-chain curves, that removes the only objection I have had, and I think it is all we need desire for the traffic at present time. Then, on the Preston Valley route there would have been some 10-chain curves—a good many—so that there would not be much difference between the two routes in this respect, except that one route would have many more curves than the other. Hon. members will also see, by the report of the Engineer-in-Chief, that he does not see any difficulty in constructing the line for the amount of money estimated; and therefore we may take it that, with this grade and these curves, we will be able to run 30 miles an hour on the 60lb. rails, and that speed is quite as fast as it is necessary to run, under our present circumstances. I am glad, indeed, to know from some hon. members, and I believe it is the general feeling, that the time has arrived in our history when we can afford to undertake this public work. A year has gone by since the matter was last before us for discussion, and during that time our circumstances have no doubt improved in every way, so that those hon. members who had doubts as to the wisdom of spending this amount of money last year may not, and I hope will not, have any doubt on that point now. I see no reason why we should not embark on this undertaking at the present time. There were difficulties last session, as we know—more

particularly in the other branch of the Legislature—in regard to this railway, but I do not think these difficulties will be found to exist now, when this Bill goes before hon. members in another place; especially if we can pass the Bill in this House by a fairly large vote, or, as I hope, unanimously. I hope that those hon. members of this House who were opposed to this railway last year will now join hands with the Government and with those who supported it, and will give to this district the advantage of railway communication. I believe the district is thoroughly deserving of it, and that this will be a work which will prove of great advantage to the colony, from a production point of view, in the future. I do not mean for a moment to say that this railway will pay from the very start, but I believe it has as good a chance of paying as any other agricultural railway that has been constructed in the past, or will be constructed in the future. I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

THE SPEAKER: I may inform the House that the plans and schedule of the proposed railway route have been laid upon the table of the House, in compliance with the Statute.

MR. SIMPSON: It will be agreed by the House that the Premier only does justice to those who have been opposed to the construction of this railway, when he says no one has expressed an opinion that a railway should not be built to the Blackwood district. It has been admittedly a question of expediency as to the time when that railway should be built. Referring to the report of the Engineer-in-Chief, it will be observed that the cost has grown from £100,000 last year to £174,000 this year. That is a very large increase, and is perhaps caused by the present proposal to construct the railway direct to Bridgetown. It is very wise that the railway should go to some definite place; for whereas the scheme put before us last year was to take the railway "towards Bridgetown," the railway is now to go definitely to somewhere. I think we are all agreed as to the magnificent resources of timber, the good climate, the well-watered country, and the magnificent soil of that district. But there is no doubt the Premier is largely governed, in the immediate construction of this railway, by considerations that affect his heart rather than his head. He seems to think the people of that district have a claim on the sentimental rather than the commercial con-

sideration of the matter; for I do not imagine he would contend for a moment that, if two or three commercial men were sent down there to ascertain whether the construction of this railway would be a wise investment in which to sink £174,000, he could anticipate from them a very hearty assent to his proposition. A deputation which recently waited on the Premier, in reference to the question of rival routes, made out that there was a total of 150 tons of produce per annum to be carried from that district to market—19 tons by one route, and 131 tons by the other route. This was stated somewhat authoritatively, as I gathered from the newspaper report of the interview; though, as we are not permitted to read from newspapers, I cannot, as I would like to do, quote some of the remarks made in that interview. We are practically asked to vote £174,000 to construct a railway into what we know to be a fertile district, which has been settled very many years, and now turns out 150 tons of produce per annum. We are asked to put another unprofitable railway on the back of our Traffic Department, and to endeavor to make it pay. The Traffic Department has already to support the Boyanup to Busselton line and the Boyanup to Donnybrook line, and now we are asked to tack on to it this line to Bridgetown. The Premier, in introducing the Bill, said the Government did not propose to ask for the further amount of £74,000 this year, in addition to the £100,000 authorised to be raised for this work, but to leave the further amount to a subsequent session of Parliament, and that the Government do not anticipate spending the whole of this money during the next twelve months. I would ask, have any particular changes occurred since last session—have any new resources been discovered, any new commercial advantages—to induce this House to pass the railway this session? Have we not large areas of agricultural land already opened up along our opened railways? And can it be contended that a limit to the possibilities of agricultural settlement on the good land along our opened railways has yet been reached? Are we not aware there are huge areas of agricultural land along those railways that are not at all occupied. The allusion made by the Premier to the report of the Engineer-in-Chief is peculiar, for that report is remarkable in this respect, that while the Engineer-in-Chief gives in his report on the Collie Coalfield Railway, commer-

cial reasons why that line should be built, he significantly refrains from giving anything of the sort in his report on the Bridgetown Railway.

THE PREMIER: He can reckon up the coal, but he cannot reckon up the produce.

MR. SIMPSON: Further than this I do not think it is necessary for me to go, from the engineering point of view. The other considerations involved as to the various interests to be served and the character of the land to be opened up along the respective routes, are rather questions of railway policy than of engineering. My own opinion is that this House, having in view the interest of the country, would be acting wisely and carefully conserving its best interests by postponing the construction of this railway for some years. The resources of that district, the good climate, the water supply, and the magnificent timber forests will not disappear by waiting. Are we to support a policy of constructing railways because some old settlers, for whom we have profound respect, and who, as far as I could judge from my visit to the district, seemed to have done pretty well—I did not see many poor men in the district, and I do not think there is anything like destitution down there for want of a railway; they all seemed pretty comfortable, and not too hard-worked, and not too excited, and did not seem to have what we may call too much palpitation—are we to support the building of this railway because some old settlers are entitled to consideration? Whether the Premier anticipated a huge settlement was to grow immediately it was announced that this railway was to be constructed, I do not know; but this House would do wisely, in the interest of the country, by declining to build this railway at present. Let us get our other agricultural lands settled and our other agricultural railways in working order, before building this railway to open up more country for settlement. Personally, I should like to find it my duty to vote for the second reading of this Bill; but, sitting here as a representative of the people, I cannot see that the estimate of the traffic as supplied recently by a deputation furnishes any reason why £174,000 should be borrowed on the credit of the colony, to be sunk in a railway which presents no reasonable prospect of a remunerative investment. That this railway will pay some day I cannot doubt, and especially if, as the Premier says, this is to be part of a future through line to Albany, that great port of the

future; and of course that is an element in the consideration of this question. I think I fairly state public opinion, when I say there is no commercial man in this community who would at present, for himself or others, devote so large a sum as £174,000 to construct this railway at the present time. I shall oppose the second reading.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I rise to ask for an assurance from the Government that, if the second reading is carried to-night, the hon. member for Albany, who is interested largely in this railway, and who is away from us to-night, should have an opportunity, at a future stage, of expressing his views on the question. If that is understood, I think it may not be necessary to retard the second reading of the Bill to-night. When this project was before the House last session, I expressed myself as opposed to the construction of this railway. My reasons for opposing it were simply these. First of all, it is distinctly what I would call an agricultural railway. Secondly, we have a large amount of agricultural land that is being well served by the existing railways, and is not yet in profitable occupation; therefore, to construct another railway of this character, would be simply bringing in a competitive line with those already existing. I express the opinion then that, for some years to come—perhaps in a decade—it will not be possible—at any rate in my judgment it is not desirable—to expect that this railway can pay. The question of constructing railways in this colony will have to be considered with very great care. There is a tendency, in times such as these, when we have an overflowing Treasury and a general feeling of buoyancy in the hearts of most of the people, to overlook those first principles of judicious commercial investment which this House should necessarily consider. What do we propose to do? What do the Government ask us to consent to have done? To expend £170,000, or thereabouts, in constructing a railway into a district which, as the Premier himself has said, the people have been leaving and must leave because they cannot make a living. Well, the country there cannot be of the most attractive nature if the men who are there—[THE PREMIER: Young men, I said]—if young men brought up in the district are likely to leave it. If the district has not within itself inherent qualities sufficient to retain the native and locally-born young men,

who may be expected to understand and grasp the possibilities of the soil and climate better than others going there from outside, how can it be reasonably expected that a vast quantity of agricultural land in this district—when there is all the other good land, well situated, along railways already existing, and having the attractions that have been advertised for years—how can it be expected this land will be taken up and cultivated by new people going into this district, in sufficient quantity to make payable freight for this railway? And, if the line will not pay, what is going to happen? Are we to construct this railway for retaining those people who are there already, but who, as the Premier fears, will leave it, and on the off-chance that other persons may be induced to go there and settle? But supposing we fail in both these things—supposing the young men who are there do not stay, and supposing the other energetic men, young or old, do not go there, what will you then do with this railway? What will you do if there is no population to feed it with traffic? What do you expect to do with it? You are going to put this new line on your railway system, and you will have to pay the interest and cost of upkeep, besides running a certain number of trains; therefore, the constant drain of money required for keeping this railway running will have to be made up from the proceeds of other portions of the railway system. From all I have heard of this district, of which I have no personal knowledge, I believe there is a vast amount of wealth in it. That, I think, may be admitted. There is a vast amount of good timber, as we have been told, and there is a considerable amount of rich soil, perhaps some of the richest in the southern districts. These are attractive things, and if the House can be assured that, by the construction of the railway, this good soil will be cultivated and these rich belts of timber are likely to be utilised in sufficient quantity to cover the working expenses of this railway, I think we should be justified in constructing it. But up to the present I have not been able to gather, either from residents in Southern districts, or from the evidence laid before this House, or any evidence I have been able to gather from those better acquainted with the district than I am, that there is any reasonable prospect of this railway being made to pay for many years to come. Then, I ask, is it reasonable we should construct this kind of railway?

Have we not the experience of all parts of Australia to show that what has ruined the railway systems elsewhere has been the constructing of lines that do not pay? Is it not so in every one of the other colonies, that what has ruined their railway systems has been the constructing of lines by yielding to considerations of the heart rather than of the head? When we see men in the Blackwood district struggling amidst difficulties, we are apt to forget the principles of business, and to allow our sympathies to go out to those men who are struggling, and say, "Really these men ought to have a railway." I confess I have a very strong feeling in that direction, and if I could only convince myself there was a reasonable prospect—say within the next three, four, or five years—that the traffic on this line could be brought up to the standard of nearly covering expenses, I should be satisfied to give them a railway. If the Premier can satisfy me of that, I should be disposed to vote for it. I am quite ready to be convinced, but I would like to see the man who can convince me. Speaking seriously, I do ask this House to consider whether it is not possible for us to allow our sympathies for the people thus situated to go beyond our judgment, in reference to such matters. I just throw it upon the Government to produce evidence showing that this railway can be made to pay, within measurable distance; and, if so, I think these persons in the Blackwood district are worthy of sympathy and of help. I think also that a district such as this is worthy of some extent of development. We have no evidence before us which leads at all in the direction of supposing that this railway can be made to pay for very many years to come. Holding, as I do, that the first duty of members of this House is to see that the expenditure of this country is rightly directed, I feel that, as at present advised, I must vote against the second reading of this Bill.

MR. LEFROY: When this question was before us last session, I gave it as my opinion that we should wait a little before entering on the construction of this railway, because I thought we were borrowing too much money for public works at that time; that we could dock the amount in some way, and that the delaying of this work would be one way by which we could dock the amount of the loan. The circumstances of the colony have very much altered since that time, and we are now in a very much better position than we were

in before. I gave it as my opinion, at the time, that although I was not then prepared to vote for this railway, I certainly hoped to be able to do so in a year or two from that time and I am happy to say that time has now come. It appears to me that the arguments brought forward by the hon. member for Nannine and the hon. member for Geraldton are in some way rather in favor of the railway. The hon. member for Geraldton admits that the land is very fertile, that there were no poor people to be seen when he visited the district, and the only thing he seemed to object to was that they were not too excited. I can well imagine that people in that district, isolated as they have been from all the causes that have excited people in other parts of the colony, and cut off from the rest of the world, would not be in a state of excitement when the hon. member was visiting the district last year. The hon. member for Nannine also admits there is a vast amount of wealth in that district, and that there is some of the richest soil, possibly, in the whole colony; but, at the same time, he is not prepared to vote for the railway at present. I think if these circumstances are granted—that the district has a very fertile soil and that there are no poor people there—these are incentives to us for agreeing to the construction of this railway; because they point to the fact that we have good land there, and that the settlers, even without a railway, are able to get a livelihood out of the land. The Premier has told the House he is afraid the people will leave the district if they do not get a railway, especially the young men. I can thoroughly understand that, because I know that in certain agricultural districts having the benefit of railway communication, where the railways are certain to pay, the residents are not increasing as they might be expected to do; and I know that in the Blackwood district the settlers must find it very difficult to cart large loads of produce over long distances to a market, at a payable rate. Therefore, no matter how fertile the land is, if those settled on it are to compete with other districts that have railways, I can quite understand why young men should leave it to better their prospects in more favored districts. Another reason which has been urged by opponents of this line is that we have already a large extent of agricultural railways, giving access to good land. But I regret very much that what ought to be our largest agricultural railway

is offering no inducement to settlement—I mean the railway from Perth to Geraldton, which goes through some of the best agricultural land in the colony—and I know that in the Midland district a great many of the young men, who ought to be settling on the soil and cultivating it, are leaving it because they cannot acquire land on their own account. Therefore, I can quite understand why the young men should leave the Blackwood district, unless they get a railway. The cases of the Midland and the Blackwood districts are somewhat analogous, though not quite the same; and I think it is a matter for regret that there is so much agricultural land shut up at present, and that the prices which owners are asking for it are such as to make it utterly impossible for people to acquire land and settle on it. Until those who own large areas of agricultural land disgorge it, the railways which now serve it will be of no benefit in promoting settlement. I do not look upon it altogether as a question of sympathising with these struggling settlers in the Blackwood district, by building them a railway for merely sentimental reasons; but I do think we have, in that district, land of a quality different from that along our present agricultural railways; that we have there a different climate and different soil, and, therefore, a country where products differing from those in other districts can be grown, at a profit. [Mr. SIMPSON: See *Hansard* for what you said last year.] I think the hon. member for Geraldton will find, if he refers to *Hansard*, that I said last year that I found there was a great deal of very good land in that district, that I was well pleased with the land I saw there, that it was well watered, but that I thought it would require bold men with some capital to clear the big trees and settle there. But, as I said then, and I am prepared to say now, that I think the Blackwood district is deserving of a railway, and I think now that it will pay the colony to construct a railway. We must, in these days, march along with the times, and without railway communication in these days, a district is entirely shut out and neglected. Considering the present financial condition of the colony, I think we are in a condition to construct this railway; and I sincerely hope those old settlers in the district, whose acquaintance the hon. member for Geraldton made when he was there, will become a little more excited, and

that their excitability will extend towards the clearing out of some of the enormous gum trees that we saw growing down there; and that the clearings will be utilised for growing many of the useful and agreeable products which, we hope, will be sent to the central markets in the early future, from that very fertile district.

MR. A. FORREST: I intend to support the second reading of this Bill, and I do not think the hon. member for Geraldton can twit me with turning round. I supported the project when it was before us last session, and will do so this session. I will now try to convince the hon. member for Nannine that this railway will pay, by stating some facts. In the first place, this railway is to be built a distance of 46 miles, and it will traverse very productive and fertile country the whole way. The route taps some of the best land in the colony, and there are miles of loads of the finest timber in Western Australia—jarrah timber; no karri there—so that the railway will have payable traffic from the start, if it has only jarrah to bring to market. We know the timber cutting industry supports a large population in this colony, and that the whole of the money expended on it is spent in the colony; and we know that is not so with some other industries. Timber cutting is all labor and food for those engaged in it, and that is an important factor in connection with this railway. The export of jarrah is becoming a very large industry; we hear of a large capital being embarked in the erection of mills on the South coast; and when these two railways to the Blackwood and the Collie are built, you may be assured the fine timber in these districts will not remain long in its present position. In the next place, the district of Nelson, although isolated and out of competition with other parts of the colony, yet supports a fair population at present. In the year 1891, the number of people in the Nelson district was 652, and that is the smallest district in area within the colony. Then, without considering the possible freight in fruit and wheat and other crops, these people had, in 1891, nearly 8,000 head of cattle, 18,000 sheep and 1,250 horses. Therefore, I think the hon. member for Nannine will agree with me that settlers who have to cart their produce 40 or 50 miles, at the present low rate realised for some kinds, and who are entirely cut off from markets, are not in a condition to compete with settlers in other districts served by rail-

ways, and would not be able to do it if they had the best soil in the world. In the Blackwood district we have a great fruit-growing country, where the present production could be increased a thousand-fold; and though there are only a few hundred acres under crop, yet if hon. members visited it in the fruit season they would see the trees breaking down with loads of fruit, and would be convinced that the district is capable of supporting a large population in fruit growing. Another important factor, in building this railway, is that the whole of the land through which the line passes is Crown land. The railways in other agricultural districts have been made entirely through freehold land, whereas along this railway there is no freehold land worth speaking about—perhaps a few thousand acres in the whole length of 46 miles. Along the Eastern railway and the South-Western railway the whole of the country had been alienated from the Crown before the lines were made, and there was no chance for people to secure land for settling on, except by paying exorbitant prices to private owners. The whole of the country along the route to the Blackwood will be thrown open to selectors on easy terms from the Crown; and that is a most important feature of the scheme. I hope that these few facts will have convinced the hon. member for Nannine, and that he will now vote for the railway. I am sure it is a line we ought to have built years ago; and, if it had been made twenty years ago, the district would have been in a different condition from that which it is in to-day. Our young people have been leaving it because they saw no chance of being brought into contact with the capital and other progressive parts of the colony, where they could find a market for their produce. How is a settler there to live and compete with producers in other districts, where railways convey the produce cheaply to market? I often wonder how people living there have stayed so long. When I was a young man in a Southern district, not then opened by a railway, I soon saw it would be useless for me to stay in a district like that, and I came at once to the centre, where there was some scope. Young men have been leaving the Blackwood district because there have been no inducements for settlement—no means of getting produce to market at a profit, so as to be able to compete with other districts that have railways.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. A. R. Richardson): When this railway was before the House last session, I would not support it because, while I believed thoroughly that the Blackwood is a district to which railway communication must be extended in the near future, I had misgivings at that time as to whether this railway was not somewhat premature. Taking our recollection back to last year, we were engaged in borrowing a considerable sum for public works, and were not in a position to accurately forecast the results of that borrowing, and what would be the position of the colony when we had got into the thick of spending the money, because our goldfields had not reached that stage of development they are in now, and our finances had not reached that flourishing condition in which we now find them, and many things were then uncertain which are accomplished facts to-day. I agree that we must not allow our flourishing condition to excite us. But, to return to the argument, I think the condition and the circumstances in which we find ourselves now completely alter the case, and if it was justifiable to have some qualms of conscience as to whether the amount to be borrowed and expended on this public work was justifiable a year ago, I think the objections on those grounds are all now dissipated into thin air. We find ourselves now in a financial position which will thoroughly justify us in undertaking a work like this without further delay; and, supposing the amount to be £170,000, yet hon. members will observe that, in the report of the Engineer-in-Chief, 15 per cent. is allowed for contingencies in the construction of this line, it being a difficult line, with some heavy grades; and though the exact computation was something like £160,000, it is wise to allow a liberal amount for contingencies—I say, supposing the cost to be £170,000, the interest payable on this amount of borrowed money will be £6,000 per annum. What I wish particularly to point out are some peculiar circumstances in the agricultural conditions of this district. Fortunately for us, it is a district that is capable of yielding those kinds of products which other parts of the colony are not so suitable for producing. We have a large amount of agricultural country opened up by railways now, and I think if this railway was to pass through agricultural country under exactly similar conditions, I should be inclined to say we were not justifi-

fied in making this railway. But the other districts are wheat-growing or mainly cereal producing districts, whereas in the Blackwood District we have a climate and soil which are favorable to the production of many other kinds of products, such as potatoes, onions, English fruits, dairy produce, cheese, pork, bacon, and a large variety of agricultural products which—to our disgrace be it said—we are importing from other countries in large quantities. Indeed we are now sending away thousands of pounds annually to pay for agricultural products which the Blackwood district is particularly suitable for producing, but I do not think we shall ever produce these things in that or other districts, in sufficient quantity for supplying the colony's wants, unless we make railways into those districts which are specially adapted to produce these articles. Another point is that many of the products for which the Blackwood district is suitable are of that description which will not stand long carriage. Such things as potatoes and onions, when carted a few miles, are so increased in cost that all profit is knocked out of them. You have the best climate at the Blackwood for producing potatoes and onions and other things that are heavy in carriage; but if you ask a producer to cart these things twenty miles, you take away all the possibility of profit; so that the only way to induce the production of these heavy articles is to make a railway. The same may be said of fruits in their green stage. The Blackwood climate is specially adapted for English fruits, such as cherries, raspberries, strawberries, and those delicious and delicate fruits which many parts of our colony will not produce; but who would think of producing these things in that district and carting them to market in the green stage, if he had not the cheap facility of a railway? The only way we can hope for these fruits to be produced so that the people in populous centres may enjoy them, is by making railways into districts which are capable of producing them. I speak with authority in saying there are gentlemen who have taken up land in the colony and are prosecuting this very industry, by growing raspberries and strawberries on a large scale. Even if you take it on the ground that it would be an absolute luxury to make a railway to the Blackwood district, I believe it would be almost justified, because the central communities about Perth will, I believe, shortly be able to afford the

indulgence in many luxurious and beautiful fruits which that climate is capable of producing. Another argument, which I think is a good one, is that the hon. member for Geraldton observed no poor people down there; and I think no better testimony as to the fertility of the soil could be given, as showing that people who have been isolated so long, and have been so far from any market, are yet able to make a comfortable livelihood amid such unfavorable surroundings. If it has been possible to do so in the past, we may reasonably expect that, with railway facilities for sending their produce to market, they will soon be a good, sound, and flourishing community. In the present state of our revenue, and with our prospects of gold and increase of population, I cannot help thinking that, if hon. members will look at the question in a fair and reasonable light, they must admit we are quite justified in incurring the outlay this railway will cost. If our circumstances now were such as they were a few years ago, we should be incurring a very grave responsibility in proposing to expend £170,000 on this railway. But I believe our surplus revenue for the current year will amount to that. An hon. member says we should build the line out of surplus revenue, but it will be the same thing whether we do it out of surplus revenue or out of loan. I think the hon. member for Nannine has said, on previous occasions, in reference to works that are not of a reproductive character, that there is not the same objection to them when they are proposed to be built out of current revenue. As the land revenue this year will amount to £200,000, the colony could afford to pay for the proposed line out of this income in a couple of years; and, looked at from this point of view, I do not think that we shall be extravagant, or that any danger to the country will be incurred, if we pass the Bill.

MR. CONNOR: Although I think hon. members have their minds made up as to how they are going to vote upon this Bill, and I do not think they will be influenced by the debate, I cannot refrain from saying that I think the cost of the line could be spent to far better advantage than in constructing another non-paying agricultural railway, which the goldfields' lines have to pay penal rates to maintain it. The goldfields have made the prosperity of Western Australia, and the lines to them have paid large profits, so that if business guided the extension of the railway

system, another goldfields line should be made, instead of the one that is proposed in the Bill before the Chair. Instead of this line, which we know will not pay, it would be far better to start a federal line, which would ultimately give West Australia overland communication with the neighboring colonies, or to build a border railway to the goldfields. Last session, when this railway was under discussion, and the hon. member for Albany suggested that the line should go through to Albany, the scheme was looked upon as a wild one, but we are now told that the proposal is practicable, and we shall have applications to carry the line on to Albany, which will mean enlarging the deficit upon this unprofitable work. Ever since I have been in the House, this demand for railways to so-called farming districts, but which only carry a very small population, and do not produce enough to supply payable freight for the line, has been heard, and the result is that the goldfields are looked to for more than a fair share of the railway revenue. I say, no more of these speculative lines through the wilderness should be made, until there are no more goldfields crying out justly for railway communication, as some of them are doing at present. The Commissioner of Crown Lands boasts of the land revenue, which he says will amount to £200,000 this year, a very large proportion of which has come from the goldfields, and it is a sound principle that those portions of the colony which contribute the revenue, should have the larger share of the public expenditure, for the more the goldfields are developed, the greater will be the prosperity of West Australia, but it is only throwing money away to make lines like the one to the Northern Territory, which was made on the plea that it would open up pastoral and agricultural country, and which yielded according to the latest return a revenue of only £230. The goldfields lines have been a success, and the agricultural lines have not been a success, and the colony should spend its money upon what will show a profit, and not saddle itself with unprofitable railways.

MR. MORAN: I take this opportunity of again reminding the Commissioner of Railways of the promise he made to the goldfields' members in reply to a question from me, that, as soon as the goldfields' railway lines returned a profit, the fares and the freight rates would be reduced. The question and the reply of the hon. gentleman

are reported in *Hansard*, and stand as a record of a broken promise—of a promise broken by a Minister whose pledges should always be fulfilled, for to-day, while the goldfields' lines are very profitable, penal rates are charged upon them, that is a tariff in excess of what is charged upon the lines in other districts of the colony. I shall not cease to bring the distinct pledge given by the Minister and his breach of faith before him and before the House upon every opportunity, until I get justice done to the goldfields in this matter, to the goldfields which have done so much to advance the progress of the colony, and which are therefore peculiarly worthy of consideration. What would the people of Bridgetown think of me if, after having promised to vote for their line, I failed to do so. But I shall vote for the line, and, in doing so, I am convinced that the people of Bridgetown, if they were asked to decide the question, would say that the goldfields ought not to have to pay penal railway rates to make up for the less remunerative returns from the lines through the farming districts. It is not fair to press too strongly upon the point that these latter railways do not immediately pay when they are made, for we know that no such ever has paid as soon as it was made, in any of the colonies. It of course takes time for an agricultural district to develop itself after it is given the benefit of railway communication. It has to attract settlers who must have time to till the land, and for their produce to grow, before the traffic returns can be very heavy, but the settlement of the people upon the land, and the interests of agriculture, are worthy of encouragement, and as I desire to help on every scheme that has these ends in view, I shall support this Bill, especially as the district to which the line will run has an excellent climate, a good rainfall, and a fertile soil, so that with a railway, it will be in an advantageous position to turn these advantages to the best account.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said in the absence of the hon. member for Albany, for whose domestic bereavement much sympathy was felt, he desired to afford him (Mr. Leake) an opportunity of speaking against the Bill, although he (Sir John Forrest) had not understood that the hon. gentlemen had intended to vote against the second reading. The third

reading would, doubtless, give the hon. member the opportunity he desired.

The House went into committee upon the Bill.

The Bill was agreed to in committee without amendment, and reported to the House.

The report was adopted.

IMMEDIATE EQUIPMENT OF RAILWAYS WITH ROLLING STOCK.

MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

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

MR. SPEAKER,

The Legislative Council acquaints the Legislative Assembly that it has this day agreed to the following resolution, in which it desires the concurrence of the Legislative Assembly:—

That in the opinion of this House the Government should take immediate steps to thoroughly equip the present railway lines open for traffic in this colony with rolling stock.

GEO. SHENTON,

President.

Legislative Council Chamber,

Perth, 2nd October, 1895.

PARKS AND RESERVES BILL.

MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

The following Message was delivered to and read by the Speaker:—

MR. SPEAKER,

The Legislative Council acquaints the Legislative Assembly that it has agreed to a Bill intituled "An Act for the Management of Parks and Reserves vested in the Crown," 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 Chamber, Perth, 3rd October, 1895.

Schedule of Amendments made by the Legislative Assembly in "the Parks and Reserves Bill."

No. 1.—On page 3, Clause 8, paragraph 9: Between "mules" and "and" insert "camels."

No. 2.—On page 4, Clause 12, line 5: Strike

out "July" and insert "August" in lieu thereof.

C. LEE STEERE,

Clerk of the Council.

3/10/95.

Ordered—That the consideration in committee of the foregoing Message be made an order of the day for the next sitting of the House.

WESLEYAN METHODIST CHURCH PROPERTIES BILL.

MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

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 the undermentioned Bill, without amendment:—

"An Act to adapt and assimilate the existing 'Trusts of Wesleyan Methodists' Church Properties to the present Constitution of such Church in Western Australia, and for other collateral purposes."

GEO. SHENTON,

President.

Legislative Council Chamber, Perth, 3rd October, 1895.

CROWN SUITS BILL.

MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

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

MR. SPEAKER,

With reference to the Legislative Assembly's Message No. 40, informing the Legislative Council that the Legislative Assembly has agreed to the Legislative Council's amendments Nos. 1 and 2, in "The Crown Suits Bill," but has disagreed to amendment No. 3 for the reasons stated in the schedule thereto, the Legislative Council acquaints the Legislative Assembly that it insists on the said amendment, and returns the Bill herewith for further consideration.

GEO. SHENTON,

President.

Legislative Council Chamber,

Perth, 3rd October, 1895.

Amendment made by the Legislative Council in "The Crown Suits Bill," with which the Legislative Assembly has disagreed, and which the Legislative Council insists upon.

No 3.—On page 10, Clause 37; line 4: Strike out "One" and insert "Two."

GEO. LEE STEERE,

Clerk of the Council.

STOCK DISEASES BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clauses 1 to 9 :

Put and passed.

Clause 10—"Inspectors may enter lands and buildings" :

MR. LEFROY pointed out that while, in the Bill, dogs were included as stock, inspectors were prohibited from entering dwelling houses in the performance of their duties, notwithstanding that dogs were often to be found in houses.

THE ATTORNEY - GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said that during the consideration of another Act, much objection had been expressed against allowing inspectors to invade private houses, and he thought it would be better to leave the clause as it was.

Clauses 10 to 17 :

Put and passed.

Clause 18—"Owners' liability" :

MR. GEORGE asked whether the twenty-four hours named in the clause was not a very short time in which to allow an owner to destroy infected stock, in order to escape a penalty which might amount to £100.

Clause 19 to 21, put and passed.

Clause 22—"No stock to be removed from slaughter house alive" :

MR. A. FORREST moved that the clause be struck out. It would be unworkable, as sales of stock were sometimes conducted at slaughter yards in the country, and the provision would prevent buyers from removing their purchases.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL said that the clause had been in force for thirty-years. The intention was to prevent the removal of stock which had been penned with imported stock, which might be infected with contagious disease. But he would assent to the striking out of the clauses.

The clause was struck out.

The Bill was reported to the House.

The report was adopted.

MINES REGULATION BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clauses 1 to 15 :

Put and passed.

Clause 19—"No boy or female to be employed" :

MR. GEORGE drew attention to the fact that the clause provided that no boy under the age of 16 years should be allowed to charge or fire explosives, but he thought that, having

regard to the sensitive nature of gelatine, dynamite, and other high class explosives, no boy should be allowed to handle them. The explosives should be entirely in the charge of men who would have a due sense of the danger of playing pranks with them, which boys might be prone to do.

THE ATTORNEY - GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) proposed that the word "handle" should be inserted before the words "charge or fire explosives."

Amendment put and passed.

Clause as amended agreed to.

Clauses 20 to 23 :

Put and passed.

Clause 24—"Employees to satisfy themselves of safety of appliances. Failure to report danger" :

MR. GEORGE thought it was not fair to throw upon the working miners the onus of seeing that the appliances of the mine were safe, as it seemed to him, that if this were done, there was no chance of a man getting compensation if he were hurt owing to the failure of part of the plant.

MR. ILLINGWORTH said the provision was only intended to give the men the right of protesting against any of the appliances which they considered to be unsafe, and also to keep the men on the alert to ensure their own safety.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 25 to 30 :

Put and passed.

Clause 31 :—"Examination of Engine-drivers."

MR. CONNOR asked whether the clause might not stand in the way of engine-drivers being employed in some of the more sparsely populated portions of the colony, in consequence of their not being two competent persons available to examine engine-drivers, and prove their fitness to receive a certificate of competency. Or supposing that after two competent persons had been appointed as a Board of Examiners, one of them left a district, the issue of certificates of competency might be unduly delayed.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said it would be the duty of the Wardens to see that the Examiners were appointed in each district, and to have vacancies filled up without loss of time.

Clause put and passed.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) moved the addition of the words "goldfields

district," so that the clause would read that the Board for the examination of engine-drivers could be appointed for any goldfield, goldfields district, or mineral district.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 32:

Put and passed.

Clause 33:—"No uncertificated driver to be employed."

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Eart) said the addition of similar words to those added in Clause 31, "goldfields district," would be necessary, and he moved that these words be so added.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 34 and 35:

Put and passed.

Clause 36—"Noxious gases in coal and shale mines:"

MR. GEORGE said this was a most important clause affecting the safety of the miners. He found that provision was made for the inspection of coal mines at times when danger was apprehended, and the clause proceeded to say that wherever an inspection of dangerous workings was made, it, was to be reported safe or otherwise, and also said "Every report shall be recorded in a book kept at the colliery for the purpose, and shall be signed by the person reporting." Now, it appeared to him, that one of the most necessary precautions had been omitted, and that was, that the men employed in the mines should have access to these reports. If this were possible, it was likely that miners would be able to guard themselves against some of the dangers, and he would move that the following words be added to the clause, "This report shall be accessible to any person employed in or about the mine."

Amendment agreed to.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 36 to 53, inclusive:

Put and passed.

New Clause:

MR. ILLINGWORTH moved the following new Clause:—"The place in which an accident has occurred shall not be interfered with, except with a view of saving life, or preventing further injury, until it has been examined by the Inspector, or, in his absence, by two competent persons appointed by a Warden or a Justice of the Peace." This clause had been struck out

of the Bill by the Legislative Council. It was a most important one, as he had shown during the debate on the second reading.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) agreed that the retention of this clause would be of some importance in the leading mining centres, but it would be very difficult to carry out in isolated places, where it might not be possible to get two managers. It appeared to him that in the event of accidents happening there would always be plenty of evidence available, without the necessity of suspending operations at the mine, so that a man who was injured would not be at any disadvantage because the mine did not stop work. Unless the amendment was one of more than ordinary importance for the people working in these mines, it would perhaps be better not to insist upon re-instating a clause the Legislative Council had seen fit to reject.

MR. MORAN pointed out that a slight alteration had been made in the clause, and this was done in order to meet the necessities of the case, as well as what appeared to be the objection of the Legislative Council. It was proposed to exempt the operation of the clause in such places where it was clearly impossible to carry it out in a proper manner; but there could be no question of its value if applied to such fields as Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie, and other big centres, where the authorities referred to were always available. There would be no necessity for any material stoppage of alteration, while the importance of the clause in the interests of the working miner could not be too strongly emphasised. Supposing, for instance, an accident was caused owing to the use of a defective rope. In a case like that, unless this clause was inserted in the Bill, there would be absolutely nothing to prevent the rope disappearing altogether, and with it, the evidence against the management. There should be no possibility of incriminating evidence being removed before proper inspection, and the clause was one which would be advantageous to the owners of the mines, as well as those employed in them.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Eart) said that it would not be possible for only one clause of the Act to be suspended in any particular district, but the case might be met by the provision for suspending the whole of the Act in districts where the persons named were not likely to be available. He fully recognised the importance of the clause, for, as the hon. member for Yilgarn had

pointed out, it was possible the whole of the evidence on either side might be altered unless there was a law to prevent it.

MR. JAMES thought that the striking out of this clause by the Legislative Council meant that the whole of the real protection to the mining people would practically be taken away. As far as possible, the inspection of the scene of any accident shall be made by the most independent person available. In any case, it should not be left open for the evidence to be interfered with. Besides that, any court having the evidence of an independent person, or of independent persons, could accept that evidence as facts, and considerable trouble would often be saved.

MR. MORAN considered that the whole of the objections to the clause would be removed if it were possible to suspend its operations in outlying districts, or agree upon some other form of inspection more readily available.

MR. ILLINGWORTH pointed out that it would be very difficult to insist upon the strict letter of the clause being carried out in such a place as Lawlers, but that could be met by the men appointing some of their body to make the report. The same thing applied to the Star of the East at the Murchison, where it would be very difficult to get a justice of the peace, a Warden, or other managers, but certain of the men could be selected to report officially on the surroundings of the scene of any accident.

MR. GEORGE hoped the clause would be added to the Bill. It was a very necessary thing not to permit any disturbance of the scene of an accident until an inspection had taken place. He knew that, in the working of quarries, the men took very good care that work was not done to cover up the evidences of any neglect.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) thought the case would be met if the clause was made to read:—"The place in which an accident occasioning personal injury has occurred shall not be interfered with, except with a view of saving life or preventing further injury, until it has been examined by the inspector, or, in his absence, if demanded by any three miners engaged on the mine, by two competent persons to be appointed by a Warden, or a Justice of the Peace."

MR. ILLINGWORTH said he would be satisfied with this, and asked leave to withdraw his motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendment proposed by the ATTORNEY-GENERAL agreed to.

Clause put and passed.

Title agreed to.

Bill reported.

On the motion for the adoption of the report,

MR. ILLINGWORTH moved that the Bill be re-committed.

Agreed to.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 1—"Short Title":

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) moved to insert the words "goldfields district," which was a consequential amendment, owing to alterations in later clauses of the Bill.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 3—"Interpretation":

MR. MORAN drew attention to the definition of a mine in this clause. Mine was stated to be "A claim, place, pit, shaft, drive, level, vein, lode, or reef, in, or by which an operation is carried on for obtaining any metal or mineral by any mode or method whatever, or any shaft, level, or plane being sunk or driven for the same purpose." If hon. members turned to the last paragraph of Clause 12 they would find it had been provided that "No person shall be appointed to act as manager of more than two mines at one and the same time, and no person who has been appointed manager of any mine in which twenty men are employed below ground shall, whilst he holds such appointment, be appointed manager of any other mine, nor shall he act as such manager." This clause was strenuously objected to on the goldfields, and it was considered that, having in view the state of mining in the colony, at the present time, and the fact that a great portion of the work was the work of development, the clause was too stringent, and might act harshly in its operation.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said the definition of a mine had been laid down by the Legislative Council, as well as the definition of a manager. Manager did not mean the bell-topped gentleman, who spent most of his time in Perth, but the person who was in the immediate charge of the mine. There must be someone in charge of the mine.

MR. ILLINGWORTH thought the present wording of the clause would act inconveniently in contract work.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) thought there would have to be some one in charge, and, whoever that was would be the manager at the time.

MR. ILLINGWORTH pointed out that the position of manager might really be held by someone who controlled several mines, and the person then in charge would be the captain of the shift, or the underground boss. Neither of these could be said to be the manager.

MR. SIMPSON thought the best thing to do would be to define what might be done by a consulting engineer, and who should be considered the manager, in the case where the underground boss practically had charge.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 33—"No uncertificated driver to be employed":

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) moved to insert after the word "district," in line 3, the words "or portions thereof respectively." He said the amendment was consequential on the amendment made in Clause 1.

Amendment put and passed.

Bill reported, with further amendments.

EXPLOSIVES BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): Sir, I rise to move the second reading of this Bill. It is a copy of the English Act, and seeks to insert in the Act already in existence (the greater portion of which comprises this measure), some portions of the English Act which were omitted. Mr. Hake, the Victorian explosives expert, who was recently in the colony under engagement to the Government to report on the question of explosives, suggested that the law relating to them should be consolidated, and that the omitted portion of the English Act should be adopted. That is what this Bill purposes shall be done.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE.

The various Clauses of the Bill were agreed to without amendment.

Preamble and title:

Agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Report adopted.

ENGINE SPARKS FIRE PREVENTION BILL.

SECOND READING.

MR. TRAYLEN: Sir, I rise to move the second reading of this Bill. It is an old friend attired in a new dress. On one occasion, Sir, it was passed by this House, and was thrown out by the Legislative Council, and I hope it will not meet with that fate on this occasion. It is of the utmost importance in the interests of my constituency, and of many other constituencies of this colony, that some legislation should be passed to prevent fires from occurring along the railway lines of the colony from the sparks which fly from the funnels of passing locomotives. During the present season the growth of natural grasses—and I hope of the crops also—has been such that there can scarcely fail to be very large conflagrations in the agricultural districts through which the trains run, unless some extra precautions are insisted upon by Act of Parliament to protect those for whose benefit we are building railways, and whom we are assisting in other directions. I regret that some of the country members are not present this evening to speak of the personal losses they have sustained by this means. I have inserted one or two trifling alterations in the Bill as it passed in this House before. The most noticeable is in Clause 4, which provided at that time that "Inspectors shall be appointed by the Government." I do not think, however, that it is absolutely essential to make so strict a provision as that, and I have therefore made it optional on the part of the Government whether they appoint inspectors under the measure or not, in order to save any unnecessary expense. At the end of the clause I have inserted a provision giving power to the Inspector, and to every person who occupies land adjacent to a railway to lay an information for a breach of this Act. That is really what I desire to do in the first instance.

MR. GEORGE: Sir, I should have liked to have heard the hon. member for Greenough explain the Bill more fully than he has done, particularly in regard to the provisions contained in Clause 3, that every engine should be fitted with an efficient spark arrester, and with a steam jet carried into the ash pan for the purpose of extinguishing the live cinders. I think these provisions will work to the

disadvantage of the Railway Department, and of the private Railway Companies, because an efficient spark-arrester has never yet been invented. Many persons have tried to invent one that will meet the requirements, but all have, so far, failed, while I think that if the steam jet is insisted upon, the speed of the trains will be considerably reduced. While I quite sympathise with the object which the hon. member for Greenough has in view in introducing this Bill, I do not think we should be too hasty in passing it, because of the objections I have referred to, and although I want, as far as possible, to protect the farmers, whose properties are near the railway lines, I do not think we should pass such humbug as this Bill proposes.

MR. DANDELL: Sir, I agree with what the hon. member for the Murray has said, although I think that the other portions of Clause 3, which provide that the owners of land adjacent to a railway line should burn the grass at stated periods and under certain specified conditions, will be found to be useful in preventing fires from occurring in the manner which the Bill seeks to prevent. Considering the late period of the session at which the Bill has been introduced, and that there is likely to be much debate upon it in another place, I think the hon. member for Greenough should withdraw it, unless he is prepared to accept only those portions of the Bill providing for the burning of grass.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn): I quite agree with the hon. member for Perth that the Bill should be withdrawn, unless the hon. member is prepared to allow it to pass with only the provisions for the burning of grass on lands adjacent to railway lines, for the purpose of preventing fires occurring from engine sparks. As it is at present drafted, I think the Bill will lead to no end of trouble, and possibly litigation, without any good being done.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): Sir, I should like to say that the hon. member for Greenough has my deepest sympathy in his endeavor to pass this Bill through the Legislature, because I know that, particularly on the Midland Railway, there are certain to be huge fires this season, and I am positive that the whole of the excellent crops at parts of the line, and particularly in the Greenough district, which we are regarding with so much satisfaction

now, will be completely destroyed by fire from the cause which the Bill seeks to prevent, and I consider that if we compel the farmers, who have land adjacent to the railway line, to burn the grass which is within the boundary of the line, we should do so. But I am afraid the Bill will not pass both Houses in its present form, because I believe that there will be considerable objection shown to it in the Legislative Council. With regard to the provision that engines should be fitted with "efficient" spark arresters, I would suggest that it should be amended by striking out that word "efficient," and inserting words that provide that engines should be fitted with spark arresters that have been approved of by the Engineer-in-Chief. It is necessary also that the steam jet referred to in the Bill should be used on the engines, because it has been proved that fires have been caused by live cinders escaping from the ashpan, and being blown into the crops adjacent to the railway line. I think some provision should be made to prevent what will be an appalling destruction of crops this season from this cause.

MR. PHILLIPS: Sir, I hope the Government will not place any obstacles in the way of the passage of this measure, because if something is not done to obviate the danger of fires from this cause, the whole of my district will be conflagrated this season. I agree with the Hon. the Attorney-General, that many of the fires are not caused by sparks from the funnel of a locomotive, but from the cinders which escape from the ashpan, and as this season is proving to be a very good one, I do hope that something will be done to prevent the danger of the farmers who have land adjacent to a railway line in crop, being burnt out.

MR. LEFROY: I can fully endorse what has been stated as likely to occur on the Midland Railway this season, if some provision is not made to prevent fires being caused by the sparks from railway engines, and I think the cause of the danger on that line particularly is to be found in the fact that the company use firewood instead of coal for the fuel of the locomotive. This wood causes an immense number of sparks to fly from the funnel of the locomotive, and the sight at night when travelling on that line has reminded me very much of a pyrotechnic display. In preference to enforcing the owners of land to burn the grass which is within the boundary of the railway line, I

would recommend that ploughing should be resorted to as a preventative of fires, because, by burning the grass, there is still the danger of the fire spreading to the adjacent crops. I have tried it with success on my own property, and I believe if the system were adopted in the Greenough district, where the possibility of extensive fires from this cause has been referred to, I think it would be found to answer the purpose very well indeed. With regard to the proposal of the Bill that efficient spark arresters should be fitted to all locomotives, I have always understood that an efficient spark arrester was not obtainable anywhere; while, in addition to that, I do not see that anyone is made liable by the Bill for any damages caused by fire. On the whole, therefore, I think the Bill, although it appears to have a good object, is beset with many difficulties, and I really think it is dangerous to attempt to pass it at this stage.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I should like to state, for the information of the House, and especially for the information of the hon member who has just spoken, that it is the universal practice on the Victorian railways to burn the grass which is within the boundaries of the railway lines, the work being done by the men in charge of the railways. The difficulty which presents itself to my mind in regard to this Bill, is whether we can force the private railway companies to burn the grass which grows adjacent to their lines, and I think the Government ought to set the example and burn the grass along their railway lines.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: They do so.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Then I consider that this particular provision of the Bill should at least be passed, in order to compel the private railway companies to burn the grass which grows alongside their lines. With regard to the question of spark arresters, the experience in Victoria has been that they are a delusion and a snare. All sorts of inventions have been made, and not one of them have answered the purpose yet, and if we act in this matter with the idea that safety will be secured by fitting engines with spark arresters, we shall be deluding ourselves. I, therefore, do not think there is anything practical in the Bill beyond the provision for the burning of grass.

MR. TRAYLEN, in reply, said: I am sure if the hon. member for Nannine thoroughly understood the dangers which existed by

reason of these flying sparks and cinders, he would not say anything of the kind. I am somewhat at a disadvantage in introducing this Bill, in this respect, that for the last year or two the crops have been so poor that there has been very little indeed to burn, and consequently we have not had the outcry that was raised two years ago, when the crops were better. This outcry was universal, and those who lived alongside the railway line in my district simply lived in terror. With regard to the proposal of the Bill that grass alongside the railway lines should be burnt, and also with regard to the suggestion which the hon. member for Moore threw out, that ploughing should be resorted to in order to prevent the grass fires from spreading to the crops, I do not think those means alone would prevent these fires, and I know that one lady in the Greenough district had the roof of her stables ignited seven times in one day by the sparks from passing locomotives; and I am certain that no amount of burning or ploughing alone would prevent those fires. The danger is increased, on the Midland Railway, owing to wood being used as the fuel for the locomotives. This wood has a light description of bark which, when it ignites, falls into the ashpan of the engine, and is blown out of the pan, and carried by the breeze, in some instances, 100 yards, into a standing crop, and ignites it. I am certain that spark arresters are obtainable, because it is well known that the engine which was used on the construction of the line from Guildford to Gingin was fitted with one of those fire preventives, and that there were no fires to speak of in that locality at all. Unfortunately, the engine subsequently ran into a tank when it was running on the Northern line, with the result that the spark arrester was disabled from use. I do hope hon. members will pass the second reading of the Bill, and allow it to go into committee, because I believe the Attorney-General will propose some amendments that will, perhaps, improve it considerably.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

FENCING BILL.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): I move, and I cannot help admitting that I do so with some pleasure, that the order of the day for the consideration of this Bill in committee, be read and discharged.

Motion put and passed.

Order of the day read and discharged.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS AND THE MINIMUM WAGE.

MR. JAMES: Sir, I beg to move—"That the Government be requested to consider the advisability of providing that, in all Government contracts, the persons employed should be paid at a specified minimum rate of wage by the contractor." This resolution, Sir, asks the Government to take into consideration a question which has been considered and settled in some other parts of the world, and which cannot, I think, be too easily settled here. I regret that I should have to bring the resolution forward at such a late hour, and under such unfavorable circumstances—but hope the House will not be hostile to the motion for that reason. I feel sure, Sir, that every hon. member will agree with the end I desire to attain by this motion. All of us recognise that if the Government, or any other body, can do anything towards improving the status of labor, they should do it. All of us recognise also that, owing to so many facts having been brought to public knowledge during the past few years in connection with what is known as sweating, the public conscience has been quickened, and some good people begin to think that we have been a little premature in congratulating ourselves upon the abolition of slavery. By the abolition of slavery we abolish labor by compulsion of the lash. We still have labor by the compulsion of hunger and want, and that, I am sure, is quite as, if not more, degrading and demoralizing. Now, I fear I shall not receive much sympathy in my contention as to the practicability of this motion by the Hon. the Attorney-General. I know he is a strong supporter of the selfish principles, of what is known as the "Manchester School," and which treats men as though they were mere mummies, and would apply to men—human beings, people who have souls—the same absolute rules as applied to the disposition of merchandise.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): You are not justified in saying that.

MR. JAMES: I understood that the principle of the Manchester school, as applied to labor, is that they treat men as mere merchandise, and apply to them exactly the same rule of supply and demand as they would apply to goods and chattels. They state that where high wages prevail, there is a high birth rate,

which high wages encourage, and that with low wages there is a correspondingly low birth rate, and thus everything is governed by supply and demand. But they seem to overlook or not appreciate the fact that where you have low wages, a greater amount of poverty and ignorance with a very high birth rate exists. It is simply in those places where you have education, that you have a diminished birth-rate. If all persons admit that high wages are good—and I have never known any political economist to deny that—I think we are justified in making some effort for the purpose of attaining that end. A good deal of difficulty surrounds this subject, but that is due to this somewhat selfish rule of supply and demand, which has so much sunk in the minds of the people, and is so much in accord with our selfish instincts, that we begin to think that the evils which we fear from that rule are inevitable. When Adam Smith referred to this question, and crystallised the law in regard to wages, so far as England was concerned, he went into pages of rapture as to the condition of the English laboring classes at that time, and yet we know that this state of affairs, which he eulogised so highly in support of his theory, was one in which women and children were herded like cattle, and worked worse than slaves. And yet so thoroughly had this idea sunk into the minds of men, who were in all things honorable, and generous, and unsympathetic only in connection with this matter, that John Bright said when the Ten Hour Bill was before the House of Commons, (the object of which was to rectify some of the abuses which thrived at the time the Bill was introduced):—"He would not detain the House further; but believing as he did in his heart, that the proposition was most injurious and destructive to the best interests of the country; believing that it was contrary to all principles of sound legislation; that it was a delusion practised upon the working classes; that it was advocated by those who had no knowledge of the economy of manufacturing; believing that it was one of the worst measures ever passed in the shape of an Act of the Legislature, and that, if it were now made the law, the necessities of trade and the demands alike of the workmen and of the masters would compel them to retrace the steps they had taken—believing this, he felt compelled to give the motion for the second reading of this Bill his most strenuous

"ous opposition." Now I fear that some of the things that were said by John Bright on that occasion will be said in the debate on this motion. We have, however, the light of 50 years' experience to show whether any of John Bright's prophecies have ever been justified, and all of us must admit that, to say the least of it, the Ten Hours Bill was a very meagre and insufficient act of justice. But I submit that it is not only competition, and competition alone, that has to do with the rate of wages, and the mistake is made in thinking that is *has*. Custom has a very great influence on wages, and has had in various parts of the world, at various times. After all, custom is law, though it may be a local law. Years ago, before this spirit of commercialism grew up, there were several customs by which the wages of laborers were affected, and it was only when those old ancestors of the present trades unionism were effaced, that these difficulties arose, and sweating began to replace slavery. The question has often been asked—How can we increase wages by an Act of Parliament? I do not want to do that, but I might state that by Act of Parliament we have dealt with exactly analogous matters, and more drastically. For instance, legislation dealing with factories, the management of mines, the relations between masters and servants, and many other laws, all of which interfered with the very principle upon which those persons stand, who say that nothing can be done to remedy these evils by Act of Parliament, or legislative protection or assistance. By all these measures, that fundamental theory of the Manchester school, that competition is the sole and final judge of all things, and *laissez faire* the only true gospel, has been interfered with, and there is a very strong tendency in English public life to still more radically interfere with that principle in other directions. During the course of a debate that arose the other evening, I referred to what Mr. Campbell Bannerman said when this discussion arose in the House of Commons, and it is a significant fact that public men, of the importance of that gentleman, and educated as he was on the "competition theory," recognise that the time is gone by for a Government, or anyone else, to take their stand upon the inhuman principle that competition is the sole test in this question of wages. I think, Sir, Mr. Thorold Rogers is a gentleman whose opinion is entitled to respect, even from those who admire un-

restricted competition, and in his book on "Work and Wages," he states:—"Employers will get cheap labor if they can; it is the business of the State to prevent them getting it so cheaply that they impair the future of the race by the process, and it is the business of peculiar crafts of workmen to sell their labor at as good a price as they can. They have never been ruined, and they never will ruin the capitalist employer by the process, for they may be trusted not to ruin themselves, since they are quite as acute as their employers in discerning what price the market will bear." He points out that no ultimate harm is ever done by combination among workmen to obtain higher wages, nor by the Government preventing labor being done too cheaply. Now, surely, if we all recognise that high wages are so desirable, we are justified—in view of these authorities—in asking ourselves if something cannot be done by the Government, not by passing an Act of Parliament, but by their being the largest employers of labor, setting the example to all other employers, and in seeing that on Government work, wages do not fall below a certain minimum. I am quite sure that, if this example is set by the Government, it will have a great beneficial and immediate effect. Hon. members and others have often asked—What is the minimum wage? I really believe every hon. member must recognise the general rule for determining it. It means something more than a mere subsistence. It means something that will enable a man to pay, not only for his clothes and food, but will allow him sufficient to maintain and educate himself and family, and to enjoy some of the amenities of life. I do not want in further support of my argument to quote the opinion of Henry George, nor do I want to quote from a very able book by A. O. Chasse on the question of the labor movement, in which the minimum wage is defined. It is too late to quote, however good the quotation may be. When this question cropped up in Great Britain some years ago, letters were sent to prominent ministers of religion asking them to give their views upon it, and I cannot refrain from quoting the remarks which the Rev. C. F. Aked made, and then to quote what Mr. J. J. Wilson, Editor of the *Investor's Review*, and city editor of the Tory London newspaper, the *Standard*, said. The Rev. Mr. Aked, a gentleman who is well known in Great Britain, said, "I regard this demand for a living wage, with all that

"the demand implies, as the most profoundly important and far reaching movement of the present century. It fastens a check upon competition; it limits a selfish individualism; it opposes to the vices and scandal of sweating, the solid block of an irreducible minimum in the cost of production. I am not clear that it is our business, once sure of the absolute righteousness of the case, to consider temporary effects. I should be inclined to plead for a little healthy recklessness. The cold blooded calculator is so often wrong—the enthusiast who throws himself on God is so often right. Nevertheless, I am convinced that if the producers could secure this irreducible minimum, a safer and juster national life would inevitably be built upon such broad and strong foundations." Now, hon. members might say that that is merely written in the passion of an advocate. Well then, let me turn to a man who is not possessed of that passion, and quote the remarks of Mr. J. J. Wilson. He says: "By itself the phrase 'living wage' is nearly meaningless, because no attempt is made to define a standard of 'living.' Presumably it is something more than a 'subsistence wage'—a wage, i.e., which just keeps the worker alive and no more—and I think all workers have a right to demand this something more. Therefore, I look upon this new formula of the working colliers and others as a signal of revolt against the hitherto all-swallowing demands of the capitalist. Turn where one may, one finds the modern habit of thought to be that capital is first and labor nowhere. The shareholders of a company which has been capitalised by promoters at twice the first value of the business, look upon their 'rights' to dividends as a sacred possession, and they are generally willing that the laborer should be starved, rather than that their demands should be foregone. This half-century or more the railway companies of the Kingdom have diligently heaped up capital upon the top of the industries of this country, without a moment's regard to the question whether those industries could live beneath the weight. We must exact the charges necessary to pay interest and dividends on our capital, no matter what may come of the producers, is their maxim. So it is all round. The demands of the capitalist have been sustained by preacher and economist alike, to the utter oblivion of those of the capital

"maker. So a demand for a 'living wage' is, to my thinking, a crude expression of revolt against this neglect. The Warden is coming forward to say—We must have our shares in the benefits which are accruing to mankind for the increase in labor saving inventions, and in the power of man to control the forces of Nature." Hitherto the capitalist—he he an honest provider of money, or a fraudulent promoter, or large handed waster of millions, raised for purposes in themselves, and, to a moderate extent, legitimate—has intercepted nearly all the profit which the progress of invention has brought to mankind. 'It must no longer be thus,' the workmen have begun to say, and I own I sympathise with them. Nay, more, the interests of the capitalists will be 'safe' for the future, only in proportion as he recognises a duty of surrender towards labor. He will gain by giving, and the more he grasps the more he will lose." I want to point out to hon. members that this opinion is that of a man who is not likely to be led astray by what some people call "claptrap." It is the practice of those who appeal to the capitalist to always charge those who do not appeal to the capitalist with talking claptrap. My own opinion is that, if far less claptrap were indulged in on behalf of the capitalist, the cause of the working man would be more protected. Now Mr. Wilson—whose opinion as to the minimum wage I have quoted—is not given to talking claptrap, neither is he likely to err on the side of being too enthusiastic for labor, and his opinion is strongly in support of the justice of these demands. With regard to the resolution which I have moved, the legislation which it proposes is in existence in England, a strange resolution having been passed by the House of Commons without dissent from either the Liberal or the Conservative party, and the speeches which the members of that House made show that the feeling was strongly favorable to the resolution. The minimum rate of wage is not fixed by the Imperial Government, but is accepted as that defined by the Union for the particular district or industry concerned in the contracts. I do not ask the Government to go as far as that in this instance, but I merely wish them to fix a minimum wage, so that it shall not be reduced below what they think is fair. In addition to the action of the Imperial Government, this principle has also been adopted by about 200 corporations and

public bodies in England, including the London County Council and the corporations of Birmingham and Glasgow, while two of the Australian Governments, and several Australian Corporations have also brought it into operation. In view, therefore, of all that, it cannot be said that we, in this colony, cannot define the minimum wage, that we cannot do what hundreds of others have done.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Which colonies have adopted it.

MR. JAMES: Victoria and New South Wales, and several local and municipal bodies in those colonies have also adopted it. The position which I take up is one which all will support if they consider this question quietly and sympathetically. If the good people of Melbourne, which was the richest city in Australia, had been told a few years ago that they would have in vogue in their midst a system of sweating, so vile that a Royal Commission had to be applied to inquire into it and that an indignation meeting was held in the Town Hall a few nights ago, would they have believed it? No, Sir, they would not, but the evil does exist there, and we should prevent it from even growing up here. If it grew up in Victoria during the period of her brightest prosperity, and before the present depression, how can we say that we are safe, during our prosperity, and are not subject to the same influences that acted there? What harm can be done by the Government following the example which has been set by the Imperial House of Commons, by two of the Australian colonies, and by so many important corporations throughout the length and breadth of England and Scotland, and by various corporations in the Australian colonies? If, by any reasonable effort, we can prevent wages from falling below that level beyond which it is unsafe that they should go, it is not too much to ask that we should make that effort. I do not wish the Government to accept my estimate of what the minimum wage should be. I let the Government fix it themselves, and, I think, they should, after fixing it, recognise it as the minimum wage on the Government work. There is nothing unreasonable in that request, neither is it unreasonable to ask them to follow the examples which have been set them by other countries. I am not advocating an increase in the rate of wages, but I simply want the Government to say that the wages shall not fall below a certain level, so

far as the Government are concerned, in connection with our Government contracts. I hope hon. members will pass the resolution, and leave the details to be settled by the Government during the recess.

MR. SIMPSON seconded the resolution.

MR. WOOD moved that the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and passed.

Debate accordingly adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) moved that the House, at its rising, adjourn until Monday, October 7, at 7.30 o'clock, p.m.

Motion put and passed.

The House adjourned at 11.30 o'clock, p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Monday, 7th October, 1895.

Roadways for New Estates—Reported Outrage by Natives—Goldfields Bill: third reading—Public Health Act Further Amendment Bill: third reading—Electoral Bill: third reading—Collie Coalfields Railway Bill: third reading—Donnybrook Bridgetown Railway Bill: third reading—Explosives Bill: third reading—Mines Regulation Bill: third reading—Stock Diseases Bill: third reading—Parks and Reserves Bill: Legislative Council's Amendments—Engine Sparks Fire Prevention Bill: in committee—Establishment of Minimum Wage in Government Contracts—Adjournment.

The SPEAKER took the chair at 7.30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

ROADS FOR NEW ESTATES.

MR. TRAYLEN: I would like to ask, with out notice, whether the Government can do anything, during the recess, towards providing that when estates are cut up into small blocks, there should be ample roadways left.

No reply.

REPORTED OUTRAGE BY NATIVES.

MR. CONNOR: By leave, without notice, I desire to ask the Premier whether he has received any information of a lot of cattle be-