

Ordered, that the Committee have power to send for persons and papers, and to sit during any adjournment of the House; also to report on 9th October.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 9:47 o'clock until the next day.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 2nd October, 1900.

Question: Voters' Certificates for Referendum, Irregular Issue.—Petitions: Perth Electric Tramways Lighting and Power Bill (in opposition).—Papers Presented.—Question: Roebourne Shipping, a Crew Returned to Singapore.—Cattle Restrictions at Fremantle, Report of Select Committee.—Land Drainage Bill, first reading.—Manufacturing Industries Bill (State Aid), first reading.—Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Bill, Amendments on report.—Coolgardie-Norseman Railway Bill, second reading (adjourned).—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

QUESTION—VOTERS' CERTIFICATES FOR REFERENDUM, IRREGULAR ISSUE.

MR. MONGER, without notice, asked the Premier, Whether any further correspondence has been received in connection with the improper issue of voters' certificates at the recent referendum?

THE PREMIER: As far as I know, there is no correspondence, but inquiries were made. The Government have not taken any action, until the House should think it desirable to take action in the matter.

PETITIONS—PERTH ELECTRIC TRAMWAYS LIGHTING AND POWER BILL.

PETITIONS IN OPPOSITION.

MR. JAMES presented a petition from the Perth Gas Company, objecting to the Bill which had been referred to the Select Committee with reference to the

supply of electric light and power by the Perth Electric Tramways Company, and asking for permission to be heard before the Committee by counsel.

Petition received, ordered to be printed, and referred to the Select Committee, with leave to be heard by counsel.

MR. A. FORREST presented a petition from the Perth Municipal Council, also objecting to the Bill, and asking for permission to be heard before the Committee by counsel.

Petition received, ordered to be printed, and referred to the Select Committee, with leave to be heard by counsel.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the PREMIER: 1, Return, under Life Assurance Companies Act; 2, Paris Exhibition, return (as ordered) showing expenditure incurred on behalf of Western Australian exhibits. He said the return was not complete in all details, as some of the vouchers had not yet been received from the Agent General, these items being shown only in lump sums at present.

QUESTION—ROEBOURNE SHIPPING, A CREW RETURNED TO SINGAPORE.

MR. A. FORREST asked the Attorney General: 1, By what authority the Resident Magistrate at Roebourne ordered men of the British ship "Nellie" to be returned to Singapore, and at owner's expense, the men being imported under the Immigration Restriction Act for pearling purposes, and all signed on ship's articles. 2, Whether the captain of the schooner "Nellie" could arrest these men as deserters.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL replied:—1, The Resident Magistrate has received authority, under Section 10 of "The Immigration Restriction Act, 1897," to make a contract with the master of a vessel for the conveyance of any members of the Asiatic crew of the schooner "Nellie" who may be found unlawfully on shore and destitute, to the place from which they set out for Western Australia, and to pay to each of them a sum of money sufficient to enable him to live for one month after disembarking from such vessel. 2, Not unless the men were lawfully engaged as seamen under the provisions of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1894.

CATTLE RESTRICTIONS AT FREMANTLE.**REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE.**

MR. HARPER brought up the report of the Select Committee as to removing the cattle restrictions at the port of Fremantle, and admitting cattle from Wyndham and the Northern Territory (S.A.).

Report received, read, and ordered to be printed.

LAND DRAINAGE BILL.

Introduced by the COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS, and read a first time.

MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES BILL (STATE AID).

Introduced by the COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS, and read a first time.

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION BILL.**AMENDMENTS ON REPORT.**

Report from Committee read.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, referring to Clause 53 (power of removal of members of the Court by Governor), moved as an amendment that Sub-clause 2 be struck out, and the following inserted in lieu:

(2.) If any member of the Court has been absent without sufficient cause for three consecutive sittings of the Court, the Governor may remove that member from office.

(3.) Save, as aforesaid, the president and members of the Court shall hold office on the same terms as to removal as a Judge of the Supreme Court.

The original sub-clause contained rather strong language to which the Judges had taken exception, and the new sub-clause was submitted in deference to that opinion.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: This would mean that a member of the Court could only be removed by a vote of this House?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Practically the same thing, only the new clause eliminated the objectionable features of the removal.

Amendment put and passed.

Report adopted.

COOLGARDIE-NORSEMAN RAILWAY BILL.**SECOND READING (MOVED).**

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest), in moving the second reading,

said: I have much pleasure in asking the House to approve the second reading of this Bill. Hon. members will notice that, as I said some time ago, the Government propose for the future to adopt a different procedure in regard to Railway Bills from that followed hitherto. The practice we have adopted in the past is not in accordance with the practice adopted in the other colonies, and the procedure I am taking now is in accordance with that practice. Hitherto we have submitted a Loan Bill for the approval of hon. members, providing the money, or such portion of it as we required immediately, for the construction of the work; and after having obtained the money, we have asked hon. members to pass a special Bill authorising the work. That procedure has not been very convenient, because, if after providing the money and passing the Loan Bill through this House, the measure were not assented to by the other branch of the Legislature, all the trouble of arranging the finances necessary to the Bill was without result; and it seems to us the better policy would be to obtain the approval of Parliament for the authorisation of the work, and afterwards, when that has been obtained from both Houses, to provide the money for carrying out that work. The construction of a railway from Coolgardie to Norseman is no new subject. Hon. members have had it before them on many occasions, and especially on two occasions; once when a vote of £2,000 was asked for the survey of the line the year before last, and last year when £60,000 was put in the Loan Bill for the purpose of carrying out the work. On both those occasions the vote was assented to by this Assembly, but I regret the appropriation—because there was an appropriation in each case—was not agreed to by the other branch of the Legislature. The Government, however, have never changed their opinion from the time I visited the locality and examined the country between Esperance and Norseman, and Norseman and Coolgardie. We have always been of opinion that this work should be carried out, not only in the interests of the goldfields, but of the whole colony. The position of Norseman is one of considerable isolation at the present time. It is 120 miles away

from Esperance Bay, and I think a little over 108 miles by the surveyed route from Coolgardie. The only means, therefore, of getting there is by road from either of the two places; and the reason the Government have all along favoured the route from Coolgardie to Norseman, rather than from Esperance to Norseman, has been put before hon. members more than once in the House, but I will just shortly refer to it. The construction of a railway from Esperance Bay to Norseman would be an isolated railway cut off from all the rest of the colony, and a railway which would require everything to be landed by sea at the port of Esperance, with independent railway workshops, and altogether an expensive system.

MR. A. FORREST: The railway would soon go through to Coolgardie.

THE PREMIER: That is another matter, which we are not proposing: we are only thinking of Norseman at the present time. No doubt the hon. member, when he has control of the purse, will extend the line perhaps to the moon; but at the present time we are dealing with Norseman. On the other hand, a railway from Coolgardie to Norseman means the extension of our railways for 108 miles, with no necessity for new railway workshops; the extension not to be isolated, but controlled in the same way as the other parts of the railway are controlled; and above all, an extension which will put that district in communication with all parts of the goldfields and all parts of the colony, from Fremantle and Coolgardie as well as from the Murchison, from Geraldton, or from the northern fields at Menzies, and (when the extension is made) from Mount Margaret also. So that the extension of the railway system of the colony to Norseman is a different thing from constructing an independent and isolated section of railway, which would benefit Norseman certainly, but would do no good to other parts of the colony, and no good to the present railway system of the colony. These remarks are made for the benefit of those members of this House who think the railway should be built from Esperance to Norseman; and amongst these members I am sorry to include my friend the member for the Canning (Mr. Wilson), because of all persons in the colony, one would think that from his

business experience and knowledge of the requirements and necessities of trade, he of all persons would have come to the conclusion that to build a railway 108 miles from Coolgardie, giving access to all parts of the colony by railway, would certainly be better for the State than to build an independent and isolated system of railway, cut off from the rest of the colony, and therefore of no benefit whatever to the existing railway system. I should like to point out to those who think differently from the view I take of the facts I will place before hon. members, that the position of Norseman in regard to Fremantle and the existing railway system of the colony generally is as nearly as possible the position of Menzies at the present time in regard to the railway system of the colony. One is about 100 miles to the north, and the other about 100 miles to the south; and we never hear of any inconvenience being suffered by the people of Menzies by their having a railway there, and we find them very grateful for the means of transit which has been provided. Not only so, but we are carrying that railway farther to the Mount Margaret district, or at any rate as far as Laverton, another 100 miles beyond Menzies; and the people in those distant goldfields are only too glad to think they will in time be brought within the scope of the railway system of the colony. Although Norseman is within 120 miles of a seaport in the south, still it is, for all practical purposes in regard to the people of the colony generally, in exactly the same position as Menzies is at the present time.

MR. WILSON: You want to make it so.

THE PREMIER: When we have got the railway to Norseman, the people there will suffer no greater disabilities than the people of Menzies suffer to-day in regard to railway charges and convenience. This proposed railway leaves Coolgardie and traverses through auriferous country; passing Burbanks, a very important locality six or seven miles distant from Coolgardie, which will be on the route of this railway and will benefit by it. Burbanks is at present as good a place as Norseman, supports as large a population, and does as much trade as Norseman. Passing Burbanks the line goes past the Londonderry, formerly

an important mining centre, and on to Widgemooltha, leaving Red Hill to the eastward; thence it goes by the Peninsula, crossing Lake Cowan on to the Peninsula, which is auriferous, although no great finds have been made there. Mines exist on the Peninsula, and I may say that, having travelled the country myself and being now nearly an expert in gold-mining, I believe the whole of that country is auriferous, and has been barely explored yet, because it is so destitute of water.

MR. MORAN: Then how are you going to supply your railway with water?

THE PREMIER: There is a better rainfall in that country than between Coolgardie and Menzies, for not a single drop of water is to be found along the line towards Menzies, except what is caught from the heavens in tanks. We have two cemented tanks on the line of the proposed railway, which have cost between £30,000 and £40,000 together; one at Widgemooltha, nearly always full, and another at the 50-Mile Rock, about half-way to Widgemooltha. These two tanks will probably keep the railway supplied. They are generally full now, and the rainfall being rather better as we go further south, these tanks are available at the present time, and will be available for the use of the railway. If a scarcity of water does occur there when the railway is built, we must condense water, as there are plenty of salt marshes at intervals. Along this route it is generally timber country, and there is an immense quantity of timber. Indeed, I believe private companies would undertake to build a railway half the distance for the timber alone. I am not asking this House to approve of the railway as a timber line only, but this traffic may be taken into account as a profitable one, and I mention it in passing. As I have said, there are two cemented tanks, each having cost nearly £20,000, and holding 3,000,000 gallons of water, with good catchment; and these will be available when the work is being carried out, and when the railway is completed. The Norseman goldfield suffers, as this colony has suffered, by the want of knowledge amongst members of this House. I have said over and over again that it is not a good thing to place important matters in the hands of hon.

members when they do not know the circumstances sufficiently; therefore members should pay a good deal of attention to those who do know the country, and are able to give them honest and good information in regard to what the Norseman goldfield is likely to produce, especially when members have seen what has been done there under such disadvantageous conditions. The Norseman goldfield has already produced half a million pounds' worth of gold, coming out of that small place with all these disadvantages in regard to means of transit. Last year the value of the gold produced at Norseman was nearly £172,000, and during this year I hope as large an amount as that will be produced, although as far as I have looked at the returns I do not think the amount is likely to be larger, and the probability is that it will be about the same as that of last year. Norseman suffers not only from the fact of legislators and other people not knowing much about it, but suffers also from being out of the way, as we know this colony has suffered in the past. People who come to see us, not having much time to spare, have not an opportunity of seeing what we are made of, or of investing in the industries of the colony; and this state of things applies more especially to Norseman, which is so far out of the way that any public man, or financier, or business man would think twice before venturing on a week's journey to Norseman, knowing that he would have to spend two days in going there, two days in coming back, and all this under uncomfortable conditions. Besides that, people have not always the time to visit places that are out of the way. We know that people coming to this colony as visitors can hardly find time to visit the goldfields, having perhaps only a few days available; and therefore to visit Norseman under the present conditions is out of the question. Norseman is forgotten in the consideration of places in the colony, owing to its isolation and the difficulty of getting there. One of the objections often raised to the construction of a railway from Coolgardie to Norseman is that it will be only the beginning of a railway that will go right through to Esperance Bay; and persons are very clear that if we once get a railway to Norseman, it will soon go on to Esperance, and that having been con-

structed it will do an immense injury to this part of the colony.

MR. MORAN: No one raises that objection.

THE PREMIER: I think I know something about the feeling of the people here, and I say that had it not been that people here dislike the idea of a railway to Esperance and think it will be inimical to their interests, a railway to Norseman would have been built before this. It is important to take this objection into consideration, that this line will be half the way to Esperance, that a line once built to Norseman will be continued to Esperance, and that this will not be to the advantage of Western Australia. I have always said that the same power in this House which can take a railway from Norseman to Esperance can also take it from Coolgardie to Esperance; that if there is power to carry a railway half the distance, the same power can carry it the whole distance, though of course to take it the whole distance would cost more. The same power of legislation will do the whole work in the same way as it will do half the work. The reason why I do not advocate a railway to Esperance is, as I have often said, that it is not necessary at the present, in the interests of the colony, and I do not believe it would pay. If it would pay, which I do not think would be the case, it would be at the expense of our existing railway system. Therefore as the railway is not necessary in the interests of the colony, and in my opinion would not pay, I am not prepared to advocate it. I believe in having one good railway system to the goldfields rather than having two bad ones; and I would not do anything to take away from the people of the goldfields, not only what they have got now, but the prospect of their getting a far better railway system than they have at the present time.

MR. WILSON: Do you say a railway from Esperance to Coolgardie would not pay?

THE PREMIER: Yes. I never could understand the reason for what I may call the clamour on the goldfields in favour of a railway to Esperance. When those people do get a railway to Esperance, they will find there is no line of mail steamers at Esperance Bay, nor is there likely to be any for a long time.

We know how long we have had to wait before getting mail steamers to come to Fremantle; and if mail steamers are to call at Esperance, it will be necessary first to spend a million of money.

MR. VOSPER: What on?

THE PREMIER: On a harbour and wharves.

MR. VOSPER: Then you do not know much about Esperance.

THE PREMIER: I know as much about Esperance as the hon. member, and my judgment and experience are perhaps equal to his in forming an opinion as to what would be necessary at Esperance. And I say, before the mail steamers could come there, an immense amount of money would have to be spent.

MR. A. Y. HASSELL: If the mail steamers would not call, plenty of other steamers would.

THE PREMIER: Would you get cheaper freights to one part of the colony than you would to the whole of it?

MR. A. Y. HASSELL: Yes.

THE PREMIER: I say you would not get such cheap freights to Esperance as you would to Fremantle. There might be some time saved in transit, if the service were extraordinarily good from Esperance to the other colonies, which it would not be likely to be for many a long day. That service is not likely to be half so good as the service from Fremantle.

MR. A. Y. HASSELL: Why?

THE PREMIER: The hon. member can answer that for himself. I do not wish to be interrogated here. The great entrepôt of the western portion of Australia is Fremantle—there is no doubt about that; and Fremantle will increase in importance year after year until it becomes one of the important ports of this continent; and freights will be as cheap to Fremantle as they are to any other port of Australia—as they are to Melbourne, Sydney, or Adelaide. Therefore if anyone likes to argue that any other port in this colony is likely to have the same volume of trade as Fremantle—because after all that is the great consideration—if anyone likes to argue that any other port will have the same volume of trade and the same facilities as Fremantle, I think he prophesies that which is not likely to occur in this country for

many years. The trend of popular opinion and the desire of this country will be to make the port of Fremantle the port of this great continent, and to improve it in every way; and to tell me that an isolated harbour away down at Esperance Bay, with the trade of only one part of the colony, will equal Fremantle as regards cheap freights, is telling me what I do not believe; because there are twice as many people in other places in this colony as there are on the eastern goldfields; and it is idle to say that that proportion of one out of two or three is going to provide sufficient trade and commerce to enable all these great facilities and this cheapness in freight and in passenger traffic to come about. To tell me that is telling me what I do not believe, and something which is not likely to occur in this country for many a long day. I could never understand the clamour on the goldfields in regard to this matter. It was a cry set up in the early days of the fields by the Press, as a sort of opposition to the older portions of this country. I do not blame the goldfields people. They were isolated, they were living under difficulties, and they soon began to think the best thing they could do was to say and publish those things which would be hurtful to the older inhabitants of the colony. The cry was raised by the Press to annoy the older population of the colony, and it is a cry which has "taken on," as they say. I can assure hon. members that in those days, this country, which was not then too rich, was using all its resources and putting forth all its best energies in building that railway from Southern Cross to Coolgardie across those sandplains. And when I went to Boorabbin, which is half-way, and posted from thence to Coolgardie, I was met by deputations urging that a railway should be built to Esperance Bay before the line had got even to Coolgardie. When the Coolgardie people were paying probably £14 a ton for their goods, when they had the utmost difficulty in getting along the roads at all for want of water, even then the cry was got up by the Press—I think the member for North-East Coolgardie was one of the principal newspaper writers at that time—that they wanted a railway to Esperance Bay before there was even a road to Esperance. Some enterprising fellow had looked at the map and

had seen how short would be a straight line from Coolgardie to Esperance Bay, and that it would be a good cry to raise; and the cry has gone on ever since. But I am very glad to say it is now dying out a bit. It is not so loud as it used to be.

MR. MORGANS: It is dead now.

THE PREMIER: I think it is dying; and a railway from Kalgoorlie to Port Augusta, which is now in the air—the idea of a railway from Kalgoorlie to Port Augusta—will put an end to that agitation absolutely. And the agitation never was genuine. It was a noisy and unreal agitation, opposed to Western Australia. The principal plank in the platform of the agitators was opposition to the older inhabitants of Western Australia, notwithstanding that we were desirous of holding out to them the right hand of fellowship; notwithstanding that we were most desirous of trying to do justice and right, and to assist them in every possible way to develop the goldfields, still this agitation was kept going. I am very glad indeed to say that the power of that dishonest class—of those leaders who were dishonest from the beginning and who are dishonest still—is dying out; and there is a great feeling now, if we can only take advantage of it, a generous feeling rising up amongst the people of these goldfields, that the older inhabitants of this colony have been their best friends all along, and that a closer and better understanding should be cultivated between all sections of the community. (**MR. KINGSMILL:** Hear, hear.) I hope, therefore, that in this discussion as to the construction of a railway from Coolgardie to Norseman, the question of the ultimate extension of the railway to Esperance and the injury that would do to Western Australia will be left out. I hope we shall deal with this question of the construction of a railway to Norseman as if Norseman were situated to the north of Coolgardie rather than to the south.

MR. WILSON: We cannot do that.

THE PREMIER: I think we can.

MR. MOEAN: We must discuss the question on its merits.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Norseman is south, you know.

THE PREMIER: I say we will discuss the question as if Norseman were to the north of Coolgardie rather than, as it is, to the southward. We shall deal with

the question as if Norseman were Menzies, as it is in an exactly similar position with regard to the railway system of the colony. (MR. MORGAN: Hear, hear.) I ask hon. members to authorise this work. I may point out that the passing of this Bill will not give any authority to spend one single penny of money. If this Bill, however, be passed by both Houses of Parliament, the desire of the Government is to make provision in the loan appropriations for the survey being carried out immediately and the rails being ordered, as soon as Parliament votes the money. Until that happens, the passing of this Bill will do no more than affirm that Parliament is in favour of the construction of the line at such time as Parliament chooses to vote the money for its construction. As far as regards the survey and the importation of the rails, I hope the time will be during this session. With regard to this work, opening up as it will a portion of our own territory where there is a considerable population engaged in developing the country and producing wealth, the only questions we have to ask ourselves are, should we construct this railway in the interests of the colony? Will it be a burden on the people or will it be self-supporting? The only questions we have to bother our heads about are, will the railway be a burden, or will it support itself? Should we come to the conclusion that it will support itself—as all the railways I have advocated in this House, taking them as a whole, are doing at the present moment—then I do not see that I am asking hon. members to run any great risk. What is this railway to cost? Firstly, in regard to the rolling-stock, no doubt in constructing railways we must provide for rolling-stock; but at the present time we deal with our rolling-stock as a whole, and do not charge any portion of it to any particular railway; we have a vote for rolling-stock for the whole of the railways, and we use our stock on any railway we like. Leaving out rolling-stock, the Public Works Department estimate this work will cost £290,000, and included in that is £50,000 for water. I think that item of £50,000 is a large estimate, and probably the fact that we have those two dams, which cost us about £40,000 to construct, was not taken into sufficient consideration. I think these

dams, with some little additions, will probably be sufficient to supply the railway with water. Supposing we say that this railway, when completed, will cost a quarter of a million, that sum would require an expenditure in interest of £9,000 or £10,000 a year at 4 per cent. And even if we had to pay that out of the national exchequer, it would not be such a terrible affair. But when I believe, and I ask hon. members too to believe, that this railway will be self-supporting, then there is nothing to lose. I believe this railway will pay its way, if economically managed. At any rate, that is a matter which hon. members must consider for themselves: how much of a burden is this to be on the general taxpayer? I say it will be none.

MR. MORAN: At what do you estimate the cost?

THE PREMIER: At £290,000.

MR. MORAN: That is below the average.

THE PREMIER: No; I say it is above the average.

MR. MORAN: It does not include the rolling-stock.

THE PREMIER: I know it does not. Rolling-stock is not included with the cost of the line, but is taken separately.

MR. MORAN: But you must charge the cost of rolling-stock against a new railway.

THE PREMIER: You can charge it if you like. This estimate of my own is £250,000. Taking £40,000 off the departmental estimate for water, and leaving the cost of water at £10,000 or £15,000, the estimated cost of the line will be about a quarter of a million; and we know pretty well that our engineers are generally pretty careful to make the estimates neither too little nor too much. I am prepared to accept the estimate of our engineers. Now what will this railway do which it is proposed to construct? At any rate, it will give the first chance of the markets between Coolgardie and Norseman to producers and traders of this colony. I do not mean to say the producers and traders of other countries will not have a chance: they will be able to have a share in the trade of this part of the colony; but, at any rate, our own people, and especially those living in the Avon Valley and those closer to the market, will be given the first chance

for what produce is required on the Norseman goldfield. This railway will open up the country for 108 miles, a country where there is timber required for the mines at Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie. The line will stimulate and encourage the development of the mining industry all along the route; and, in my opinion, all this can be gained without any additional burden on the people. I do not see why we should think a railway such as this, economically built and economically worked, should be a burden upon the people, any more than any other railway we have built on the goldfields. We have not yet tired of building railways on the goldfields, and I am sorry to think there should be people adverse to such railways, which have not meant a single penny-piece as a burden on the people. Having regard to the good fortune which has attended all our efforts to build railways, why should we hesitate now as to continuing this reproductive work, this self-supporting and reproductive work, which we have carried on for the last twelve years?

MR. VOSPER: Trust to luck.

THE PREMIER: Luck would not last all that time.

MR. MORAN: Look at the Southern Cross railway.

THE PREMIER: Hon. members are always glad to fall back on the Southern Cross railway.

MR. MORAN: That is the only instance: look at the traffic returns.

THE PREMIER: Southern Cross has not had a fair chance, because it has been overshadowed by the mines further east; but Southern Cross has paid, and there are lots of gold yet to the east and to the north. I am quite sure that Parker's Range goldfield is coming to the fore; and if we only had this line to depend on we would never have had any difficulty.

MR. MORAN: It would not pay for the axle grease.

THE PREMIER: It is a bad argument to point to something which might have turned out badly, but which turned out well; and if that is the only argument, it had better not be used. To show you what a goldfield such as Norseman can do, I will refer to Burbanks, which, though it has not done nearly so much for the colony as Norseman, has

done a great deal. I had a few figures wired to me yesterday as to Burbanks and the surrounding district within a few miles; and while the population of Burbanks and Norseman is about the same, the gold output at Norseman is double that of Burbanks. I was informed yesterday that in the district of Burbanks, which is only six miles from Coolgardie, there is a population of working miners of 1,200, and that they have produced during the last two years £250,000 worth of gold, while Norseman has produced £500,000 worth; and the wages paid at Burbanks amount to £65,000 per annum, and 20,000 tons of firewood and poles are used, with 3,000 tons of produce from Fremantle and Perth annually.

MR. MORAN: Three thousand tons of produce?

THE PREMIER: Well, of merchandise. No doubt the Norseman needs would be greater, and I think there is more machinery at Norseman.

MR. MORAN: Idle machinery.

THE PREMIER: See what this little locality has done for trade in the products of the country. This alone would be a good reason for carrying out the work; and I am not asking hon. members to burden the colony. If there is anyone who thinks the spending of a quarter of a million of money, the interest on which would be something like £10,000 a year—

MR. MORAN: Half a million.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member may have figures, but I take my figures from the Engineer-in-Chief.

MR. MORAN: I am taking the figures from the Government themselves.

THE PREMIER: If any hon. members think I am asking them to burden the country in regard to this work, they will of course vote against the measure. But no words of mine could induce hon. members to unduly burden the country, and there will be no burden, because this work will be reproductive, and will do good to the farmers and the manufacturers of the country. We hear people talking about building up manufactures and encouraging producers; but we must provide facilities for getting to market, and there never was such a market as in those districts where the rainfall is uncertain and scant. It seems as if an all-wise providence had made

parts of this country well suited for the production of the necessities for daily sustenance in the more sterile districts of the goldfields, the districts near the coastal parts having a better rainfall and a more fertile soil, and being able to provide those things which make life enjoyable in the interior. This railway will help our own people and producers; not like the railway which the member for the Canning (Mr. Wilson) would build from Esperance to Norseman, which would support the people of South Australia and give not a single penny to the farmers of this country.

MR. WILSON: And you are a federalist!

THE PREMIER: Yes; I am a federalist, but I look after my own country as well as I can, without being anti-federal. The hon. member wants to encourage the farmers of South Australia, and does not care twopence about the farmers of the Canning or elsewhere. He wants the producers here to find their market in Europe or somewhere else, while there is a market at their very doors.

MR. WILSON: There is a good market.

THE PREMIER: If the hon. member holds those views, he must expect me to take advantage of them, but there is nothing discourteous, I hope, in what I have said. His proposals would give the whole trade, so far as productions of the soil are concerned and also manufactures, to the people of South Australia and the other colonies, while the producers here would have no chance whatever.

MR. VOSPER: And yet you say the Esperance line would not pay!

THE PREMIER: I am dealing with the question of the railway from Coolgardie to Norseman, and apart from all those considerations we owe a duty to the people living on the goldfields between Coolgardie and Norseman, who should not be altogether overlooked. Some sacrifice might be made for those people, in the way of giving them the opportunity of producing wealth for the community under better conditions; and I am only asking hon. members to assent to this proposal in order to give every facility and advantage to the goldfields, and to assist people who live here and are producers. I do not know what position hon. members opposite are going to take in regard to this project; but we know they have expressed themselves

pretty clearly during the session in opposition to this railway. I do not wish to say anything to alienate the support of any hon. member opposite, but I cannot help thinking that hitherto the expressions of opinion from them do not give me much hope of their support. I hope, however, I may be mistaken. There are, so far as I know, in this House representatives of the goldfields who are as two to one against the representatives of other interests, and this opposition was hardly expected, and will not, I hope, be found in the division. If, however, the people of the goldfields, by their representatives here, vote against this railway and against the extension of railways to the goldfields—if they vote against giving facilities to people who are doing their best under great disadvantages at Norseman, and at the places between Coolgardie and Norseman—I can only wonder what evil spirit can have entered into their minds to cause them to oppose those who have been foremost, as we have been during the last ten years, in assisting the goldfields and the constituencies which those hon. members represent. We are told by some of them, in the action they have taken during the last month on certain questions in this House, that they have been acting in accord with the wishes of their constituents. I can only say if that is so, I do not know what sort of people they do represent; because when the Government and those who have supported them here many years are willing to extend the railway system of the colony so as to embrace another goldfield, a new province, and give assistance to those who are trying to develop the goldfields and the railway system of the colony, we have a right to expect the representatives of those goldfields to give us loyal support and assistance in this work. We find members representing goldfields who are willing to support a railway from Esperance to Coolgardie, but unwilling to support a railway from Coolgardie to Norseman. We find them willing to support a railway from Esperance to Norseman, but unwilling to support a railway from Coolgardie to Norseman. I would ask the people of this country whether members with ideas of that sort are really acting genuinely, whether they are genuine in the views they profess to represent, and whether

they are single-minded and desirous only of promoting what is best in the interests of Western Australia.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Why impute motives?

THE PREMIER: I say it is not arguable that any business man, I do not care who he is, if he is independent and unprejudiced, and if he knows anything about the conditions of this colony, would be willing to advise that a railway from Esperance to Norseman would do as much good for Norseman as a railway from Coolgardie to Norseman. These being the arguments of the member for the Canning (Mr. Wilson), I say they do him very little credit as a business man, and as one who is supposed to know something about finance; and if, as I expect, the hon. member does reiterate these opinions when he speaks again on the subject, I am confident that his repute as a business man and a financier will soon disappear. I say this is not a new railway, such as was advocated by the hon. member (Mr. Wilson), but is merely an extension of our existing railway system; and this extension will enable us to go to Norseman as quickly as we can now go to Menzies. The manufacturers, the capitalists, the traders, and the working-men of this country will be able to go to Norseman in pursuit of their avocations, as quickly and as easily as they now travel from Perth to Coolgardie, or from Kalgoorlie to Menzies. The hon. member (Mr. Wilson), and with him many hon. members on that side of the House, might well be christened the apostles of private enterprise; because they desire that everything should be done by private enterprise and by contract; that there shall be no public works carried out by day labour. Yet these are the ultra-democrats in this House who are trying to win the favour of the working men, who are known to be opposed to the contract system, and prefer to have works undertaken by day labour and carried out by the Government. I am in favour of private enterprise so long as it is kept within bounds, but I am not going to say that all public works in this colony should be carried out by private enterprise. I told some people the other day that the works which have been carried out by day labour in connection with the

Public Works Department, under the late Commissioner of Railways, have proved so far satisfactory that there was no reason to regret the introduction of day labour into our public works policy. I said this to representatives from the Trades and Labour Council, and I believe that is one of the planks in their labour platform; and although I am not so much in touch with them as some members opposite are, and I am not supposed to know the wants of working men so well, yet I was glad to be able to assure them that our experience in that direction has not been adverse to the construction of public works by day labour. Still hon. members opposite take every opportunity of telling the working men of this country that we (the Government) have no sympathy with them, and that the (the Opposition) are the real friends of the working man.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: When was that said?

THE PREMIER: Said every day.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Never said yet except by you.

THE PREMIER: I do not intend to speak much longer on the second reading of this Bill, as I have spoken three times on the subject before in advocating this railway; but I do say to hon. members let us construct this work, let us continue to bind the people of the goldfield together, and at the same time promote the good fellowship of the old and the new population of the colony, binding them together by the iron road. Let us give to the people on the Norseman goldfield an opportunity they have never had of seeing something of the metropolis of visiting the metropolitan district and of seeing the other goldfields of the colony. Do not let them live, as most of them have lived, in isolation, never having had an opportunity of seeing any other part of Western Australia from the day they landed at Esperance and travelled up a sandy road 120 miles to Norseman. Let us give them an opportunity of joining hands with the people in other parts of the country, seeing that the people of Norseman have come here to live and throw in their lot with the rest of the colony. I say to the traders, let us give the opportunity to the traders of this country to the manufacturers of the country, to the business men of the country, of doing

their business between Coolgardie and Norseman in the same way as they do their business in other goldfield centres, as they do it in travelling to Menzies. All things being equal, if hon. members can see any disadvantage to the colony in constructing this railway, these facts I have mentioned should certainly weigh with them. As I said before, there never was a time in the history of the colony when we should make a greater effort to do our best to encourage the good feeling which is now manifested on all sides by the goldfields people towards the people living in the older parts of the colony. A new era seems to be dawning upon us, and all the misunderstandings with the goldfields population are passing away. If we do this, we will not only be doing the best for ourselves, not only assisting in our own advancement, but we will be getting the goodwill and the co-operation of these people who, I can assure hon. members, are living in isolation, and for the most part have no knowledge of any other part of the colony outside the Norseman district. This railway will break down the isolation that has so long existed, and will let the light of goodwill and friendship into that part of the country, the light of goodwill and friendship from the people living in the older parts of the colony. I again appeal to hon. members not at this time to do anything which will undo in the slightest degree the good we have already done. I am asking nothing that will cost this country a penny, because I believe this railway will be self-supporting; and that being so, I have no hesitation in asking hon. members, with all confidence, to approve of the second reading of this Bill for the construction of a railway from Coolgardie to Norseman.

MR. VOSPER (North-East Coolgardie): As in the case of the Premier, I also have expressed my views on this railway question two or three times in this House; and I must say I have not heard anything in the speech of the right hon. gentleman to induce me in the slightest degree to modify or change them. All that the Premier proposes for Norseman is that it should be placed on an equality, not in advantages but in suffering, with the people on the eastern goldfields, who

complain of the injustice and the burden caused by their trade being taken 1,100 miles out of its natural route, and diverted from its natural port. All that is proposed in the present Bill is to perpetuate that system by putting the people on an equality of suffering with the rest of the goldfields population. I have always favoured the construction of a railway from Esperance to Coolgardie by way of Norseman, for the purpose of opening up a natural port, which I believe will in time be a sanatorium for the goldfields on the south coast. I can see nothing in the speech of the Premier or in the Bill to change my opinion. Besides that, the route which is chosen for this railway is not the best calculated to serve the interests of the goldfields in that part of the colony. The right hon. gentleman has told us this railway will open up Burbanks; but I regard Burbanks as being practically an integral portion of Coolgardie, being close to it.

MR. MORGANS: Eight miles away.

MR. VOSPER: Six miles. It does not appear to me that the people of Burbanks will suffer any inconvenience if this line does not go there, but takes a route better calculated to develop the auriferous country. The Premier tells us also that the line is to go on to Londonderry, a deserted place, now a memory of the past. Then he tells us it will go to Widgemooltha, a defunct mining centre, and another memory of the past. The route, we are told, will leave Red Hill to the eastward; but the district of Red Hill is said by competent judges to be quite equal to Burbanks; yet this important district is being left out of consideration altogether, while the beauties and glories of Dundas and Widgemooltha are enlarged upon for the edification of this House. Then we are told that along the route is a series of tanks, which have apparently been built for the purpose of conserving water for this line; and the last reason stated for building this line is the immense quantity of timber along the route.

MR. MORAN: The same might be said of every route on the goldfields.

MR. VOSPER: That applies to every portion of the goldfields, except to those already denuded of timber. A few years ago, much of the country round Coolgardie was as thickly covered with timber as

this route. But there is one difficulty in connection with this route which does not apply to the other timber lines. Those lines run over comparatively level country to the north, and the wagons can be taken out there, and the lines moved from place to place in order to fall the timber; whereas on the Norseman line it will be far otherwise, for after the White Horse Rocks are passed, and until one reaches Norseman, the engineer will have to contend with hills and gullies.

THE PREMIER: The line will not go along the present road.

MR. VOSPER: Quite so. You cross the lake; but even so, you will find an immense amount of broken country, and the further you go eastward the less will be the quantity of timber available, and it will be just as difficult to transport that timber through the broken country to the railway as it would be to take it direct into Kalgoorlie.

MR. MORAN: In some places they cut down two acres a day.

MR. VOSPER: Yes; for the supply is speedily exhausted. If this were the object in building this line, it would be far better attained by taking a more easterly route, across country more level, and on which the supply of timber is more evenly distributed.

THE PREMIER: It would be impossible to go further eastward to Widgeemooltha. The line could not go through the lake.

MR. VOSPER: You are going through an equally big lake when you cross Lake Cowan.

THE PREMIER: Look at the map.

MR. VOSPER: I have been there twice; and I should like to ask the right hon. gentleman, does the true configuration of any of these lakes appear on the maps?

THE PREMIER: The line must go to Widgeemooltha.

MR. MORGANS: Or within four or five miles of it.

MR. VOSPER: There would be no real difficulty in going further eastward; and, as a matter of fact, whatever difficulty can attach to Lake Lefroy will apply with equal force to Lake Cowan. If you are going to cross one, you might as well cross the other. The Premier went on speaking at some length on the question of the Esperance Bay railway,

and he demolished the only real reason why the goldfields members should vote for this Coolgardie-Norseman line. He told the House that they need have no fear, in the event of this line being constructed, that it would ever be pushed on to Esperance. Now, the sole reason why the goldfields people, or some of them, are clamouring for this railway, and the sole pretext or excuse for the construction of this proposed railway, is that it will be the first section of a line from Coolgardie to Esperance.

THE PREMIER: I am not the arbiter of this country for ever. That statement expresses my opinion, but you may have a different opinion.

MR. VOSPER: Quite so; my opinion is different, and I believe the next Parliament will construct the line right through to Esperance.

THE PREMIER: Then they had better help us to make it half the distance.

MR. VOSPER: I am therefore in favour of leaving the whole matter to the next Parliament. Let them take the responsibility. We may pass this Bill for the construction of the line, but it is very certain that we cannot find the money. That is the crux of the whole question. Now with regard to this Esperance Bay railway, the Premier, as is sometimes his custom when he makes an enthusiastic speech, succeeded in contradicting himself when he said that the Esperance Bay railway would lead to all the trade of the goldfields being done, by means of that railway, with the Eastern colonies.

THE PREMIER: I did not say anything of the sort.

MR. VOSPER: Pardon me. What the Premier said was that the trade in produce, which is now carried on between the coastal districts and the goldfields, would be diverted to the Eastern colonies.

THE PREMIER: No; I said the trade of Norseman—not that of Coolgardie.

MR. VOSPER: No; you did not say anything about Coolgardie. Is it to be assumed that if the Norseman people buy their vegetables from South Australia, the Coolgardie people will refrain from so doing for the purpose of benefiting the agriculturists in the South-West?

THE PREMIER: I was comparing Esperance-to-Norseman and Coolgardie-to-Norseman.

MR. VOSPER: I am speaking of the through route.

THE PREMIER: I said nothing of the through route.

MR. VOSPER: You said a good deal. The real reason the Esperance line is not constructed is not because it will not pay. The real reason is the same as is always apparent—the selfish desire to conserve local interests at the expense of the goldfields, and, consequently, at the expense of the whole colony. We are told, further, that in order to make this line available, to make the Esperance harbour fit for the reception of shipping, there would be required an expenditure of a million of money. I can only say that if such a statement were made outside the House, I should have no hesitation in characterising it as a deliberate misstatement, because, in my opinion, there is in it no shadow of truth. I know very well that reports have been made on that harbour time after time. They have been laid on the table of this House and published in the columns of the Press: and these are not authorities who went overland to see the harbour, like the Premier, but men who judged it as master mariners; and they all say that the sole requirements to make that harbour useful and commodious are a couple of lighthouses, and a few beacons and buoys. And these are going to cost a million of money! As a matter of fact, nothing at all will be required to be done there beyond the construction of two or three jetties. It is a complete, commodious, and natural harbour, which could accommodate the whole of the traffic to the goldfields and to Western Australia generally; and to ask us to believe for one moment that it would cost one million of money is simply to mislead this House. As for the mail steamers not calling at Esperance, who wants them? How long is it since we have had them at Fremantle? Fremantle was not quite a fishing village before the mail steamers came there. It was almost as important a place five years ago as it is at the present moment. And yet we are told that there will be no traffic on that Esperance-Norseman railway because the mail steamers will not call at Esperance! What difference does the calling of the mail steamers at Fremantle make to the Eastern railway

at the present moment? No very considerable amount. What is required is to have a steady coastal traffic opened up from Esperance to the Eastern colonies. That is what the goldfields desire, and what the Premier practically promised to the people of Esperance long ago. As far as injuring the trade of Fremantle is concerned, it is true that Fremantle in the past has depended to a very large extent upon the goldfields trade: but the Premier himself has pointed out that the trade of the port lies more with the coastal districts than, perhaps, with the fields, because only one-third of our population live upon the fields; consequently Fremantle would lose only one-third of her trade, and would not now be so seriously affected as would have been the case a few years ago, when she depended to a very much greater extent on the goldfields. The Government are endeavouring to squelch the desire for the Esperance railway by pandering to the selfish requirements of a few people at Coolgardie. Coolgardie, for a long time past, has been living on the bounty of this Government, and it hopes to continue to do so. Coolgardie has been practically a pauper city; and apparently, the object of the Government is, for its own political ends, to feed Coolgardie at the expense of the rest of the goldfields and the country generally. For my own part, if I were absolutely assured that I would lose my seat within the next twenty-four hours, I should object strongly to the policy of the Government in regard to that town. All that is valuable in the old population of Coolgardie is scattered up and down over the whole of the goldfields, where they are doing the same good work that they did in the early days at Coolgardie; but the majority of the inhabitants who remain in that place are simply looking forward to being spoon-fed on Government bounties, and the whole existence of Coolgardie depends on what she can receive from the State. We have seen the Coolgardie Exhibition, the workshops —[MR. MORAN: The School of Mines]— and now they are to have another gift of £290,000 poured into their lap. When Coolgardie was opposed to the Government, the railway workshops were denied her; but now that she is heartily supporting the Government, all these gifts

such as the Menzies railway are showered upon her, together with any extra benefits which the Government can bestow. I do not say that this has been done as a bribe, but I say these facts are extremely significant, to say the least of them.

THE PREMIER: The statement is incorrect.

MR. VOSPER: Can the Premier deny my statement as to the way Coolgardie has been treated? Compare the treatment it now receives and the manner in which it was dealt with when its inhabitants were strongly opposed to the present Government.

THE PREMIER: When was that?

MR. VOSPER: When I was there: when I had something to do with the moulding of public opinion in Coolgardie. It was not the kind of place which would have banquetted the Premier, and given him a favourable reception. The right hon. gentleman penalised the place at that time for its opposition to the Government.

THE PREMIER: He is a very bad man.

MR. VOSPER: Yes; I have always had that opinion of the Premier, politically, and I am glad that he has at last the saving grace to confess the truth. We are told that the construction of the Norseman line will open up a part of our own country. That is very interesting for the people of Esperance to read. But we are asked to believe that the line to Esperance will not open up another portion of our own country. The people who happen to live in the most favourable geographical position for supplying the wants of the Eastern goldfields are denied the opportunity of doing so, because, if that opportunity were granted them, they would trade with South Australia. And I may say it is a very fine example of that federal spirit of which the Premier has been boasting so much of late, and of the narrow parochialism which has always been the key-note of his policy—it is an excellent example of his desire to protect this province against the Eastern colonies; and not only that, but to protect every district in the colony against every other district. Norseman and the goldfields generally are to be excluded from their natural port, for the benefit of Bunbury and the Avon Valley; and the whole scheme of the Government is to concentrate the trade of the colony

in one particular district; in fact, their policy is centralisation first, centralisation second, and centralisation all the time. That is the beginning, middle, and end of the Forrest song, all the way through.

THE PREMIER: It has proved very successful.

MR. VOSPER: The idea of the colony, as it presents itself to the right hon. gentleman's mind, is a piece of land bounded on the north by Highgate Hill and on the south by St. George's Terrace.

THE PREMIER: It is astonishing how we progress, notwithstanding.

MR. VOSPER: The colony has progressed in spite of that policy, and any country less worthy, and possessing less gold, would have succumbed to such a policy long ago. That policy was tried in Queensland for many years; but they had to abandon it there; and as soon as we cease to live on our borrowings and on our gold returns, the right hon. gentleman may depend upon it that it must come to an end here. We shall have to settle down to work on our own resources.

MR. MOORHEAD: And, therefore, build a line to Esperance!

MR. VOSPER: Yes; because it is the natural outlet for trade. You can always depend upon a very large traffic over such a route, as compared with the miserable little branch traffic from Coolgardie to Norseman. It is the difference between the trade of a province and that of a continent. The line to Esperance will open up the trade of a huge colony in itself, whereas the Coolgardie-Norseman railway will simply start from a tank in Coolgardie and finish with a pump at Norseman. Then we are told that the goldfields members are bound to help the Government to do their duty to the goldfields and to help to build railways which we do not approve, for which we have no money, and which we regard as a mere empty promise to be hung up. The position will be similar to that in regard to the Nannine Railway, which was hung up year after year, and all the time this Coolgardie-Norseman line will be dangled before the people of those places as an inducement to support the Government. That is the idea the Government have of doing their duty to the goldfields. If the majority of the goldfields members

are not more alive to their duty than that, they will have a small chance of remaining in this House. Our duty to the goldfields, according to the Premier, is to compel them to pay three times the freight they ought to, and to run that traffic by a route which is unnatural and vexatious—to compel people to trade with centres they do not want to trade with, and pay more for their goods. I am not prepared to make that the interpretation of my duty. I know what the people sent me here for, and one thing was the construction of a line from Esperance to Coolgardie, with no tiddliwinking nonsense about a line from Burbanks to Norseman. The description we have had of the financial position of the country, and which has not been contradicted, is sufficiently alarming.

THE PREMIER: I said 10s. per head. but that, I believe, is reduced to 3s. 10d.

MR. VOSPER: That is the kind of thing one sees in an insolvent's schedule, because I never saw an insolvent who did not show a substantial balance in his favour. The Premier does exactly the same sort of thing, and it is ominous that at this time he should show a balance on such lines.

THE PREMIER: You seem to know all about it.

MR. VOSPER: I have not been "through the mill" myself, but if I stick to politics a few years longer I may know of insolvency from experience. I observe these things, and it is a bad omen that the Premier should resort to this sort of thing in order to make out a specious case. At all events my opinions are as firm as they were last year, and I shall not vote for the Bill, because the expenditure is not justified, and the money would not be forthcoming; and if the money were forthcoming, my belief is that the Government intend to hang the matter up as a temptation as well as a stumbling-block in the future. My vote and sympathy will always be given to the Esperance-Coolgardie railway, and short of that I will not engage myself to vote.

MR. MORGANS (Coolgardie): I have listened with some interest to the remarks of the Premier, as well as to those of the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper), and I must say in regard to the latter gentleman, that his attitude in

regard to this railway is not quite what it was when he was resident at Coolgardie. I am quite prepared to know a man has changed his views and opinions on an important matter of this kind, but what is wanting in the case of the hon. member is that he has not given a good reason for his change. I suppose, however, we must accept his dictum when he tells us he will vote against the railway, and must put up with the loss of his vote. I feel sure that after the remarks of the Premier and some facts which I hope to be able to lay before the House, there will be a very substantial majority in favour of the Bill. The important question of the Norseman railway has been made a political shuttlecock in the House by members of the Opposition, and they have had an opportunity on several occasions of attacking the Government on the question. The first time, I believe, the Government were not successful, but a second time there was a substantial majority in favour of the railway, though unfortunately the proposal was negatived by one vote in the other House. Now the Government have brought the measure in again, and the Premier has, I think, shown this is a railway which should be built. He has given some facts and figures which should be sufficient to justify the House in giving a consent to the construction. Taking the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) for example, I judge from his interjections that his intention is also to vote against the Bill; but I hope the hon. member will alter his views at last, and will see his way to vote for the railway when he has heard some further facts. One of the most important and potent reasons for the construction of the railway is that the Norseman goldfield is a very valuable one. There cannot be any doubt about that, because the results are quite sufficient to justify any member in characterising the Norseman as a great, valuable, and important field.

MR. MORAN: I arrive at the very opposite conclusion, from the returns. I have figures.

MR. MORGANS: I regret the hon. member's grasp of the subject is so narrow that he is not able to realise the importance of the question. The Premier has told us that last year the production of gold at Norseman was 172,000ozs.:

and that of itself is a very respectable output, and one, supposing that it could be maintained, which would be sufficient to justify this railway, which will travel through a very important mining belt. Here we have a goldfield which certainly has not developed as rapidly as its importance demands. Why is this? The simple fact is that the Norseman goldfield is languishing for want of railway communication. If the Norseman goldfield had had railway advantages such as Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie, Menzies, and other centres have, there is no doubt the field would be in a far more prosperous condition than it is now. The Norseman goldfield is on the outskirts of the Coolgardie gold belt, and only 120 miles from Esperance; but the road between Esperance and Norseman is of such a nature that the cost of carriage alone at Esperance often amounts to £25 per ton, and even under the best conditions haulage for machinery and stores from Esperance to Norseman costs £18 per ton. It would be impossible under these conditions for a goldfield to develop satisfactorily, though I remember the hon. member for the Murray (Mr. George) said something about all necessary machinery having been supplied to Norseman. That may be so for the present, and I am prepared to admit there are a few batteries at Norseman idle; but that is no argument against the present proposal. This freight for machinery is a very small proportion of the cost for carriage of stores, fuel, and mining timber. When once machinery is erected, the cost for carriage is settled, and I contend that the question of freight for the carriage of machinery is one that should not enter into the consideration of this railway proposal. I can assure the House, from my own knowledge, that the total tonnage necessary for the erection of all machinery on a goldfield like Norseman, for a 20-head battery, does not amount to more than 150 tons for the complete outfit. But what about the fuel to keep it going? It would require ten times that amount of freight in the way of firewood, pit timber, and stores; and I mention this fact because it shows how very unfair and misleading it is for a member in the House to use that as an argument why this railway should not be built. The

railways are not built for putting machinery in the locality, but for supplying the mines with stores and fuel and other things required for carrying the machinery on.

MR. MORAN: The hon. member was not always of that opinion in regard to the Leonora line.

MR. MORGANS: I am perfectly willing the hon. member should turn up any speech I have made in the House, and though he is a very energetic man and has a good memory, in this particular instance his memory has failed. I have never said that the Leonora railway was necessary on account of the machinery.

MR. MORAN: Did you not use that as an argument?

MR. MORGANS: I said it would aid very much in the development of the country by carrying machinery. I am taking a case which has been put forward by the Opposition, namely that all necessary machinery for Norseman is already there; and I desire to show there is no force in that argument.

At 6-30, the SPEAKER left the Chair.

At 7-30, Chair resumed.

MR. MORGANS (Coolgardie): I regret that the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) is not present, because I have to direct a few of my remarks to him in connection with some statements he made this afternoon. The hon. member said there is a strong agitation on the goldfields for the construction of a railway from Esperance to Norseman. I claim to know more of the feeling of the goldfields than the hon. member can know, for I am there oftener and I come into contact with a far greater number of people; and I can safely say, from my knowledge of the facts, that the hon. member is not correct in his statement. It is perfectly true that an agitation was formerly got up on the goldfields with regard to a railway from Esperance; in fact, it was made the centre of a policy of opposition to the Government. It is well known by the members of this House and the public generally that the member for North-East Coolgardie was at one time the editor of the Coolgardie *Miner*, which newspaper was at the time a violent oppositionist under the direction of an

editor who is now the member for North-East Coolgardie. The question of the construction of a railway from Esperance to the goldfields was made a matter of opposition policy by that newspaper; and afterwards this same cry was taken up by the *Kalgoorlie Miner*; but so far as that cry is concerned, I can assure this House it is a newspaper cry and nothing more; that it is not a cry of the public at all. It is true that a few meetings were called, and we know that at a public meeting any good speaker, such as the member for North-East Coolgardie, could "enthuse" a goldfields audience upon any question that happened to be against the Government. There were one or two public meetings called in reference to this agitation, but so far as the general feeling of the population on the goldfields is concerned, I say there is no feeling whatever at the present time in reference to the construction of a railway from Esperance to the goldfields, and there are not twenty men on the goldfields at present who care a straw whether a railway from Esperance to Norseman is constructed or not. The great question on the goldfields is to get railway communication. I recollect the member for North-East Coolgardie taking a trip to Esperance on one occasion—[MR. VOSPER: Two]—with Mr. Kingswell, the then proprietor of the *Coolgardie Miner* newspaper; and although I am this evening not able to quote from the hon. member's remarks on that trip, I have in my possession some newspaper articles written by him after his return, and also some statements made by him during the progress of that trip; and I may say that at that time the hon. member was in favour of establishing railway communication between Coolgardie and Norseman.

MR. VOSPER: No. I advocated a railway from Esperance to Coolgardie; the Esperance-to-Norseman section first.

MR. MORGANS: I accept that statement; but on the question of the construction of a railway to Norseman at the time, supposing it had been suggested by the Government, I am sure the hon. member, who then took a great interest in the affairs of Coolgardie as editor of a newspaper and as a citizen of Coolgardie, would have supported that railway, and would have been glad to see the work carried out. I regret the remarks

he made this afternoon in reference to Coolgardie. They were, to say the least of them, unkind, and I think to a large extent unjustifiable. I do not know what reason the hon. member may have for attacking so severely and so unjustly Coolgardie as a city and a gold-mining district; but those remarks do not agree with the opinion he held formerly in regard to Coolgardie as a gold centre. We know that for some time he has severed his connection with Coolgardie; but I do not think Coolgardie deserves at his hands the severe comments he made on it this afternoon, nor do I think there is anything to justify those remarks. With regard to Coolgardie as a gold-producing centre at the present time, in contradistinction to what the hon. member has told us, I may say that Coolgardie is to-day in a prosperous condition. It is quite true that during the boom time in 1896 and 1897 the inhabitants of Coolgardie were greater in number than they are to-day. We know perfectly well that there were in and around Coolgardie a great many "wild cats" which were floated in London, and floated even in this colony; and we know the result of the flotation of those "wild cats" is, finally, the suspension of work. Consequently, it is quite natural that a period of depression should follow the untimely end of those "wild cats." Coolgardie at the present moment is in the enjoyment of a considerable income from the wages of various mines, and, so far as I have been able to ascertain, there are now in and around Coolgardie wages distributed to the extent of £3,000 per week. This being so, I do not think the hon. member's remarks were justified with regard to the poverty of Coolgardie or with regard to the conditions generally in that very important goldfields centre. The township is, as I say, in the enjoyment of the distribution of wealth to the extent I have mentioned, and I am not now speaking of the distribution of wealth from other sources, but am speaking of mining sources alone; and I say that any town which is in enjoyment of such wealth as that cannot be in the unhappy condition of poverty depicted by the hon. member. With regard to the hon. member's statement that the Government have been spoon-feeding Coolgardie, I have no doubt the hon. member

may think he has made out a fairly good case; but I do not agree with him. I do not know of any special aid which has been given to Coolgardie by the Government.

MR. VOSPER: If it had not been for you, Coolgardie would have been dead long ago.

MR. MORGANS: The hon. member, in saying that, does me too much honour. I can assure him that as regards the Coolgardie Exhibition I admit the Government spent a considerable amount of money, and the result fully justified the expenditure; and it can be shown beyond all doubt that that Exhibition was one of the best investments the Government ever made upon the goldfields. That is about the only large sum of money the Government ever spent in Coolgardie, and when the Exhibition was established, it was intended that the permanent portion of the building should be used as a School of Mines for the goldfields, and that idea I hope to see carried out in a very short time. There is no doubt Coolgardie has suffered very severely from the determination of the Government to start the Menzies railway from Kalgoorlie instead of Coolgardie. If the line had gone from Coolgardie, Coolgardie would have been a distributing centre of great importance on the goldfields, and there is no doubt that it would be now enjoying many of the great commercial and industrial advantages enjoyed by Kalgoorlie.

MR. MORAN: What are they? Kalgoorlie is living wholly on her mines.

MR. MORGANS: I take it that in Coolgardie there would have been the workshops, the engine sheds, the shunting yards, and the various other important railway works, the presence of which would have meant an expenditure of about £3,000 a week, had that railway started from Coolgardie instead of from Kalgoorlie. Of course I am not discussing the question of whether it would have been better to start from Coolgardie.

MR. MORAN: You do not want two centres.

MR. MORGANS: The incident is ended, and there is nothing more to be said. I merely called attention to the question to show that through that decision Coolgardie has been a very serious sufferer. The member for North-

East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) was at that time in front of a very strong agitation against the Government, and I know well that the hon. member was not prepared, even in the interests of Coolgardie, to slacken that agitation for the purpose of having that railway started from Coolgardie.

MR. MORAN: Would that have affected the Government?

MR. MORGANS: No; but the hon. member referred to the incident, otherwise it would not have been mentioned by me. But if the railway had gone from Coolgardie, it would have been more advantageous in many respects for the northern portions of the colony, and more convenient in every way. I hope that the very unkind things said by the hon. member with regard to Coolgardie this evening will be withdrawn, or at least modified. For a long time the hon. member was a citizen of Coolgardie; he took a lively interest in its destinies; and it is hard to understand why he should now say such unkind and spiteful things of that spot which received him well, and of which he was a citizen for some time, seeing that the conditions of that place have not changed so much since he was there. I can only hope the unkind expressions used by the hon. member to-day were the result of a disordered liver or of some strong feeling he experienced before he came into the House. At any rate, I feel sure he would not, on reflection, desire to do the injustice to Coolgardie that his words this afternoon would convey. Something was said about the difficulty of making a railway through this country; but I cannot see that there are any difficulties at all. What better evidence could the House have on this question than the testimony of the engineers of the Government? The member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran), when the Premier mentioned the estimate of the Engineer-in-Chief with regard to the cost of this railway, interjected and said that the estimate was too low. If the Government are not in a position to take the estimate of their own Engineer-in-Chief, and if the House have more confidence in the opinion of the hon. member with regard to railway construction than they have in that of the Engineer-in-Chief, then I think we had better replace the

Chief Engineer by the member for East Coolgardie. It seems to me that is the logical position. There is no doubt the estimate for this railway is quite correct. The line can be built, and built very substantially, for the sum mentioned. The hon. member (Mr. Moran) interjected again, and asked what about the rolling-stock? If that line had to be specially equipped with rolling-stock for its own exclusive use, that question would be justifiable.

MR. MORAN: Take the average.

MR. MORGANS: I am taking the Engineer-in-Chief's figures. They are quite good enough for me.

MR. MORAN: So am I.

MR. MORGANS: I do not want any further justification.

MR. MORAN: His estimate does not include rolling-stock.

MR. MORGANS: The Premier told the hon. member that rolling-stock was not included. If this were a separate line with its equipment and rolling-stock entirely distinct from the general railways of the colony, no doubt a very considerable sum of money would have to be added to the estimate for the equipment; but this line being connected with the general trunk lines of the colony, the question of rolling-stock is very insignificant in proportion to what it would be in the circumstances I have suggested.

MR. MORAN: Will no new rolling-stock at all be wanted?

MR. MORGANS: I do not say that no new rolling-stock at all will be required, but I say that the conditions arising from the fact that this railway is part of the trunk line railway system of the colony do alter the circumstances with regard to the cost of rolling-stock for this railway and make a very great difference. Let us take, for example, merchandise and machinery loaded at Fremantle for transit to Norseman. What happens? At the present moment, such goods are taken up to Coolgardie and shipped on wagons.

MR. MORAN: And the wagons sent back.

MR. MORGANS: If the hon. member will give me an opportunity to explain, I will try to do so. In the other case, supposing the railway be built, the wagon is sent on to the Norseman, takes one day to get down there, and one day to get back.

THE PREMIER: About four hours to get down.

MR. MORGANS: But I am allowing a full day for the wagon to get down and another day to come back again.

MR. MORAN: You may safely allow that, too.

MR. MORGANS: The most you can say is that this truck will be two days longer running than it was formerly, and I am prepared to admit that in proportion to the amount of traffic there will be on the railway, there will have to be an addition to our rolling-stock. That is a very small matter indeed, and it is not worthy the attention of the hon. member nor of this House; and I sincerely hope that the hon. member, if he intends to oppose this railway, will have some better reason to advance than he has given us hitherto. With regard to turning this railway eastward in the direction suggested by the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper), I may say the railway cannot very well go further east. There is the question of lakes, which the Premier mentioned. It is quite true, in view of the position of Lake Lefroy, that this railway could not be built much further to the east; but supposing it could be, it is not a desirable thing to build this railway too much to the east, for by so doing we should be getting very close to the land of the Hampton Plains Company, and, in fact, would have to go through a portion of that estate. So I do not think it is desirable that this railway should be built for the purpose of developing the Hampton Plains land. There is a very large amount of timber in a westerly direction, and it is much more convenient in the interests of the country that the railway should be built there, even if it cost a little more. But we have the estimate of the Engineer-in-Chief that the building of this railway in a westerly direction will cost half a million of money.

MR. MORAN: The estimate was £290,000.

MR. MORGANS: I have seen the estimate, which says £250,000; the actual outlay the House has to face is £250,000.

THE PREMIER: That is it.

MR. MORGANS: Is that not an amount of money this House would be justified in spending on a railway like this? An hon. member says it would

not be justified, but I say the country and the House are as justified in spending this money as in spending money on the Fremantle Harbour Works. The whole railway system of the colony means direct benefit to Fremantle, and if any portion of the colony is to be benefited by the construction of the line, it is that port; and, therefore, in the interests of Fremantle, apart altogether from the important interests of the colony, which are above all other interests, I cannot understand Fremantle members opposing this measure, supposing it can be shown that the railway is a good investment and could be made to pay.

MR. MORAN: Show that it is so.

MR. MORGANS: I think I can show that. If the railway is constructed on the lines we mentioned, the interest on the outlay and the redemption fund will amount to less than £11,000 per annum—1 per cent. redemption. I am speaking of a railway equipped as this will be running in connection with the main trunk railway.

MR. MORAN: Do you mean profit over running expenses?

MR. MORGANS: Certainly. I suppose the hon. member does not think I am calculating this amount as the gross takings of the railway, which would be rather too absurd. I suppose an ordinary ten-year-old schoolboy would not fall into such an error as that, much less a man experienced in finance like myself. The fact remains that this is the amount of profit which must be made out of the railway in order to make it a sustaining enterprise. If we take the running expenses of the railway at 65 per cent.—

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Nearer 76 per cent.

MR. MORGANS: This particular railway will not cost quite so much, as I am prepared to show, but supposing I accept the suggestion and take the running expenses at 70 per cent., then the gross earnings of the railway will have to be less than £30,000 per annum in order to pay running expenses, and at the same time pay interest on the capital invested, and 1 per cent. redemption fund.

MR. MORAN: More than that.

MR. MORGANS: The member for East Coolgardie is in an anxious state of mind, and is quibbling at figures. I am

flattered that the statements I am making are going to his heart, and making an impression on him, and I hope before I sit down I shall be able to convert him from the error of his ways. I say we must have £30,000 worth of traffic in a year in order to pay working expenses and interest on outlay and redemption. Is there any hon. member who knows anything of the Norseman goldfield and anything of the country through which the line will run, who will suggest for a moment that this amount of traffic will not go over the railway? It only amounts to a little over £2,000 a month, or if hon. members like I will take the gross traffic at £2,500 per month. I assure the House that is a very small amount indeed to estimate as the traffic which will be carried over this important line, because there is no doubt the traffic will be double that. As to the question of wood, I regret to say I have unfortunately mislaid some important statistics I had in regard to the timber on this section of the country through which this railway will run. Those statistics would show there are over a million tons of firewood available within a reasonable distance of this railway, for the Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie goldfields, and within a distance of 50 miles of Coolgardie, and the time is coming when this timber will be required for the mines. We know quite well that at the present time there is a vast amount of timber being cut on the goldfields to keep the Kalgoorlie mines going, besides that which is required for mines in the neighbourhood of Coolgardie. At the present moment, in order to supply the Kalgoorlie mines alone, it is necessary to clear about 200 acres of timber country per day, and the position, so far as Kalgoorlie is concerned, is that 1,000 tons of firewood per day are being consumed. That is the minimum; but I am sure if you were to take the amount of fuel that has been supplied by the timber company of which a great deal has been said, and also by a number of small contractors working, I think it would be found that the fuel consumed by the Kalgoorlie mines is considerably over 1,000 tons per day. It is easy to understand that, notwithstanding the fact there is a fairly timbered country between Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie, and away in the direction of 42-Mile, many years of

working will not be required before the whole of the firewood is cut out. I should say that so far as timber is concerned on the Norseman railway, there would be a supply for six or seven years for the Kalgoorlie mines.

MR. MORAN: At the rate of 200 acres a day?

MR. MORGANS: It must be remembered that the Norseman district has one advantage over other districts, in that there is a very large amount of timber suitable for mining purposes. I must mention to the member for East Coolgardie, who is making a most interesting calculation, that this remark does not refer to firewood entirely, but to mining timber as well; so when we look at the great importance of the fuel and timber question, that is a strong argument in favour of the construction of this line as soon as possible. But I wish to go beyond that, and advocate the railway, not on the timber argument, though that be an important factor, but on the merits of the Norseman goldfield. I do not hesitate to say statistics have shown, so far as production has gone, that Norseman is a most valuable goldfield, and has produced more than half a million pounds worth of gold, and it is only a matter of railway communication to make the field a very much larger producer of gold than at the present time. At Norseman they have a great many low-grade mines, which have suffered severely from cost of transit; and there is no doubt that with a railway there would scarcely be an idle battery in the district. It is a question of the cost of transit of stores and materials for the mines, and the transit later on of firewood and mining timber. There is no scarcity of gold in Norseman, because, in the opinion of men who know the district well, it is one of the best low grade mines in the colony; and I should say that the member for East Coolgardie has never been there.

MR. MORAN: Yes, long before you came here.

MR. MORGANS: Then I shall correct myself. Will the hon. member tell me that he has been down a mine at Norseman?

MR. MORAN: No; I have not.

MR. MORGANS: That is practically admitting he does not know anything

about the matter; but we have the testimony of men engaged in the mining industry for the last six years there, and they tell us one of the great difficulties in the exploitation of the mines at Norseman is the question of transit, with high cost of living, and of all stores and materials for the mines, particularly the high cost of horse-feed. These are the great drawbacks of the Norseman field; and while it is all very well for hon. members to think that when once machinery is erected there is no more transit to be done, the question of stores, firewood, and fuel is of far more importance than the haulage of machinery. What are the store accounts of any great mines at Kalgoorlie and on the northern goldfields? If hon. members look into the question, they will find the stores account, next to wages account, is the largest item of expenditure. I am speaking of wood also, which comes under the head of stores account, and in many cases this stores account is even larger than the wages account. Norseman has one great advantage over Coolgardie, in a much better supply of water; and the great difficulty has been that of transit. No doubt if the railway be constructed it will put new life into the Norseman goldfield, because the inevitable result will be that nearly all, if not all, the batteries now idle will be started again.

MR. A. FORREST: What about the Leonora line?

MR. MORGANS: Of course we want the railway to Leonora, and I am not saying a word against such a line, which is required more than this railway. Just now, however, I am advocating the Norseman line; and I do not see there is any reason, because I am advocating the construction of the Norseman railway, to suppose I oppose the construction of a line to Leonora. My own personal interests are in the north, and, therefore, I should help forward the Leonora railway; but I am taking a broad view in this matter, and while I have no interest in Norseman, I desire to assist those people in getting a railway constructed, because they have a splendid low-grade goldfield, and it requires a railway to enable the splendid resources of the district to be developed.

MR. A. FORREST: Why should they not have a railway to Lake Way?

MR. MORGANS: They will have that in time, and railways will be gradually constructed north. But here is one of the oldest portions of the goldfields, only 108 miles from Coolgardie.

MR. MORAN: Mount Sir Samuel as well.

MR. MORGANS: I do not object, and some day I hope a railway will be run through that splendid goldfield from East Murchison to East Coolgardie; but this Norseman railway is one that should be constructed now, and all the conditions are in favour of the construction, seeing it is only a question of making a branch railway from Coolgardie for 108 miles. We know the goldfield is a good one, and if the people of the district are given railway facilities, the gold yield, which last year was valued at £172,000, will soon be doubled or trebled. This is a national work for the purpose of encouraging the production of gold, and there is nothing parochial in the suggestion to build the line. No doubt it has been spoken of as a political railway, but I can assure members of the Opposition there are no politics mixed up with the railway at all. The only object of the railway is to develop the national resources of the colony, and to give the people at Norseman facility for working their mines. The colony is in a position at the present time to meet this expenditure, and I ask, what reason can there be against the construction of the railway, providing it can be shown that there is every reasonable and practical probability of its being a financial success?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: You have not shown that yet.

MR. MORGANS: We have shown that the railway can be constructed at a certain cost, and that the result of the working will be so much.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Give us figures.

MR. MORGANS: I do not think figures can prove more than I have shown; namely, that the sum of £33,000 at least will cover working expenses.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It would cost £40,000 to do the work.

MR. MORGANS: As I say, I have proved that the sum of £33,000 would cover working expenses, and return to the Government interest on the outlay. It is only a matter of figures, and no one can disagree with the figures I have given

to the House. It is quite impossible for us to tell absolutely what the traffic is going to be; but we know there is one mine alone, the Burbanks, which pays for 3,500 tons of freight per year in this particular district. How much more would there be passing on to Norseman? Look at the Norseman traffic for horse feed alone, together with the firewood, timber, and other stores for the mines. Surely there is enough inducement to justify the House in passing the measure for the construction of this railway. I am, as a goldfields member, prepared to say it would be no advantage to Norseman to authorise the construction of a line from Esperance to that place. It is absolutely useless to think that any advantage would accrue in the opening up of mines at Norseman with a view to the investment of capital from the Eastern goldfields, that it would be any benefit to men seeking investments for capital or any benefit to men seeking work in the mines, to have to go by way of Albany, thence by steamer to Esperance, and from there travel 120 miles over a sandy road to Norseman. It would be practically useless to these men, and useless to those who are interested in the Norseman goldfield, to have a railway built from Esperance. There is no advantage in that, nor do people desire the construction of a railway from Esperance. The desire on the goldfields is to have the railway connecting with the trunk lines of the colony; for the people know they would then be in connection with the whole commerce and industry of the country; whereas by the construction of a line from Esperance to Norseman, the people at Norseman would be entirely cut off from the commerce and industry of the rest of the country, as much as they are to-day. Any suggestion with regard to carrying this railway from Norseman to Esperance, after it is constructed from Coolgardie to Norseman, is simply drawing a red-herring over the path. I know some members of this House fear that the construction of this railway from Coolgardie to Norseman means the early continuance of the line to Esperance. That may or may not be so; but I do not fear the construction of a railway to Esperance, for I do not think it will ever do Fremantle much harm. At any rate, it must be admitted that if this is the reason

for opposing the construction of this railway from Coolgardie to Norseman, it is parochial and selfish in the extreme, and I do not think it should be offered as an argument in this House. With regard to the construction of a railway to connect the goldfields with the coast at Esperance, it would be no advantage to the goldfields to have that connection made, because freights from the Eastern colonies, although they have to come much farther round by way of Fremantle, would be just the same in cost to the goldfields as if they went by way of Esperance, because Fremantle has the advantage of various lines of steamers calling there, and the effect of this competition in bringing freights to Fremantle will certainly bring down the cost to the lowest possible limit. I know that in America the effect of competition in coastal freights is that freights can be carried long distances from point to point along the coast as compared with a very short distance inland, because the facilities of transit are greater. It will be the same at Fremantle, for you have now the German line of steamers, you have the English lines, and will soon have the French line of steamers bringing freights to Fremantle, and the cost will be brought down by this competition to the lowest possible limit, and no doubt at an early date manufacturers and producers will be able to send freight from the Eastern colonies to Fremantle cheaper than they can now send it from Fremantle to Esperance. It is simply claptrap when people object to freight being sent 1,100 miles further by a trade route than by the shortest possible route; and to practical men that argument has no weight whatever, and would never appeal to the mind of any business man, because we know that the transit of freight for 200, 400, or even 500 miles of sea means practically nothing. Is it not a fact well known that at present freight is being carried from Liverpool to New York, a distance of 3,000 miles, for 2s. 6d. a ton? Therefore distance has nothing to do with it: it is a question of competition and circumstances; and all these arguments to the contrary can be looked on simply as so much claptrap. I shall give my strongest support to the construction of this railway, for it is justified, and is a necessary work for the development of

the gold resources of the Norseman district; and I strongly urge the House to do justice to this section of the colony, not for parochial but for national reasons, these reasons having for their object the further development of the great gold resources of this colony. I am sure the House will believe that, so far as Norseman is concerned, it is no insignificant factor in the gold production of this colony; and if this railway be constructed, there is no doubt that the Norseman district will become a very important gold-producing centre, and this House will never regret having passed a resolution in favour of the construction of this railway.

MR. MORAN (East Coolgardie): As a goldfield member, I wish to reciprocate the kindly feelings expressed by the Premier, and also the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans), between the goldfields and the coast populations. As far as the Premier is concerned, I believe he has always entertained the warmest good feelings towards the people on the goldfields, and I have always known him to do his best to ameliorate the physical conditions of the people on the goldfields, and also to lend his aid to bring the people in distant parts of the colony into closer connection. I remember that six years ago the Premier was one of the first to offer a helping hand to me and the member for Central Murchison, in endeavouring at that time to ameliorate the condition of the early prospectors on the goldfields. While acknowledging all that, I must put it seriously to the House: can this question of public works to alleviate, or ameliorate, or silence, or put down clamour on the part of the people on the goldfields, go on for ever at the expense of the colony? In asking the old settlers of the country to constantly give way to every demand for a public work of this nature, is not the Premier trespassing too much on the good feeling of the old party who have kept him in power so long?

THE PREMIER: No; helping them to make their fortunes.

MR. MORAN: I thought, when the Premier commenced his speech to-night, he wanted somebody to fight at, in the first few minutes; and I never saw him look so choleric in making a speech in this House. Seeing that he is so much in earnest, I conclude he has examined

the figures and the cost of this work, and has arrived at the conclusion that never did he put forward a scheme with such poor reasons to support it as the scheme he has submitted to-night. As for the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans), he is speaking for his own electorate in supporting this scheme; and we can afford to take little notice of the persiflage of his remarks. We had a very numerous deputation from the goldfields the other day, a hundred or so of men from Coolgardie, and perhaps one from Norseman, to tell the Premier they wished to have this railway constructed immediately; therefore we may look on this as a Coolgardie proposal. Coolgardie has discovered that the Premier is a most estimable and lovable person, a most magnificent and great politician—for how long? Let us see where their gratitude will be if this Bill be thrown out. They will turn round, as they did last year, and complain that the Premier said to their faces all that was fair, but that behind their backs he plotted to have the Bill thrown out. We who are in the House acquit the Premier of any such intention, for we know he is straining every nerve to influence the recalcitrant members of his own party on this question. There are eight men on this (Ministerial) side of the House, including one Minister, who do not believe in this work. The present Commissioner of Railways, in deference to his position as a new member of the Cabinet, is silent on the matter; but it is no secret, and I think he will admit it, that he does not believe in this Norseman railway project. What are the cold, hard facts of the case, and what are the statistics in regard to Norseman and its output of gold? Let us not listen to the rhodomontade given to us by the Premier and the member for Coolgardie, about railways putting new life into goldfields; as if the effect of constructing a railway would be to put gold into the mines. Surely the member for Coolgardie was not thinking of his own dear electorate of Coolgardie, or he would not argue that way! What life has a railway line put into Coolgardie? A few weeks ago coming from Kalgoorlie, one could see from the railway houses with six or seven windows each, being shifted on jinkers from Coolgardie to Kalgoorlie. Is Coolgardie to-day as good a town as when the

hon. member was first elected to represent it? What has the railway done for any town on the goldfields? Take Broad Arrow: what is it now? Take Bardoc, or the 90-Mile, or Goongarrie, or even take Menzies, and what has been the effect of connecting these places by railway? Take Cue, on the Murchison: has the railway made that town any better? Has the railway in any instance in Western Australia improved the grade of the ore, or the value, or the returns of the gold mines? Take the oldest goldfield town, Southern Cross: I do not know that there is any great improvement in the condition of that town, although it has had railway communication for a number of years. Southern Cross goes on the even tenor of its way, one of the most regular producing goldfields of the colony.

MR. MORGANS: Southern Cross would not go on without a railway.

MR. MORAN: I ask the Premier calmly and deliberately to look back as a matter of history, and say what position would the colony have been in to-day, after building 175 miles of railway to Southern Cross, if great goldfields had not sprung up beyond it? From the latest monthly returns relating to Southern Cross, I find the population is 1,200 people, and this is the result after having had a railway for a number of years. The cost of that railway at our average of £4,700 per mile, and taking the length at 175 miles, would be—what? Any member can reckon it for himself. And what position would this country have been in to-day, had not other goldfields sprung up on the other side of Southern Cross?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The same in the case of the railway to Mullewa.

MR. MORAN: The same as Mullewa. The Premier has talked about building a line to Burbanks; but surely this is a serious question, and we should not talk of building a line to every mine that is six miles from a railway. If our railway extensions are to be made on that principle, we shall have to build 101 spur lines to the mines in the northern part of the Eastern goldfields. A mine is considered to be in a good position when it is within twenty miles of a railway. In Queensland there are rich gold mines, and important ones too, which have

never had a railway to connect them. Even the great Mount Morgan mine has never been connected by railway. As to the Norseman goldfield and the traffic to be expected by this railway, I find the population of Dundas in 1898 was 1,246 persons, and in 1899 it had gone down to 1,000. This reduction in population does not look like a great increase in the prosperity of the place; but beyond this I want to point out that the mining machinery erected *in situ* is capable of turning out four times the quantity of gold actually turned out now; and how can a railway improve the position of the mines in that district when the output is only one-fourth the capacity of the machinery? Not only batteries *in situ*, but cyanide vats are in use, and yet the average output is too low, in many cases, to pay; therefore all the railways in the world will not put gold into those mines. Is it not the low-grade character of the mines that keeps the place back, not the want of a railway? The member for Coolgardie tells us now it is the want of a railway, and he told us on another occasion that what kept Coolgardie back as a goldfield was the want of water, although Coolgardie has had a railway for years. There is no scarcity of water at Norseman, and there is no scarcity of mining timber there. Having timber and water, having batteries at work and other machinery *in situ*, and having also cyanide vats, is it not too much of a fairy tale to ask us to build a railway to a place which is not prospering under these conditions? The fact is they are sending away batteries from Norseman to the Phillips River goldfield.

MR. MORGANS: That argues nothing.

MR. MORAN: The hon. member told us also that they do not want more machinery at Norseman, but want a railway to bring down the price of tea and sugar. Well, Coolgardie has had a railway for many years, and the price of tea and sugar has been brought down there; and still Coolgardie is languishing. Norseman turned out in July 3,394 ounces of gold. There are 800 acres of land under lease, and there are 201 men at work. The number of tons treated in that month was 3,956, or in other words she treated 127 tons per day of 24 hours. Now with that 201 head of stamps, as my friend on the right (Mr. Oats) knows,

the output should have been 600 tons every 24 hours, but instead of that the Norseman and Dundas, with English capital, have been treating only 127 tons every 24 hours, although they have power *in situ* capable of treating 600 tons. Now where is the reply from the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans)? Where is the reply from the Premier? Dundas is as old a goldfield as Coolgardie. She has all this machinery erected, and we hear of no recent rich finds. She turns out 127 tons instead of 600 tons in 24 hours. This is the great goldfield into which the railway is going to put new life. How absurd is the proposition when calmly considered!

MR. MORGANS: Why do you not wipe out all the railways if they are no good to the mines?

MR. MORAN: I propose to point out to the hon. member the great difference between every other goldfields line built up to date and the line to Norseman. Our Eastern railway line is a huge tree with a long trunk going as far as Southern Cross, and then across the desert country to the goldfields, where there are 50 different centres to which lines branch out from the trunk. Such centres are Coolgardie, Burbanks, Kalgoorlie, and Kanowna. There are 101 centres which are fed from that one railway line. We should follow the safe policy of going through country already settled into a great bunch of mining centres. What have we done in the Cue line? The very same thing. We have opened up the whole of that great Murchison goldfield with a trunk railway, and when you see that railway line, it does not go to one miserable centre like Dundas, with 1,000 people. All along the line it is serving Yalgoo, Murchison, Peak Hill, and the whole of that vast country. There you have another great trunk of a tree with its branches over the Murchison goldfield. But what is proposed in this Bill? It is proposed to depart from that principle; to go back 110 miles from Coolgardie, and back where? Back to an old goldfield which the very advocates of the line themselves say measures 20 miles by 34 miles. It is proposed to go back to one centre already exploited, with no hope of extending further on, because if you go further on you get into the sand desert at

Esperance. Here is the foolhardiness of this proposal to go back from Coolgardie with a railway 110 miles in length, and not one single mine on the route. I know the country. Acting for an English company, I spent many hundreds of pounds in Widgemooltha years and years ago, and the mine had to be abandoned for want of gold. Widgemooltha is an old gold centre: there is nothing new about it, not even a new find. My friend from Southern Cross (Mr. Oats) was managing a very large company there at one time, with hundreds of acres of land; and there was the same old complaint—want of gold. There is nothing between Coolgardie and Norseman saving a place called Widgemooltha, with a dam and a caretaker living on it. This is the position of the head of the Government to-day, in face of the fact that he has never replied to the criticism of his financial position; in face of the fact that he cannot borrow the money to build this line; in face of the fact that he cannot start the line within two years if we pass it to-night, because he has not the rolling-stock and has no rails in the country at all. Are we not justified in saying this is purely and simply a political railway? In reply to my friend (Mr. Morgans), if he will kindly listen, I was very much amused with his historical account of what it would take to pay the interest on the particular £250,000 which it will cost to build the Norseman railway. I will give him some facts and figures which were issued from the Government offices within the last few days. If the hon. member wishes to check the figures, they are there with the sign manual of the Government officer upon them. The Premier says the line was estimated originally to cost £292,000. If we take the "Year Book of Australia" for this year—the very latest statistics—we find that the railways of Western Australia have cost an average of £4,743 per mile up to date, and that is 33 per cent. below the cost of any other Australian railway, and 50 per cent. below the Australian average, which I think is £9,700 per mile.

MR. MORGANS: Look out for your own figures.

MR. MORAN: The Western Australian average is £4,700 per mile, there-

fore our lines have cost us less than those of any other Australian colony. Still, here is the way to estimate the cost of a railway line. This Norseman line will mean 110 miles at £4,700 a mile.

MR. MORGANS: But we have the figures of the Engineer-in-Chief.

MR. MORAN: I do not care. I have the figures of the Commissioner of Railways. These are the figures to go by. The late Commissioner of Railways says the average cost of lines in Western Australia is £4,700 per mile, and with 110 miles of railway line of a difficult character to construct—more difficult than any other goldfield line—the capital cost will be more. I know the country well. It is all rough and rugged, once you get past the Rocks, round by Lake Lefroy and Widgemooltha. It is very rough country, and it will be a more costly line than any other goldfields railway. And suppose we take it at £4,000 per mile, and calculate rolling-stock according to the ridiculous argument of my friend the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans), who says we do not want rolling-stock at all on this line.

MR. MORGANS: I never said so.

MR. MORAN: Well, it may not be so ridiculous after all: perhaps there is a lot of truth in it. I will admit that you will not want much rolling-stock. But on your own argument, it will cost about half a million of money to build the line; and taking his own figures of half a million, to pay interest on sinking fund there will have to be provided £11,000; and in order to do that, since the running expenses are 70 per cent. of the total earnings, it will be necessary to make in the year £33,000. The hon. member is wrong there. As a matter of fact, the proportion being 3 to 10, it would be necessary to make £33,600 odd in order to pay interest and sinking fund on the Norseman line. The only way in which we can make comparisons is to take the ordinary traffic and the same number of people on a goldfield. Very well; it is necessary to make £36,000 in carrying stuff for 1,000 people 104 miles, leaving out Burbanks. Now I take Southern Cross. Take last year's returns for Southern Cross traffic, where there are nearly 200 more people than there are at Norseman. Here are the total earnings of the Southern Cross

station, which serves the people all around Parker's Range, Mount Jackson, right round Southern Cross and Golden Valley. These figures are issued within the last few days from the Government offices. The hon. member's figures are £36,000; and here is what Southern Cross yielded for the whole year: Coaching revenue, £3,700; and total goods earnings, live stock, etc., £8,900.

MR. MORGANS: That is no comparison.

MR. MORAN: Hold on; we are getting near the truth now. In all, £12,600 was the total earnings of the Southern Cross railway station last year, serving a population of 1,200 people, who are turning out just about the same quantity of gold as those at Norseman.

MR. MORGANS: No, no.

MR. MORAN: I want to know from the hon. member whether a man who is working a mine eats and a man who is not does not eat at all. Methinks if one asks my friend from Southern Cross (Mr. Oats), he will say that the people of Southern Cross live fairly well, and that to expect the 1,000 people at Norseman are going to earn for the railways exactly three times as much as the 1,200 people in Southern Cross is absolutely the height of absurdity. There can be no possible chance of their doing so. There were 25,000 tons of goods brought forward to Southern Cross last year, and 2,000 tons brought outward—as much as the hon. member says will be carried over this Norseman line, including timber and everything else. In the light of these figures, can any one conceive the Premier of this colony telling us this railway will pay from the beginning? Did we ever hear such a ridiculous assertion? Did the Premier make an attempt to say how 1,000 people on a goldfield six years old, with 200 head of stamps erected in position and turning out a fourth of their full capacity, can possibly pay more revenue to the State than the people of Southern Cross, who are 1,200 in number and who are all actively engaged in constant employment? If there is any reply to these figures, then I am prepared to listen to it, but the hon. member told us that the line would earn £36,000 per annum.

MR. MORGANS: It would earn much more.

MR. MORAN: Those bland and solid statements of the hon. member are not worth a great deal. Why, have we not heard the hon. member and his figures before, and is not everything splendid? Did you ever hear anything from the hon. member on facts and figures except that the colony is splendid?

MR. MORGANS: So it is.

MR. MORAN: The finances of the colony are splendid; the credit of the colony is splendid.

MR. MORGANS: That is right.

MR. MORAN: But the most splendid thing of all is the combined imagination of the Premier and the hon. member put together. That is the most splendid thing I have ever come across. Never have I come in contact with anything so magnificent, so overpowering, so absolutely grandiloquent as the imagination of the hon. member when he tells us what any particular gold-mining centre is going to do, when it gets the benefit of a railway.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: He sees visions and dreams dreams.

MR. MORAN: The facts, I think, will be somewhat like this. The Norseman railway, let us say, will cost £480,000, and that is a long way below the average. It would take £16,800 to pay the interest on that railway at less cost per mile than the average for Western Australia. The total earnings of Southern Cross are £12,630 last year. With 200 fewer people, Norseman, even if she had the 1,200 people, would still be £1,200 short of paying the interest alone, without the sinking fund. And, as I have said, this is a very different matter from the proposed Leonora line, because there you are going into the centre of many goldfields, and if one does not turn out well, the others may; any way, you are going through a great mineral belt, and may hope to see a great many mining centres established. But in going from Coolgardie to Norseman, we are going to a place where there is no possible hope of extension except to the Southern Ocean, and we are going through many miles of thoroughly prospected country, with not a single mine worthy of the name; and on the road I do not think there is a single mine to-day that has ever had, or has, any possible chance of returning dividends, or any

profitable crushing. The only good country on the route is between Kalgoorlie and Lake Lefroy.

MR. KINGSMILL: There is a public battery at Widgemooltha, so I heard.

MR. MORAN: I should not wonder if that public battery had been sent there in order to remove from my lips the chance of saying there was not a public battery on the route. It has probably been sent there for that purpose from Bulong. Widgemooltha is an old centre. I earnestly trust that the opinion of the late Commissioner of Railways given to this House, that he wanted half a million pounds' worth of rolling stock; that the opinions of Mr. Davies and Mr. Short, the General Manager and Traffic Manager of the Railway Department, which we shall have in this House very soon, and which should have been here prior to this debate, will have due weight with hon. members. I know what those opinions will be. We have seen the report of an interview with Mr. Davies published in the Press, in which he said we were famishing for want of rolling-stock, and that without it we could not run our lines profitably. Why, the profit has gone down from 5 per cent. to a profit of scarcely 1 per cent. this year. That is the position; and we are running the lines on a capital cost 50 per cent. less than those of the rest of Australia, and still it is a moot question whether in another year or two we shall not be running at a loss, notwithstanding the enormous difference of 50 per cent. in the capital cost. These are the figures. They are going down year after year. We are now mopping up 70 per cent. in expenses for running. We have no rolling-stock. The public are being badly served. Confusion reigns supreme in our goods traffic. Why? Nobody can help it; and I could quote a thousand instances where the producer and consumer alike are suffering daily because we have no proper equipment in rolling-stock, and because we have not what we should have had long ago—workshops running and finished. And further, we have to buy new rolling-stock constantly, because we cannot repair our old stock, and we have not the money to buy the rolling-stock, and yet we are asked to expend half a million, the very sum which we want to put the already opened railway lines on a commercial

basis. We are asked to spend this money on a wild-geese railway line from Coolgardie. What for? Well, I do not know. It is certainly not because Coolgardie is the most fitting starting point. Why are we starting the line from Coolgardie? Because Coolgardie has asked that it shall be there, that it shall commence in the middle of a desert, when 24 miles away there are running sheds and workshops. I am compelled to come to the conclusion that the Premier wishes to finish up his last session under responsible government by giving to everybody who asks him, or pretending to give, and leaving the work to be struggled through as best it can by his successors. I do not think, if we pass this vote, a pick could be put into the ground for two years. And though the Leonora railway line will serve gold-mining centres ten times the size, we find nothing done in respect of it, and we also find the Nannine line idle for five years; and we know from the late Commissioner of Railways (Mr. Piesse), who never withheld information from this House, and who was always frank with the House, that we have not even the rails for the Leonora line in the colony yet; and he said himself last year, "I shall require £500,000 for rolling-stock." We know very well from what the General Manager (Mr. Davies) said the other day, that we require three-quarters of a million to put our present lines on a commercial basis. And we must have that sum, because we are losing thousands of pounds by reason of the rotten state of the equipment of our opened railway lines. In the face of that, although we have a general election in two or three months' time, in this Parliament, which has gone through such mighty changes, here we have this proposal brought down at the end of the session, before the people of the colony can say what they think of the colony's present financial position. Surely it is not too much to ask this House to let the proposal stand over 12 months, or till we get the report of the General Manager and the Chief Traffic Manager on the traffic of this country and on the rolling stock. And I should like very much if the Premier would consult those gentlemen publicly, and ask them what they think of the chances of the Norseman-Coolgardie line

paying axle grease. I wish we had a standing railway committee in this country: I have never seen the need for it so strongly illustrated as it is now. Here we have the Premier and the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans) telling us a string of fairy tales. If we had a standing railway committee, that committee could be sent to the spot to find out how many people were there, the possibility of the line paying, and to call up on sworn evidence the General Manager, and ask him his opinion as to whether he could possibly recommend the construction of that railway in the present position of affairs. But we have no such committee; and what have we got? Simply the overmastering influence of the Premier, which would almost be enough to force the line through the House. And I may say again, I ask the Premier or any other person in the House to point out an instance in Australian history where such a proposition as that of building a railway for the accommodation of such a number of people at such a cost—

THE PREMIER: You double the cost at once.

MR. MORAN: I am taking your own average.

THE PREMIER: Take the Engineer's figures.

MR. MORAN: You cannot run a railway line without rolling-stock, and even if our lines were well furnished, we would still want more for the new traffic.

THE PREMIER: You would not want £250,000 worth.

MR. MORAN: I am prepared to stake my reputation—

THE PREMIER: That is nothing.

MR. MORAN: Whatever my reputation is, I have to look after it a bit, and I am not so reckless in particular matters as the Premier is of his reputation. The average cost of the lines is said to be £4,700 per mile, and this line would cost more on the engineering side than any of the other goldfield lines. It would certainly cost three times as much as the Coolgardie line, because there is no traffic to make the contractor undertake the work so cheaply.

THE PREMIER: Here is the estimate.

MR. MORAN: Like the estimate of the Murchison railway line, and we know how valuable that estimate was!

THE PREMIER: It was all right.

MR. MORAN: Let us place the estimate for this line at £250,000, and with rolling-stock for 110 miles of railway, the sum is brought to a figure not less than £400,000.

MR. MORGANS: If there is no traffic, why have rolling-stock?

MR. MORAN: If there is no traffic why spend £250,000? I say it is worse to spend £250,000 for no traffic, than to spend £400,000 for some traffic.

THE PREMIER: How much do you think rolling-stock would cost for 100 miles of railway? I should say £40,000.

MR. MORAN: We want to get at the truth of this matter, and I should like the Premier to tell us in his reply, whether the estimate of £4,700 per mile is correct, and how it was arrived at—how much the engineering will cost, and how much the rolling-stock.

THE PREMIER: The rolling-stock would not be half the cost of the line.

MR. MORAN: If we listen to the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans), the rolling-stock must be the heaviest possible, in order to run the heavy and constant traffic over a mountainous country.

THE PREMIER: Mountainous?

MR. MORAN: The only decent landscape I ever saw on the goldfields was from the top of Mount Monger, when Lake Lefroy was in flood. Beautiful peaks were arising from the broad shimmering expanse of water, which gleamed like a snake crawling through the grass. That is the only consideration that would make one consent to run a railway line there, and one that would even appeal to the poetic fancy of a hardened old "tinned-dog" prospector. We have another summer coming on, and I do not know whether it is fair to ask the late Commissioner of Railways how much it cost last summer for the hauling of water. Last year water had to be hauled from Northam all the way along the line, and we have this danger staring us in the face again. To increase the difficulties by the construction of a new line, and run sleepers and rails over the lines next year, while the material for the Coolgardie Water Scheme is blocking the traffic, would present the greatest difficulty. Why construct the Norseman line before the Coolgardie scheme is finished, and you

know there is water at one end if not at the other? The country is burdened with plenty of public works at the present time, with the Coolgardie Water Scheme and the harbour works. A million pounds will have to be spent before the people who are depending on these railways can be given a fair chance, and before railway officials, who are doing their best, can hope to meet the demands on lines already opened. To my mind, there would have to be spent £1,000,000—£500,000 for rolling-stock and £200,000 for railway shops, and the balance for duplicating the lines where 40,000 people are waiting to be served. While this work is waiting, there is being lost more every three months on the Kalgoorlie-Boulder line than the whole takings of the Coolgardie-Norseman line would be for twelve months. Serve the 40,000 people first, and let the 1,000 wait. Make a start with the lines you have already, and give the Railway Department a chance to run them on commercial lines. In the last days of Parliament, I ask hon. members not to pledge the country to the extent of £400,000 on a railway which will never pay, unless considerably more development takes place than we have any reasonable ground to expect. It is bad statesmanship to send out a railway in the hope that some new goldfield will spring up to make it pay. Honestly and sincerely I feel strongly on the question, not because I have any spite against any part of the colony—far be it from me—but it would be wrong and criminal to commit the country to this expenditure. I trust that members will say firmly and respectfully to the Premier that this line must stand down until there is greater warrant for its being constructed, and until people have signified their intention by returning a party to power who are pledged to build the line and will take the responsibility for its paying.

MR. WILSON (Canning): I was somewhat amused before tea to listen to the condemnation which the Premier hurled at my defenceless head, in regard to my opposition to this railway line. The Premier said I would lose my reputation as a business man and a financier, and I am glad to think for a few moments that I have such a reputation, and that the Premier recognises it. At the same time, I am not afraid to lose any repu-

tation I may possess, because I claim I have been consistent in my action in the House, in regard to railway communication between Coolgardie and Esperance. I presume the Premier is surprised, because he thinks, and is always advocating, that a member should consider the interests of a small portion of his electorate, rather than the interests of the whole country. I have endeavoured, however, always to rise above that position in viewing political matters, and I consider I would be doing what was unjust in connection with the Bill, if I were to give my support to it, merely because there happened to be some farmers in the electorate which I represent. At the same time, I do not hold or admit that the Premier's arguments are sound, or that the farmers of Western Australia would be hurt to any considerable extent, even though the railway line were constructed from Esperance to Norseman. My opposition, however, is not to the construction of this line, but to any further expenditure on large public works during the life of this Parliament; and I shall oppose to the best of my ability, not only the railway from Coolgardie to Norseman but also the railway from Esperance to Norseman, even if the latter were proposed by the Premier. I will be perfectly consistent in my opposition, although I have on previous occasions advocated the route from Esperance to Norseman; and I am prepared also to state to-night that the latter route is preferable and the only natural route, and the only route which a Government, who wished to advance the general interests of a country, would adopt in opening up this district. However, my opposition to-night is on financial grounds, and I say at once that we are not justified, in view of the debates that have already taken place in the House on the financial position of the country generally, in passing a Bill which, although it does not vote the money for the construction of this line, pledges the House and the country to the construction of the railway. With regard to my opposition to this Bill, I of course have the old opposition to the route. I contend that the Government are commencing at the wrong end, and that if the railway is to be constructed at all, it should commence from the natural terminus, that is a sea-

port. In every instance, our railway development in opening up new portions of the country should as far as possible start from the seaboard, and wherever there is a natural harbour, there should be an endeavour to open that harbour. Another argument is that every district in the country has a perfect right to develop its own resources in the most economical way; and therefore I urge that the district of which Norseman and Dundas are the centres is perfectly justified in getting railway communication to the nearest port, in order that they may get their goods landed cheaper and more quickly than they otherwise would. The Premier has argued that the line from Esperance to Coolgardie would never pay, and I was careful to ask him to repeat that statement, because I could not follow his argument. The Premier said that the Esperance-Coolgardie line could not possibly pay, and yet distinctly urged the Coolgardie-Norseman line would pay; and a few minutes later he went on to argue that the farmers of Western Australia and the people of Fremantle would suffer enormous loss if the railway were constructed from Esperance to Coolgardie, inasmuch as they would be deprived of a great quantity of the trade.

THE PREMIER: You misunderstood me. I said if the line were from Esperance to Norseman, their trade would be lost.

MR. WILSON: You said that the farmers and the Fremantle people would lose enormous trade.

THE PREMIER: They would lose all the trade, I said.

MR. WILSON: And you said the whole of the trade would go to South Australia.

THE PREMIER: The whole of the trade of Norseman.

MR. WILSON: Why should that trade be lost, even though the line came from Esperance to Coolgardie?

THE PREMIER: I never advocated carrying the line all the way.

MR. WILSON: Then you will never carry the line all the way? The idea seems to be to carry the system from the centre as near the coast as possible, but to stop there, and not to open up any harbour. That, of course, brings us down to the centralising policy which we have always stated was the policy of the

Forrest Ministry, who desire to concentrate everything in Perth and Fremantle. If that is to be our policy, we must look forward to our population not only standing still, but possibly decreasing; and we must look forward to the revenue falling off with the production of the country.

THE PREMIER: That has not happened yet anyhow, and we have had ten years of it.

MR. WILSON: It has not happened yet, but that has been in spite of the centralising policy, and some energetic and enterprising people have opened up districts far afield, and discovered gold and other things which the Premier was unable to discover when he travelled over the ground some years ago. As the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) asked, what would have been the result, if Coolgardie had not been discovered when the railway was constructed to Southern Cross? It must have eventuated in disaster to Western Australia; but the advent of more people to this country, myself amongst the number—[**THE PREMIER:** Hear, hear]—myself and others from the other colonies and the old country, have no doubt opened up this colony, and we have done as much through private enterprise as the Premier did with his policy when he constructed the railway to Southern Cross.

MR. MORAN: The unexpected does not always happen.

MR. WILSON: Exactly; there is a limit to all new claims. Between Dundas and the sea coast we have, I am credibly informed, sandplains, and the Premier mentioned that in his speech to-night: does not the fact prove that this is the natural route? People went from Esperance to Norseman, and if that were not the natural route, why did they not go from Coolgardie to Norseman?

THE PREMIER: The railway was not open then.

MR. WILSON: Yes; I believe it was open, and this circumstance proves my contention that the natural and proper route for this railway is from the sea coast.

THE PREMIER: It will not suit us.

MR. WILSON: The Premier has said, and I am glad to see he coincides in the opinion I have advanced many times, that the port of Fremantle is going to become

the distributing port of the colony. He has admitted the soundness of my argument in regard to the freights, that freights to Fremantle will be reduced.

THE PREMIER: Oh, yes. What did we build the harbour for?

MR. WILSON: As we get the over-sea freights cheaper to Fremantle, and it becomes the distributing port and the first port of call of the Commonwealth, we will find that we shall be able to distribute our produce, both imported and that produced in the country, along our coast and round by Esperance if necessary to supply Norseman, and we shall be glad to do that in competition with those farmers in South Australia and Victoria of whom the Premier is so much afraid. Having adopted federation and swept away the barriers between colony and colony, why should we not develop our country by the most natural routes for trade? If we are afraid of competition from other colonies, if we are afraid to open Esperance for fear of the trade being increased from South Australia to Esperance instead of passing through Fremantle, then we ought to carry out that policy to a logical conclusion, and oppose the extension of railways to our border; for I cannot understand how anyone can advocate the construction of a transcontinental railway, and yet oppose the opening of Esperance harbour. If you are to have communication at all by rail or sea, you must have competition; and if you fence us round and allow no trade with our brothers in the other colonies, we ought to oppose the transcontinental railway. I am sure, however, such a line of argument as that will receive no support in this House or outside, worth mentioning; and when the country is in a position to build this railway, I hope the starting point will be Esperance. If the country is not in a position to build the railway, I say now, as I said before, let private enterprise build the line on equitable terms. The Premier has referred to me as the apostle of private enterprise, and I am proud to be so called; for if you want to make the country prosper, making the old identities prosper too, then encourage private enterprise to open your country right and left and attract population; that being the truest way of making the whole of the people prosperous. It has been forcibly put by the member for

East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) as to the cost of this railway. I want to point out that the farther away from the base or terminus or the seaboard at Fremantle, the more costly does it become to work your railway, and the more rolling-stock will be required. The member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans) has said you will require no more rolling-stock for this colony. [MR. MORGANS: No.] I say you do require more rolling-stock the farther you get away, and the longer the trucks are on the trip; and if it takes three days from Fremantle to Coolgardie and back to the port, it will take five days for trucks to go from Fremantle to Norseman and back.

THE PREMIER: Only four hours' trip, the same as to Menzies.

MR. WILSON: Only four hours? How long does it take us now to go to Bunbury, by express train too, and we know the carrying of goods one hundred miles is not so rapid as the mail train, and that the journey to Norseman cannot be done in four hours. That trip cannot be undertaken under two days extra, and that will mean five days as against three at present; therefore, you will want proportionately more rolling-stock. Then take the freights, considering that goods from the seaboard to Norseman will come under the long-distance rates; the amount that will be earned between Coolgardie and Norseman on that basis will be a mere bagatelle as compared with the first hundred miles from Fremantle inland. So that all the facts we have at present point to the conclusion that this line cannot be expected to pay for many years to come, unless some new goldfields are discovered and a new population springs up there. I have always maintained that when the Government bring in these Railway Bills they ought to lay before the House some calculation as to the traffic. We have never yet had a statement from the Ministry showing what the traffic is estimated to be. Before a private contractor takes up a contract, such as that which Wilkie Brothers took in building a railway to Coolgardie, he makes a careful estimate of the traffic, as they did in that case, and they had men watching the traffic for weeks so as to ascertain what amount might be relied on before sending their tender to the Government.

THE PREMIER: When we constructed the Collie railway there was no traffic.

MR. WILSON: But there was one mine open there, and the proprietor was prepared to supply so much coal at a certain rate. The building of a line 28 miles long through timber country is a different thing from building a railway to Norseman.

THE PREMIER: The Opposition opposed it just the same.

MR. WILSON: What I say is that if you are going to carry out a branch line from the main trunk line 108 miles, for opening up an established goldfield, I think the Government should put before this House an estimate of the traffic they are likely to get over the line, to show how they are to get a return on the cost if constructed. We have had nothing of that.

THE PREMIER: I gave you something, in quoting the traffic to Burbanks.

MR. WILSON: This is a serious matter, running the country into an expenditure of close on half a million of money.

MR. MORGANS: Why not say a million at once?

MR. WILSON: By the time your sidings and your water supply are provided, you will have expended half a million of money; I am sure of that. My opposition to-night, and the opposition of members on this side, and perhaps many on the other side of the House, is due firstly to the fact that we have no proof that this railway is required; we have no statistics to show what the traffic will be, or that it will be likely to pay. Secondly, we have a distinct recollection of the figures discussed in this House in August last, when it was shown that the financial position of the country was such that it would be unwise to go further into loan expenditure at the present time. It was proved beyond a doubt last year, in connection with discussions on the loan policy, that the Government had their hands completely full, and that if they carried out the works already authorised they would put this country in debt some £75 to £80 per head of the population. We consider the Government have as much as they can do during the next twelve or eighteen months to carry out

the works already authorised; and we are certain that they have as much as they can do to raise the money necessary to complete those works. For these reasons, and because we believe the authorisations and the mandates of this House should be promptly carried out by the Government instead of being put on one side as they have been, we are opposed to this Bill. We find the Government have thrown aside and have not proceeded with the railway workshops, which should have been constructed, but have never been put in hand; also, that many other works have been left over in the same way, to suit the convenience of the Government for political reasons, as I feel sure is the case. If this is the position, as I honestly believe, then surely I should be wanting in my duty if I did not oppose this Bill; and if the Premier thinks I shall lose my reputation as a business man, I venture to say decidedly I am going to vote against the Bill, and against the expenditure of any loan moneys during this session of Parliament.

THE MINISTER OF MINES (Hon. H. B. Lefroy): It seems like beating a dead horse, to thresh out this question of the Norseman railway. I have heard the same argument used this evening as on almost every occasion whenever the Government have proposed any progressive works in this House, which they considered to be necessary and in the interests of the country; and the same arguments have been used over and over again with regard to several railways that have been constructed, and with regard to some of the most paying railways in the colony at the present time. The Government in proposing this railway are simply pursuing the policy they have pursued for the last ten years—a vigorous public works policy, a policy with which they have frequently been twitted by members on the other (Opposition) side; but still it is the very best policy that could possibly be pursued in a country like this; and I think a policy which in the past has been justified by results, and which I believe will also prove successful in respect of this Norseman railway. I can quite understand hon. members who oppose this railway for financial considerations. I can understand the member for the Canning (Mr. Wilson) who opposes the project for that

reason, because the hon. member has always expressed himself in this House to the effect that the Government were going too far in spending money upon public works. We have already threshed out that question this session, and we had a division on the very subject upon the Address-in-reply. The Norseman railway has been compared with the Yilgarn line, and I think the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) said that Norseman and Yilgarn were in exactly similar positions. But I consider the positions of Norseman and Yilgarn are not at all analogous. Norseman is an unproved field: it has been producing gold for about four years only, while the Yilgarn goldfield is about the oldest goldfield in the Eastern belt. At the present time there are 1,352 acres held under lease in the Dundas goldfield, and 472 acres under lease in the Yilgarn goldfield. In 1899 the Dundas goldfield produced over 44,000 ounces of gold, and in the same year the Yilgarn goldfield produced a little over 16,000 ounces; so I do not see how these goldfields can be considered to be in anything like analogous positions. The cheapest way to bring together the auriferous tracts of country in this colony is by building railways. There is not the slightest doubt that if the Government had not adopted a vigorous policy of constructing railways through our goldfields, these would never have been developed to the extent that we find them at the present time. With regard to this railway to Norseman, it is of course held that there is not sufficient inducement there to warrant the expenditure of the money. It is said there is no gold there, and that there is no gold between Coolgardie and Norseman. It is a long distance, 108 miles. It is also said that the country is of an undulating character, and that the building of a railway there will be more expensive than in any other part of the colony. No doubt hon. members, as they have passed along the route, may have passed over considerable tracts of undulating country; but when we consider that a lake or a belt of lake country runs all the way down from the back of Kalgoorlie to Norseman, I do not see how any one can say that the country between Coolgardie and Norseman is of a mountainous character.

MR. MORAN: Have you never heard of lakes in Switzerland?

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Because lakes do not extend over the tops of hills. If a traveller takes the border of the lakes, in the country which lies between Coolgardie and Norseman, he will go through quite a level district.

MR. MORAN: And will follow a route which would make the line about 250 miles in length.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: It has been said that a great many batteries are lying idle at Norseman. It is a fact that a great many batteries are lying idle, but I think what has militated against Norseman during the last two or three years has been the fact that Norseman has always been expecting this railway.

MR. MORAN: And therefore the people would not get batteries.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: And a number of people who would have otherwise invested their money have always thought it would be better to wait until they had that hundred miles of country bridged over by a line.

MR. MORAN: Do you mean to tell me they hung up their batteries while waiting for a railway?

THE MINISTER OF MINES: I am telling the hon. member that during the winter months, for about four months of the year, it was almost impossible to get to Norseman. Teams were on the road for almost two months, conveying goods between Norseman and Coolgardie. Now, with the railway we could cover all of this distance, and persons in those far distant places know that with a railway they would always be able, no matter what the season was like, to get all they want at any time. Norseman has been very much kept back in the past on this account, and it is country over which it would be most difficult to make a road on which traffic could pass at all times in the year, because of the enormous expense which would be involved.

MR. MORAN: Therefore you must build a railway.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: If the hon. member will kindly wait until he gets on his legs, it will be much better for the House, and would save one a great deal of trouble. The Government are desirous of carrying out this Norseman railway as a continuation of the

policy they have adopted in the past—[MR. MORAN: Hear, hear]—of opening up this country by railways, and bringing those great auriferous tracts within touch one with the other and with the coast; and they feel satisfied this will be as successful as any of these railways have been hitherto. Norseman is not a little patch of auriferous country. The gold-bearing-country at Norseman is of large extent, and the country between Widgemooltha and Norseman is of an auriferous character, and as regards even Widgemooltha itself, though I have heard hon. members laugh at it, it is impossible to say what is in store for Widgemooltha. There has been a large number of prospectors there for some time past, and I know there have been many men who have settled there, and have never gone away; and I feel confident that if those people had not faith in the country they would never have stopped there; and, further, the country to look at is very likely country indeed.

MR. MORAN: Splendid country to look at; but do not put a pick into it.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: It only requires development, which it ought to have had in the past. Unfortunately, it got a bad name. There was a considerable amount of money spent there years ago; the expected result was not achieved; and for a considerable time this district was thrown into the shade. But I do not think there is anything to prevent even that part of the country from being a very fair gold-producing locality in the future. At any rate, I am positive, from what I have learned and seen, there is a considerable extent of gold-bearing country there, and the country only wants proving. It has never been tried to a depth. It has simply been scratched hitherto.

MR. MORAN: That is the reason you want to put a railway there.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: You cannot prove a mine by simply scratching the surface, and I believe Widgemooltha is likely to give good results with an expenditure of capital as many other parts of Western Australia.

MR. MORAN: Therefore build this railway.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: And if we build a railway and bring this country into touch with the rest of the

railway system of the colony, it is much more likely to be settled, prospected and established; and when we have at the end of it a district like Norseman, with a large extent of auriferous country, a most promising country in itself, I think we are perfectly justified in entering on the construction of this line. It has been said that this district is turning out less gold than it turned out some years ago; still, for a time mining was carried on energetically there, and I believe the surface wealth was better than the results when they got down to a depth.

MR. MORAN: There is no alluvial gold there.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: No; but I say the workings from the surface down to about the one hundred or two hundred feet level were better than at a greater depth.

MR. MORAN: So it is in every goldfield in the world.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: But now I am glad to say an improvement has taken place, and as they get further down on the reefs there, the gold is beginning to get richer than when they were nearer the surface. All these things indicate that Norseman is as likely a field for profitable mining as any other fields in the world. It has been said that this railway is simply intended to benefit Coolgardie. It has been said that Coolgardie is dead, that all the people of Coolgardie are paupers, and it is the Government and the Premier particularly against whom these statements are directed. It is said the Premier, more than anyone else, is endeavouring to bolster up this pauper town, by constructing this railway to Norseman. Now, I am surprised to hear hon. members talk in this way about Coolgardie.

MR. WILSON: Do not take any notice of them.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: If they would only take the trouble to look even at the statistics which hon. members so very frequently quote—

MR. MORAN: You have given us none yet.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: They would find that the Coolgardie goldfield is the second-best producing goldfield in the colony; and yet we are told that Coolgardie is a pauper town.

MR. MORAN: The town is not the goldfield.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Still, the goldfield makes the town. So long as we have a good goldfield, and so long as the gold production does not go down, the town will be all right.

MR. MORAN: How many towns are there in the Coolgardie goldfield?

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Certainly I think Coolgardie is doing well now, and as I said before, the output from the Coolgardie goldfield is the second-best in the colony. I do not think the hon. member (Mr. Vosper) should throw out such statements as that Coolgardie is a pauper town, thus representing that the goldfield is going down.

MR. MORAN: I think Mount Margaret is the second goldfield. You do not know your own statistics.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Last year the Coolgardie goldfield was the second-biggest field in the colony.

MR. MORAN: Never mind last year; take the present year.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: It is no use considering the present year. I quote from the published statistics of 1899. These are the latest figures hon. members have before them for one complete year; and no one can tell, until this year is up, what the result will be for the whole year 1900. Sometimes we have a small output for the first six months and a larger output for the last six months. I believe, at any rate, that the Government are quite as much justified in building this railway to Norseman as in building many other railways which have been constructed by them. [MR. MORAN: No.] It is simply a question whether we are going to open up this country or whether we are going to stop because hon. members are afraid to go on with this progressive policy. Railways in the past have paid. As far as I am personally concerned, I am always pleased to see a railway constructed for the purpose of opening up our goldfields, because there is nothing that will advance the interests of Western Australia more than the opening up of the auriferous districts of the colony. Every mile of railway which we run into those districts of the interior is a benefit to the whole of Western Australia. Every mile of railway into those far-distant goldfields induces settlement,

brings more miners to prospect and work, and benefits the producers throughout the length and breadth of the colony; and that is what the Government are trying to do in this proposal.

MR. MORAN: Then there is to be no end of it.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: I hope we will go over a great deal more country in Western Australia with railway lines, and that there will be a line going north right to Lawlers, a circular railway passing right through the goldfields of the colony, so that we can start from Perth, go to Coolgardie, Menzies, Lawlers, and back by Nannine and Cue to Perth. I am as certain as I am standing here, we will see such a railway; because we have such an enormous tract of auriferous country, so far in the interior and difficult to approach, that it cannot be developed profitably without railways. Of this class of country Norseman is an example, being a totally isolated field 100 miles away from anywhere. These people have been for the last three years working there anxiously waiting the advent of the railway. That country has been almost inaccessible during the winter months, and if it were only known the railway was going to be built, I am sure a great stimulus would be given to the place, and we would see mining revived to an enormous extent at once. The country about Norseman is different from Broad Arrow, and I maintain there is a much larger extent of auriferous country on the Dundas goldfield than at the former place.

MR. MORAN: What is preventing the revival at Broad Arrow?

THE MINISTER OF MINES: I am not here to answer questions; and hon. members can have a say when they get up. The Government on this occasion are coming forward with a policy they have pursued for years past. They feel that in building this line, which will take a year or two to complete, they are simply carrying out that policy. There are those who are opposed to the railway for financial reasons and others for political reasons, but the Government are above all those things: all the Government consider is the good of the country at large, and they feel that in building the railway they are endeavouring to open up country and carry out the policy they

have pursued for so many years. That is the only object the Government have in view. An hon. member has said to-night that the Premier's ideas were bounded by Highgate Hill and the Swan River; but that hon. member, to make such a statement, must have been dreaming. I do not think anyone could have had his mind and attention directed more to affairs throughout the country than the Premier has during the last ten years; and from one end of the colony to the other it has been the policy of the Government to carry on the work of development. I know hon. members have made up their minds what they are going to do, but I consider the country is perfectly safe in agreeing to construct this railway to Norseman. We will be simply opening up another auriferous tract of country and inducing further settlement in mining districts, which are now only in their infancy, and inducing numbers of producers to settle along this auriferous tract, thus bringing work to the producing centres and helping the coastal districts. I hope hon. members will pass this Bill as they passed the Norseman Railway Bill last session, and give the people there what they have been waiting for so long, and what so many believe will open up new territory and help to advance the mining industry of the colony.

MR. LOCKE (Sussex): I am going to support this railway, and I would like to give a few reasons. I think the railway will open up a big portion of the colony, and will be a paying concern from the first; at any rate, it will not be a burden on the taxpayers, seeing that other goldfields railways are not a burden. Some hon. members oppose this line because we cannot borrow money to build it, and others say—and this is the main reason—that the line ought not to be constructed because it is the thin end of the wedge towards building a railway to Esperance. That is what people are thinking, and that is the strongest objection I can see to the proposal. If the Government cannot see their way clear to build the railway at the present time, private enterprise ought to be given a chance. I am not in favour of private enterprise for railway construction, but I think this railway ought to be built, and it will not prove a very expensive line. If we do

not build the railway somebody, possibly in the next Parliament, will see fit to build a railway from Esperance to Norseman, and the safest and best way would be to build the railway now proposed. I do not think that when this railway is built we will be any nearer to Esperance than we are at the present, so far as railways are concerned. I favour the railway also because it will open up more country and trade for the people on the coast. We on the coast will be able to supply people with produce, and it will pay the farmer if railways be built to the goldfields. This railway would also be of advantage to the Kalgoorlie people, because, I am informed, there is a vast amount of timber and firewood between Widgemooltha and Coolgardie, and for that traffic alone it would be wise to build the line. It is said that in two years all the available timber will be cut out, and if we have a railway into the timber country the railway will pay, apart from any other consideration.

On motion by the COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS, the debate adjourned.

COMMERCIAL AND BUSINESS HOLIDAYS BILL.

Received from the Legislative Council, and, on motion by MR. HIGHAM, read a first time.

LEGAL PRACTITIONERS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Received from the Legislative Council, and, on motion by MR. MONGER, read a first time.

REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS, DEATHS, AND MARRIAGES AMENDMENT BILL.

Received from the Legislative Council, and, on motion by the ATTORNEY GENERAL, read a first time.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the PREMIER: 1, Education Department, return showing teachers and salaries; 2, Bubonic Plague, report of Venice International Sanitary Convention, 1897; 3, State Governors under Federation, Correspondence as to Emoluments.

Ordered to lie on the table.

DISTILLATION BILL.

SECOND READING.

Debate resumed from 20th September.

MR. VOSPER (North-East Coolgardie): My only object in moving the adjournment of the debate when this Bill was last before the House was to refer to Clause 58. In other respects the Bill leaves not much to be desired, but in regard to Clause 58 the Attorney General might be recommended to insert a clause dealing with the labels of Western Australian wines. I believe a pernicious custom has arisen of putting French labels on local wine bottles, which are thereby sold under false pretences. Some 15 years ago, in South Australia, a similar clause was inserted in the Act there, and all wine-growers were compelled to label the bottles as of local origin. The result was not such a good sale, but ultimately the effect was to advertise the local product and bring it into more general use, and now South Australian wines are largely in demand. I think hon. members will agree with me it is highly desirable that our wine industry should not sail under false colours, and that a label should be affixed to the bottles, stating where the wine comes from, and our law thus assimilated to the Merchandise Marks Act of the old country.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

GAME ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

POLICE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

Debate resumed from 20th September.

MR. MONGER (York): For years past, at the early portion of this and preceding Parliaments, we have had a Police Act Amendment Bill. In some instances the proposed amendments have emanated from private members, and in other instances from the Government; and a more indelicate piece of legislation has never been forced on the Parliament of Western Australia than that which I am now about to discuss. It is my intention to deal with this indelicate Bill in the most delicate manner possible, and to emulate the language of the

Attorney General when he moved the second reading. The Attorney General referred to the Bill as one which to all intents and purposes dealt with two questions, namely the social evil and that of gambling, with the latter being involved the question of legalising or otherwise of lotteries. As all members know, I have given notice of motion to omit several clauses in the early portion of the Bill, not so much that I disagree with those particular clauses, but in order to show, at a period like this, that it is impolitic on the part of any Government to bring forward legislation of the kind. My reason for moving to strike out the four clauses dealing with the social evil is to show that we have no desire at a period like this to move in such legislation; more particularly the main reason is that it is only within the last few months we have extended the franchise to women, and I think that on the eve of the general election we should allow a big social question to be dealt with by the large women's vote which, in the future, will form a permanent part of the political history of Western Australia. I wish to let the people of Western Australia know that with three or four of the clauses I am entirely in accord, and that there is no creature for whom I have a greater disrespect than the pimp or the landlord who knowingly lets premises for these immoral purposes. Whilst dealing with this question, it is only fitting I should say that it is within the knowledge of almost every member that there are persons who occupy positions in the Parliament of this colony, there are men who occupy positions as justices of the peace, there are individuals or creatures who occupy municipal positions, there are men who are looked up to and in many cases respected by the ordinary public, who knowingly lease premises for the purposes that this Bill is trying to obviate. I am desirous that some by-law should be adopted by municipal councils, whereby the names of those individuals who knowingly lease premises for these purposes should be made public to every person in the colony; and, whilst moving the withdrawal of these clauses, I think it is within my power, in speaking on the second reading of the Bill, to suggest to the municipalities of this

colony that a by-law should be passed setting forth in a prominent manner that town lot X-Y-Z, rented by a lady from Japan (I put this as a supposed case), is owned, according to the registered title, in the name of Mr. A-B-C. If such a move as that is made, by publishing the names of such persons as I have referred to in strong terms this evening (refraining from mentioning their names), it will have the effect of getting rid of this particular evil. Before dealing with the second portion of the Bill, I desire to call attention to an interview which took place between a representative of the Press and the Anglican Bishop of Perth, also the Jewish Rabbi, in which they referred to this social evil, and I am glad to see that the heads of certain sections of our churches are men who are willing and not afraid to confess that such an evil has existed since the world began, and is likely to continue till the world ends. So long as we have broad-minded men at the head of our churches, so long will questions such as this be brought into fair and honest discussion; and I take this opportunity of congratulating the heads of those two churches on the able way in which they expressed their opinions on this question. I come to another phase of this Bill, which has for its object the prevention of lotteries. It prevents them in one direction whilst it sanctions them in another; and whoever may have been the framer of this Bill, I cannot but suggest to him that what is wrong in the individual is equally wrong in the church. [MR. ILLINGWORTH: Hear, hear.] The framer of this Bill is desirous of legalising, in a modified form, one kind of gambling, while he is desirous of suppressing it in another form. It is not my intention to deal with the question of lotteries, or with the main question of gambling in all its phases; for if I were to attempt to do so from personal experience, I might take up time for a very indefinite period. But I am desirous of saying that as far as this portion of the Bill is concerned, we have for several years past allowed this supposed evil, or what is considered an evil from a certain point of view, to exist. I fail to see what harm has resulted. For years past I have read every article on this question which has appeared in the public Press of this colony. The

various arguments on the one side or the other fail to make me alter the conclusion I arrived at in 1892, when I was the occasion of repealing the Act which the Attorney General is now desirous of reinstating on the state book. During the past few weeks I have read articles which emanated from the Press of Western Australia, articles which have emanated from the outlying parts, from Murchison, from the big centres of Coolgardie, and Kalgoorlie, and from the leading newspapers of Western Australia which circulate in this growing city; and further, I have read articles which have emanated from the hub of the universe, namely, Northam. I have also read articles which have appeared in the *Bunbury Herald*; and I have never seen, with the exception of an article by a writer named Mr. Richards, one single item condemnatory of these lotteries which now exist in our midst. I have moved sundry amendments in connection with this Bill, and these amendments are in conjunction with the law relating to lotteries, and if adopted by the Attorney General, they will form the basis of a Bill similar to that which is now in existence in Tasmania, and which has been the cause of the legalising of Mr. Adams's Tattersall sweeps in that colony. I am doing this because I am desirous that Western Australia shall be placed in exactly the same position as that occupied by the people of Tasmania; and I think, now that we have federation, if these lotteries are to be expunged from the statutes of this colony, they should be expunged from the statute book of Tasmania. I have no doubt the leader of the Opposition will say that is what he is desirous of doing; but I want to point out that if we do abolish these lotteries from federated Australia, they will take place in other parts of the world; and the moneys which are now circulated in our midst will, perhaps, be sent away to some foreign country. I have had a fair experience of this particular question, and I may say that I have it on the very best authority that Adams's sweeps which were run and regulated and looked after in the colony of New South Wales, and which subsequently, in a moral moment, the people of New South Wales suppressed—I have it on the very best authority, and I

would ask the Attorney General to bear this in mind, and if necessary to have it confirmed or disproved by telegram in the course of the next few days — that the Government of New South Wales would welcome the return of Mr. Adams to that colony. In the amendments I have tabled, I only ask that the same law which now exists in the colony of Tasmania shall be enacted in this colony. I should like to point out that one of the amendments I have moved, the amendment relating to regulations, states in a very few words, "The Governor may from time to time make, alter, and revoke regulations for the proper conduct of any lotteries." I may inform hon. members that it is under that small clause in the Tasmanian Act that Adams's lotteries are legalised in that colony. Before formally moving these amendments, I have another amendment to make; but supposing they are carried in the way in which they appear on the Notice Paper, we give to the Executive Council the power to frame such regulations as they may think necessary. They may think no regulations are necessary, and perhaps nothing may be done. The whole question is: We have year after year handed down to us amendments of the Police Act; they have stood on the Notice Paper week after week and month after month, and then at the end of the session they have all been thrown out; and I think, as far as I can judge, if we continue on the principle we have followed in the past, these Bills will remain as figureheads on the Notice Paper, and at the end of each session will be quietly allowed to lapse. Under these circumstances, and with the prospect, probably, of other amendments being added to the Notice Paper, I should advise the Government to take the hint and quietly withdraw this Bill, which emanated from people who, at the present time, have not had an opportunity of voting, but who will have an opportunity of voting at the next election, and of returning members who may, or may not, be of their way of thinking. I ask the Government to take this opportunity, and to agree with me in the formal amendment which I intend to submit to this House, and that is: I beg to move that this Bill be read this day six months.

MR. VOSPER (North-East Coolgardie): With regard to the clauses in this Bill down to Clause 5 I am in entire sympathy. I can quite bear out what the member for York (Mr. Monger) has said in reference to some persons who lease houses for the purposes mentioned in that portion of the Bill, and I may say that so far as I am personally concerned, and apart entirely from what the municipalities may do, I intend to take the earliest opportunity which the means of publication at my disposal permit, of publishing to the world a list of the persons in Perth and Fremantle who are guilty of these practices. I do not think these dens of iniquity can be suppressed, but I do think that the persons who profit by this nefarious traffic should be exposed to public odium and scorn; and if that cannot be done by law, it is the duty of the Press to take up the matter. With regard to the latter portion of the Bill, I should like to say that while this House should be virtuous and endeavour to enforce virtue, the first virtue we should practise is that of common sense; and it certainly does appear to me that the quality of common sense is sadly lacking in this class of legislation. The position is: we have an evil here in Western Australia called "gambling." We have had it all over the world ever since the world began; and as the member for York says, it will probably continue until the world ends. That would not, of itself, be a sufficient reason for not endeavouring to combat the evil. But there are other reasons of a very cogent character, which I would commend to the attention of hon. members. At the present moment it is a moot point whether lotteries are legal or illegal. As a rule, they get the benefit of the doubt; it is taken for granted they are legal, and consequently there have been several lotteries established in Western Australia. Of these, more than one have been fairly well conducted and honest institutions; the balance have been more or less in the nature of frauds. I should have been in entire sympathy with the Government had they brought in a Bill for the purpose of checking or prohibiting those lotteries run on fraudulent lines. Such a law is very much needed, and should certainly receive the attention of this House. But when it comes to a question

of destroying lotteries and sweeps altogether, I think it is a matter over which we should pause, because much can be said on both sides of the question. Supposing we succeed in abolishing the sweeps now established in Western Australia, shall we thereby do away with the evil of gambling? Shall we to any material extent check, much less destroy it? It is a curious fact, the fact that was published in the Press in the course of the last day or two, that during this particular season of the year, there is always a very large increase in the number of postal orders and remittances despatched to Tasmania; and there is only one conclusion to be drawn from that important fact; that inasmuch as the Melbourne and Caulfield Cups are soon coming on, that money is going away for investment in Adams's sweeps. This shows that as long as gambling is permitted anywhere in Australia, people in all parts of the continent will partake in it; and the first effect of abolishing sweeps in this colony would be simply to increase the trade of Mr. George Adams. Now I cannot see any benefit in that. If it is an evil that we should have gambling here, it is equally an evil that we should have it in Tasmania; but of the two evils we should certainly choose the least, and the least of the two evils, to my mind, is to have the gambling on the spot, where we can regulate it, legislate for it, keep it within certain prescribed limits, and get the benefit of the capital put in circulation by its operation. Now, what would be the effect if the Bill were passed as it stands at the present time? The different institutions carrying on these gambling operations would be removed as far, perhaps, as Singapore. The fact would be advertised in the columns of the papers here; or in any other convenient form or in some disguised form, the promoters of these sweeps would be able to send circulars all over the colony, and to give addresses over which the Postmaster General could exercise no check; and the money would be sent to Singapore. The gambling will go on exactly as it does now. The money will be sent out of the colony into another country, instead of swelling the revenue of the State in which we live. I may point out that in England they have legislation of this sort as well

as in the Eastern colonies, and what is the result there? We see in the English sporting journals advertisements from foreign firms distributed broadcast over England, and anyone who wishes to do so can take a ticket in a lottery by sending across to Holland or Belgium. In Hamburg, and I believe, in Saxe-Coburg Gotha, and in the Grand Duchy of Mecklenburg, lotteries are conducted under State supervision, and the management send circulars broadcast throughout Australia to addresses found in the directories, inviting people to participate in those lotteries. So the only effect of this Bill if passed would be, not to abolish the evil, but to alter its geographical position; and it appears to me there is no great advantage in that; on the contrary there is a distinct disadvantage, because we place it beyond the limits of our control, place it beyond our reach, and what is perhaps equally important, we place beyond our reach also the capital which is distributed in connection with these operations. When we have a virtuous spasm of this kind, I think we may as well carry the matter further. Here we have two sub-clauses which almost contradict one another; the first dealing with a kind of lottery which may be conducted in a shop, and the next dealing with a kind of lottery that may be conducted in a church or schoolroom. It appears that the one form of gambling becomes a holy thing, not to be touched with the sacrilegious hand of the Legislature. Yet it does seem to me hypocrisy to say we will prevent a man from investing his money in a horse race, and on the other hand we will permit him to invest his money in a church lottery. From my point of view the one form of investment is obliged to be honest, being conducted publicly, whereas in the other form of investment the business is conducted in a way that admits of the worst forms of dishonesty, for where the form of gambling is not conducted openly it provides opportunities for all the trickery and the chicanery which are carried on in the name of church lotteries, and which would be enough to land them in gaol if conducted outside the walls of a place of worship. I may also call attention to the fact that in the sub-clause the words "art union" are permitted under the sanction of the

authorities. Now if there is an evil in connection with gambling, the words "art union" express that evil; for whatever can be said against sweeps, much more can be said against the system of permitting art unions. In permitting sweeps a person pays for his ticket, and waits till the drawing takes place; but in the case of the art union, what takes place? Some person starts the thing by getting together a few cheap pictures, perhaps buying them in auction rooms for a few shillings, the auctioneer probably glad to get them out of his way at any price; and these pictures being got together as works of art, some person then sets to work to canvass the sale of tickets for a prize drawing. Often the promoters of these art unions send round a woman to canvass, or several women, and very often these are women of bad character, who canvass and pester men in their business hours, and canvass also, I have reason to believe, for purposes which would come more properly under the definition of the first portion of this Bill. The drawing of the so-called art union is frequently carried out privately, and there is no check. Generally the persons who buy these tickets are swindled out of their chance of getting a prize, or are swindled out of the prize itself. It is well known that the more privately gambling is carried on, the more chances there are for trickery and fraud; whereas in a public drawing, one can witness what is done, as it is open to the public view, and persons interested in it can see that no trickery is practised. In drawing for an art union, the operation is carried out privately or in semi-privacy, and there is no guarantee of its honesty or genuineness. It therefore appears that those things which lead to immorality of the grossest kind, and give unlimited scope for trickery, are to be permitted under the Bill, while that kind of gambling which is open and presumably honestly conducted, and is certainly open to checks, is pronounced by the Bill to be an immoral and illegal thing. If we are to do anything in the way of reform, we should endeavour to repress that kind of gambling which is the most evil in its effects, whereas that species of gambling is the one permitted under this Bill. Not only is this a hypocritical attempt at compromise between vice and virtue, but is as void of sense

as it is void of morality. Whatever may be said about sweeps and consultations, there is no doubt that a properly conducted sweep is one of the most honest forms of gambling which can take place. The fact remains that sweeps carried out as they are at present in this colony are perfectly fair and square, and no evil results are visible, more than the kind of results which attach to theatre-going and such evils. Whilst the Legislature is engaged in matters of this kind, why cannot it agree to put down some of the "open calls" on various parts of the goldfields? An exchange for the sale of shares is respectably conducted; but there are open calls, and there are so-called free exchanges, which are simply open for swindling the public. If we are to abolish gambling, then in the name of consistency and justice and common sense, let us say we will put down sweeps and consultations and lotteries, also put down "Calcuttas" and church bazaars, and will not allow gambling under the cloak of religion. Let us put down stock-broking and all other forms of gambling, for they are all as much gambling as is the buying of a ticket in Squash's or Charles's sweeps. That being so, where is the sense of permitting one and forbidding the other? I do not think the inconsistency of the thing can be denied, if we attack one phase of this evil and leave other phases untouched. This Bill is not only the work of certain pious persons, but beer and the Bible being closely allied, we find there are a number of publicans and storekeepers who imagine that money which might otherwise be spent in drink, or in the purchase of commodities, is going to be spent in the purchase of sweep tickets. If that is the case, let us encourage it as against the drink traffic; for, of the two evils, that which arises from gambling is not greater, but less, than the evil arising from the spending of money in drink. These persons imagine that because money goes through one channel it is withdrawn from circulation, forgetting that the money comes back and is spent largely in wages. If those persons fancy that they lose some money by the fact that money goes into the hands of sweep promoters, I ask how much more will they lose if the promoters of sweeps shift to Singapore or Shanghai? Those ladies and gentlemen are singularly

short-sighted, for they are under the impression that it is possible to make people pious and even angelic, that it is possible to make us all budding arch-angels, by means of an Act of Parliament. I maintain that it is beyond the power of an Act of Parliament to produce a radical change such as those persons desire. The only effect of such legislation will be to drive this vice underground. The word "raffle," for instance, is a flexible term; and a raffle can be carried on in such a way as to be anything but fair and honest. If a man wants to indulge in this or any other vice, do not let him play the hypocrite in embarking on his particular vice. The open and public gambling institutions in this colony are conducted at least as well as stock exchange gambling is conducted, except that a man has more chances of losing over shares than over a five-shilling sweep; and if so, to pass any measure that will have the effect of driving these things underground will defeat the very object those well-meaning but mistaken persons are seeking to promote by this Bill. We shall accomplish no real good by such legislation. If, however, the object of the Bill were to regulate these gambling sweeps by placing them under State supervision, and for deriving some revenue from them while also giving to the public some guarantee for their solvency and their honesty, I would vote for the Bill; but in seeking to make people moral by Act of Parliament, those persons are accomplishing no good, for I am confident the evil will continue, and whatever little good is derived from it will be lost to the colony by the promoters of sweeps removing elsewhere. I am loth to support the amendment on account of the earlier clauses in the Bill, which I regard as being good in principle, and I shall be glad to see them passed; but I think there is no option for me to support the amendment, and I hope the effect will be that if the amendment be carried, the Government will introduce a Bill embodying sensible regulations with regard to prosecutions and matters of that kind, and also to introduce new clauses in reference to sweeps, so as to place them under supervision and let them become a benefit to the colony instead of a source of loss and an evil. The evil, after all, is comparatively small, and not in any

way to be compared with the evil which the Bill in its present form would promote. It will foster vices which at present we do not engender, and it will drive out of the colony the use of a great body of capital which is now employed in these sweeps.

MR. WALLACE (Yalgoo): If it can be shown to me that this Bill will achieve the end intended, I shall be willing to pass the measure in silence; but I feel assured it is impossible to gain the end desired by this Bill, and if not possible, why not adopt some measure for restricting or controlling these evils? The first four clauses of the Bill deal with an indelicate question; and, it being our duty to cast aside any false modesty, I desire to say a few words on that part of the Bill. Some time ago I was twitted by hon. members in asking a question alluding to a crime similar to that dealt with in the first part of this Bill; and in regard to these clauses, I am not in favour of any legislation that will become unworkable. I prefer to be plain, and let the House know my opinion on the question, and I would much rather see legislation like that which has been in operation in Queensland for 32 years. In discussing a question of this kind, members should cast off all false modesty, because this is a serious matter, notwithstanding we have been told the evil has been removed from the principal streets of the city. It is my desire to move the evil still further, and in such a way that we may be able to check it, for I feel sure it is impossible to do away altogether with this deplorable crime. Legislation of the kind I have indicated is to be found in English statutes, and though that legislation is confined to garrison towns, it is capable of application to Perth and other large centres in the colonies. If such legislation suits Queensland and some parts of England, the sooner we here place some check on the evil, the better it will be for the community, more especially the rising generation, because the consequences of the evil are too dreadful to contemplate. Not only does the present generation suffer, but new-born children are afflicted with the dire results of immoral practices; and when we see the number of such cases, it is time hon. members should cast off false modesty and

assist in helping those who suffer from terrible disease. No doubt these matters are very shocking, but we are not called upon to legislate for the bright side of life, but for the dark side in human nature, and hon. members must awake to the necessity of not only speaking, but acting in the interests of people who are suffering. I would welcome legislation similar to that in operation in Brisbane, because by that means we could remove those unfortunates from the centre of our city, and suppress to a large degree the evil influence. I believe that some women's organisations in the city are responsible for this Bill, and I wish they would give to their unfortunate sisters that attention and consideration one woman deserves from another. I always recollect that it is never too late to mend. But the promoters of this Bill are trying, through the medium of the Government, to achieve the impossible; because I will undertake to predict that it is impossible to finally obliterate this unfortunate evil that is to be found in our city of Perth. I was pleased to hear that the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) is pointing out many cases which should have been looked into by the police, and which were not looked into until attention was drawn to them by the hon. member; and I am further pleased with his statement this evening that he will use the columns of his paper for the purpose of exposing those persons connected directly or indirectly with the houses in which these unfortunate women are located, or may be located in the future. That is an act for which all respectable persons should be very grateful indeed. The remarks of the member for York (Mr. Monger) will be indorsed, I think, by almost all those who heard them this evening; and I have noticed within the last few days that there have been very many vacant houses not very far from Hay street, so that the introduction of this Bill has had some effect. But it has only had the effect of driving the occupants from these particular streets to some other streets. I want to assist in placing on our statute book some such legislation as exists in Brisbane, in spite of the immense opposition offered by various bodies to such legislation. Such bodies appear to have nothing else to do than to urge this House to introduce

social legislation, which they must know it is impossible to pass. On the question of lotteries I will support the amendment of the member for York that the Bill be read this day six months, seeing that in Sub-clause (c) of Clause 6 a penalty is provided to the extent of £200 for any one indulging in games of skill. When we see such a miserable defect as that in a Bill, I think it is wise for everyone to assist in having the measure thrown out altogether, with a view of having a properly-framed Bill brought in at a later stage. The member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) has clearly placed before the House the opinion of the people of Perth, and we also have the opinions of several clergymen in Perth, who say that this Bill which seeks to legalise lotteries for church and charitable purposes can only be characterised as a farce. Some opponents of gambling say it interferes with trade, and that the money which should go to pay the honourable debts of working people is spent in lotteries. But to be consistent, it is a wonder to me that it is not prohibited to attend theatres, because we find comic operas crowded every night, and there is no murmur in this House or outside about the money going to the management instead of to the creditors of the audience. I should like the Attorney General to show some little consistency, so that he may command the support of hon. members, because I do not think there is one member who is not inclined to favour some such measure as this. But in my opinion this Bill will not assist in bringing about the desired end. I will support the amendment that the Bill be read this day six months.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: I move the adjournment of the debate.

Motion for adjournment put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 11.5 o'clock until the next day.
