

have been prepared to place a plan of the building on the Table this Session. At present hon. members know nothing whatever about this building, beyond that they had voted £1,000 towards it last Session, and were now asked to vote another £1,000. They had no idea what it would cost eventually. This was not the first time he had called attention in that House to the desirability of plans and specifications of proposed new buildings being laid before hon. members, so that they may form some idea as to the adaptability of the structures for the intended purpose, and also be able to form a judgment as to the probable cost.

MR. STEERE concurred with the hon. member for Fremantle. The same subject had repeatedly been mentioned, in previous Sessions, and he thought a promise had been given that in future plans and specifications of proposed new buildings should be laid on the Table of the House.

MR. MARMION asked if anything was going to be done towards providing a Casualty Hospital at Fremantle?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Lord Gifford) said it was the intention of the Government to meet the hon. member's wishes in this respect.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Lord Gifford) moved to insert the item "Railway Platform, East Perth, £70."

Agreed to.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Lord Gifford) moved that the item "Hospital, Perth, £350" be reduced by £100.

Agreed to.

Question—That a sum of £8,490 be granted for Works and Buildings—put and passed.

Progress reported.

STAMP DUTIES BILL.

This Bill was recommitted, and several amendments, mostly of a verbal character, were agreed to without discussion. [*Vide* "Votes and Proceedings," p. 147.]

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

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Wednesday, 13th September, 1882.

Maintenance of Water Police—Trespass, Fencing, and Impounding Bill—Brands Act Amendment Bill: third reading—Municipalities Act Amendment Bill: third reading—Reply to Message No. 8 (Kimberley Railway)—Stamp Duties Bill: recommitted—Industrial Schools Act, 1874, Amendment Bill: in committee—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at seven o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

MAINTENANCE OF WATER POLICE.

MR. STEERE, in accordance with notice, moved, "That an Humble Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, praying that he will be pleased to forward the following Resolutions of the Legislative Council to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies, for submission to the Home Office, with a view to having the question of maintenance and cost of Water Police favorably reconsidered."

"Resolution 1.—It was with surprise and regret that the Council learnt for the first time this Session that as far back as December, 1879, the Secretary of State for the Home Department had decided to reduce the grant hitherto made for the Imperial Water Police establishment in this Colony, and that only one-half of the cost of the Water Police Force at Fremantle would be borne by the Imperial Government, leaving the other half, and the whole cost at the outstations, to be paid by the Colonial Treasury."

"Resolution 2.—The Council feels assured that when it is remembered that the Water Police Force was first established, and is still maintained, for Imperial requirements in connection with the Convict Department, Her Majesty's Government will be disposed to favorably reconsider the decision previously arrived at, and will consent to continue the grant heretofore made, at all events until the end of the year 1887, when the Imperial grant-in-aid towards Magis-tracy and Police will cease."

"Resolution 3.—Should, however, Her Majesty's Government deem it undesirable to contribute the amount

"hitherto paid for the up-keep of the Imperial Water Police Force, the Council trusts that the decision may not be made retrospective, but that the Secretary of State will sanction the payment of the Force from December, 1879, until July, 1883, when the Council will be again in Session, and will be in a position to determine whether it is necessary to retain any portion of the Force for colonial purposes, and, if so, at what cost to colonial funds.

"Resolution 4.—The Council believes that the claim of the Colony to a continuance of the Imperial grant for Water Police has been most clearly represented to Her Majesty's Secretary of State by their Excellencies Sir Harry Ord and Sir William Robinson, and the Council hopes that this further representation by the Legislature will induce Her Majesty's Government to see fit to authorise the Imperial Water Police remaining a charge against Imperial funds, as was originally understood would be the case, until such time as the Imperial grant was discontinued in aid of Magistracy and Police."

MR. STEERE said the House would doubtless remember that the Select Committee appointed to report upon the Excess Bill had discovered that a sum amounting to £2,295 had been applied out of colonial funds towards the maintenance of water police, the Imperial Government having directed that these charges should, after 1879, be deducted from the annual grant for magistracy and police, without any reference whatever to the Legislature of this Colony; and that when the Excess Bill was considered in Committee of the whole House, the Committee, by way of protesting against the action of the Home Government in the matter, had struck out this item and refused to confirm the expenditure. It appeared to him, however, that it was desirable to further strengthen His Excellency's hands, in pressing our claims upon the consideration of the Imperial authorities, and it was for this reason that he had submitted the foregoing resolutions, which he trusted would meet with the unanimous assent of the House.

The resolutions were then put and passed.

TRESPASS, FENCING, AND IMPOUNDING BILL.

This Bill was further considered in Committee.

Clause 22 reverted to: Boundary fence to be kept clear by both parties mutually:

MR. STEERE moved, as an amendment, that the words "private," before the word "land," be struck out.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. A. C. Onslow) said he would have no objection to the amendment, so long as the rights of the Crown were respected. He would have to provide for that.

MR. STEERE said he was aware it would be of no use for him to object to the hon. and learned gentleman's wish in this respect, though, for his own part, he failed to see why the Crown should not be called upon to clear its own side of a fence as well as a private owner.

The amendment was agreed to.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. A. C. Onslow) then moved that the words "not being Crown lands, occupied by the Crown" be inserted in brackets, after the amendment submitted by Mr. STEERE.

This was agreed to without discussion.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. A. C. Onslow) then moved that the following words be added to the New Clause he had moved the other evening, when Progress was reported: "Such sums may be recovered by the owner of the land in respect of any trespass, whether such trespass was committed by cattle only, or by any person whether with or without cattle." This, he believed, would to a great extent meet the objection which the hon. member for Geraldton had to the clause.

The amendment was adopted without discussion, and the clause put and passed, to stand as clause 17.

MR. STEERE then moved that the following new clause be added to the Bill to stand as clause 24: "If any dividing fence or any portion thereof shall be destroyed by accident, the occupier of land on either side may immediately repair the same without any notice, and shall be entitled to recover half the expense of so doing from the occupier of the adjoining land; providing always, that in case such dividing fence shall have been destroyed by fire or by the falling of any tree

"or trees, the occupier, through whose neglect (if any) such fire shall have originated, or have caused injury to the fence, or such tree or trees shall have fallen, shall be the party bound to repair the entire of the fence so damaged as aforesaid." The hon. member said he wished to make one amendment in the clause as it appeared on the Notice Paper. It would be observed that the clause as printed required adjoining occupiers to share the expense of repairing a fence whether it was made use of by the adjoining occupier or not; which would be going on the lines of the Fencing Bill of that Session. He wished to insert after the word "thereof," in the first line, the following words, "which may be made use of by adjoining occupiers for the ordinary purposes of a fence." This alteration in the wording of the clause would take it out of the category of the Fencing Bill of last Session, and bring it into consonance with the law now in force.

The clause as altered was then agreed to, *nem. con.*

Bill reported.

BRANDS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

MUNICIPALITIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time and passed.

REPLY TO MESSAGE (No. 8): KIMBERLEY RAILWAY.

IN COMMITTEE.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Lord Gifford) said, as it was he who had moved that the consideration of His Excellency's Message be made an Order of the Day, it devolved upon him to open the debate upon it. In this Message, as hon. members were aware, the Governor forwarded for the careful consideration of the House a letter addressed to His Excellency by Messrs. McKenzie Grant and H. W. Venn, having reference to the proposed construction of a railway on the land grant system in the Kimberley District. Before proceeding any further, he felt it his duty to say that so far as he was concerned, and so far as his hon. colleagues on the Government bench

were concerned, the position which they took up with reference to this proposal, in its present stage of development, was one of perfect neutrality. The scheme undoubtedly contemplated the opening up of territory on a very extensive scale, but until the Government and that House were in possession of further details with reference to it than were contained in the letter addressed to His Excellency the Governor by the promoters, and forwarded by His Excellency for the consideration of the Legislature, he did not think they could be expected to arrive at any definite conclusions as to the merits or demerits of the project. There could be no doubt that the construction of a railway through the Kimberley District would be of great benefit to that district, and indirectly to the Colony at large, but, until the promoters of the scheme explained their views and intentions more fully, it appeared to him it would be premature for the House to approve or to condemn it, and, for his own part, holding the position which he did, he could not at present say whether the project was one that would receive his support or not. It appeared to him absolutely necessary, before the Legislature committed itself to support or to countenance a project of this magnitude, it should be clearly understood what the terms were upon which the Colony was asked to alienate its lands for the construction of this line. Very little as yet was known even of the district through which it was proposed to construct the railway, or of the value of the capabilities of the land. They knew very little of the climate, they knew very little of the character of the soil, and it was impossible at present to say whether this part of our territory presented those conditions which were likely to lead to its becoming hereafter the home of a numerous European population, whether,—in fact, it was suited to settlement on the wholesale scale contemplated by the promoters of the project now before the House. No doubt the two gentlemen who had brought it forward were entitled to every credit for their far-sightedness, in looking ahead to the possible conversion of a district that was now a virgin wilderness into a thriving settlement, teeming with population; but, so far, the details of their scheme was

known only to themselves and those with whom they were associated, and he must confess he was unable at present to see how they proposed to carry their scheme into fruition, or, having done so, how it was going to pay them. No doubt, in the course of the debate, the Committee would be placed in possession of further information as to the intentions of the promoters, but, until they were, it appeared to him it would be premature on his part to express any opinion with regard to the scheme, either for or against it.

MR. VENN, having first read the letter addressed to the Governor by Mr. Grant and himself [*Vide* Sessional Paper, A 9, "Votes and Proceedings," 1882,] sketching out the proposal, which he was pleased to find had evoked a responsive echo throughout the whole Colony, through the press, said: Sir—A well-known writer has said "there is a tide in the affairs of men which, if taken at the flood, leads on to fortune." There may also be a tide in the affairs of a nation, which, if taken advantage of, may lead to prosperity and to power. The history of Western Australia has not, as yet, been marked by any great stirring event, nor has any turn in the tide of her affairs led to any great material progress; she still lags behind, the Cinderella of the group,—the Cinderella whose future depends entirely upon those who guide her destinies in this House; and possibly the time has now arrived to test the value of the intelligence and sagacity we possess, and show to our fellow colonists and the world that we are equal to the occasion to advance the Colony to a good position among her sisters. Sir, on the first dawn of the ideas suggested in our letter to His Excellency the Governor, and now before this House, the scheme seemed to us so vast for our small Colony, so much in advance of anything attempted before, that it presented to our minds something, while very grand, a trifle beyond our reach; and it was not until the subject was thoroughly discussed, and information gained from reliable sources, that we were prepared to place these suggestions before you in all the confidence of personal conviction as a scheme that was not only practicable but absolutely necessary to advance the prosperity not only of the North but of

the Colony generally. We have the necessary information to warrant us in saying that its realisation remains in the hands of the Legislature alone. We suggest the construction of a line of railway, on the land grant system in alternate blocks, along the line from Roebuck Bay to Cambridge Gulf. The reasons we advance in favor of this scheme are really too numerous to mention in detail, and I shall not treat of them except in general terms, and say the advantages embrace all those that can follow, and be derived, from a line of railway through any country. At first it may be contended that we have no correct knowledge of the country to go upon; but to that I would say, had we no other information than that given to us by Mr. Alex Forrest after his recent trip from the Fitzroy to Port Darwin, we would have all the information necessary for the purpose of our suggestion, and for this House. From that source we know, and from the journal of Mr. Alex. McRae we know, that the country from Roebuck Bay to the South Australian border is what might be called an open rich grassy country, favorable in every way to railway construction—even through the St. George's Ranges, which present no great difficulties, thence along the Nicholson Plains to the South Australian border—all through open, undulating country. But, Sir, we have data beyond that given to us by Mr. Forrest. We have the explorations of Gregory to the Denison Plains in 1856, the result of which trip was to start several large pastoral companies from Victoria to settle the country explored by him. I was one among the number attracted by that journal, and left Melbourne in 1864 for this very country, and, although we never reached it, I have a vivid recollection of Gregory's reports. And when those reports are so well supported by Mr. Alex. Forrest, all doubts that may be hovering about our minds as to the nature of the country must be dispelled, and we can take as real facts the combined reports of these men—such men as Gregory and Forrest—without further waiting to see or know more about it, and we can safely say that the country is as described, a rich pastoral country of enormous extent, away back from the coast,—a territory

that can only be successfully developed by means of railway communication. If I wished to bring additional authority as to the nature of this Northern country, I would mention the history of the Port Essington settlement by Mr. E. W. Earl, and the explorations of Grey and Lushington; as also the history, too well known by some of us, of the Denison Plains and Camden Harbor Associations, which were led to the shores of Western Australia by the reports of Gregory and others, but whose efforts at pioneering failed—I may say through gross mismanagement, and the impossibility of reaching that country. I mention these facts simply to show that we have had numerous sources from whence to gain our information, that such information is open to every hon. member, and that we come before this honorable House with suggestions that are the result of mature reflection. The resolution I shall move in this House is one, I feel sure, hon. members will unanimously accept, and my object in wording it as I have done is in order that hon. members may approach the different stages of the subject with their minds free from conflicting considerations. This resolution binds us to nothing, but simply expresses an opinion that it is desirable to develop the district of Kimberley by railway construction on the land grant system, taken in alternate blocks along the line. No one can, I venture to say, oppose such a resolution, any more than they could oppose the desirability of finding a gold mine. The principle of railway construction on the land grant system has already been affirmed in this House (as applied to the Central District); hence I feel that this resolution will meet with cordial and unanimous support. It deals in no way with the question of cost, and leaves the minds of hon. members fully free to decide that question when it arises. The object of the resolution is, as I have stated, to affirm a principle, and I wish for the present that the cost shall in no way enter into this discussion. Sir, having said that, I will draw the attention of the Committee to the relative positions of the Northern and Southern portions of our territory. Western Australia boasts of a territory equal in extent to almost one-third of the whole conti-

nent, and, Sir, we must be struck, forcibly struck with this fact,—that the North is daily and hourly asking for a more extended and enlightened policy to apply to her territory. She looks to the South as the natural source from whence should emanate her laws, and the guiding principles of her constitution. She looks to the South to assist in the development of her territory; to initiate colonisation, to populate, and to cement their political relations, so that Western Australia shall be rent by no internal jealousy—the North against the South—but that North and South may continue together and form a homogeneous whole, and a prosperous Colony. Much, Sir, as I desire Responsible Government, much as I have worked to obtain for this Colony that form of Government best suited to her permanent advancement, I have no desire to see that gained by severing the North from the South; and it remains for us as legislators to ward off that calamity, if not for ever, still for many years to come, by the initiation of active progressive measures that will bind us more closely together. The North does not seek separation willingly; the position will be forced upon her by the tardy legislation of the South, and it behoves us, with the patriotism that should inspire the bosom of every legislator, to use all the intelligence we possess for the advancement of our Northern territory, and so promote the welfare of the Colony as a whole. I join not with those who for ever sneer at the value and importance of the South, believing as I do, that she has yet immense undeveloped resources; but Sir, at present they are undeveloped, and I opine that the greatest revenues we shall derive will come from the North for many years, and that it is from that quarter we must expect the means to give increased prosperity to the South. No measure we could adopt, towards fulfilling the obligations of the South to the North, or which would conduce more to bring about Federation, could, in my opinion, be found, than the scheme now before us, and that, too, at no cost whatever, at no further taxation, and at no further burden on the South, while at the same time it develops, populates, and thoroughly colonises the Northern territory. The revenues to be derived from

the leased occupation of that territory, from the sale of land, and from increased Customs duties, would be enormous. Sir, the subject is a great one; its importance requires no eloquence of mine to give it prominence. It forces itself upon the mind, and, in speaking of it, I feel like one speaking the minds of all present, simply echoing the feelings and aspirations of my fellow legislators. Let us glance for a few moments at the results of railway construction through unknown and uninhabited country. Let us look at the Great Pacific Railway, and see what that has done for the colonisation of that part of America. No scheme seemed more visionary, no difficulties were ever greater to be overcome by the scientific engineer, and yet we have to-day 3,000 miles of a railway as an accomplished fact, and one that now stands before the world as one of the greatest triumphs of the age, both politically and financially. The interior of that great continent now offers attractions for an immense number of immigrants, and America is fast becoming the greatest nation in the world. And it is railway construction before settlement that has mainly contributed to that result. I have mentioned this Great Pacific Railway as an example, a splendid example of what may be done in this direction, but, in America, there are hundreds of miles of railway constructed on the same land grant system, railways that have been an immense success. Everywhere, in every part of the world, railway extension has encouraged and increased settlement. And now, Sir, what is the present position of the Kimberley District? An almost uninhabited territory of one hundred million acres of land; large portions of which are, near the coast, very suitable for tropical products, but the larger portion open grassy country, the best of which stretches back towards Central Australia, and beyond the reach of the most enterprising and wealthy pioneer,—in fact, Sir, so far away from any port as to be beyond the reach of settlement, without the assistance which railway communication would give. Let honorable members allow their eyes to wander over the chart before them, and trace the route of this railway, and they will see it is for the development of territory that

cannot be tapped except by the means we suggest. The seaboard, except at the terminus, is in no way affected, and the richer lands suitable for tropical products would form no part of that alienated for the construction of this line; and no suggestion emanates from the promoters of this scheme that has not the material welfare of the Colony as its object. For once in our history, our legislators have an opportunity of showing to the world that, if West Australia has lagged behind in the march of progress, it has been from causes over which they had no control; and that, like all true Englishmen, when occasion serves, West Australians can come to the fore and seek to advance their Colony to the proud position she should occupy. The formation of this railway means the formation of whole towns; of jetties at the termini, and of towns in the interior, and of a large town on the border of South Australia,—the whole Colony will in fact advance to almost the dignity of a State. The construction of the line through Central Australia to Port Darwin will certainly sooner or later take place, when the Colony of Western Australia will be in direct railway communication with all her wealthy sisters, and with the civilised world. Land that is of no value now will become a saleable commodity, and the whole Colony become the centre of enterprise and healthy speculation. We shall then require no great scheme of immigration, that will impoverish our slender revenues, to attract to our shores the population we so much desire. They will come to us as they go to America, to a Colony where extensive public works are in progress. Population means revenue. Without population the land in that territory is valueless,—as valueless as unused gold. Population means the utilisation of land, the conversion of land into coin, for the purpose of revenue. Population means a fixed source from whence a nation draws its revenue through taxation. Land without population is worse than useless, and nothing we could do to induce population, nothing would give greater prosperity to the North and to the whole Colony, than the carrying out to fruition of this scheme, and nothing would tend more to cement present relations for a very long time to come. But,

Sir, for the sake of argument, suppose it did not cement those relations,—suppose that its result would be that of advancing the North into a better position to look after herself; is it not the policy of the South to obtain all she can from the North, to recoup for all past expenditure and to pay for the loss incurred by the South by the act of separation? Is it not the policy of the South to do this, while it remains in her power to do it, rather than to hesitate and delay, and to let the chance go by? The North once gone, is gone for ever. Therefore I say immediate action is imperative. It will inspire confidence, by showing that the South can be trusted to advance the interests of the North, and by drawing the attention of the outside world to her resources and to their development. It will be to the interest of capitalists constructing this railway to induce immigration to provide settlement on the land and to give a value to what they have for sale. Personal interest is the most active agent that can be employed, and this personal interest the capitalists must have, to recoup themselves for money expended. A line of railway, unless it induced settlement, would be useless to them as an investment. Sir, I do not know what arguments could be used in opposition to this resolution. The importance of the scheme recommends itself to every intelligent mind, and I feel every confidence that this honorable House will accord its unanimous support to it. That being done I shall be in a position to move a resolution that shows we mean business, a resolution embracing more definite proposals; but, until the resolution I am now about to move is affirmed, I shall not be in a position to submit that which deals more directly with the financial and practical part of the question. The resolution I now ask this Committee to adopt is: "That this Council having carefully considered His Excellency the Governor's Message, together with the letter of Messrs. McKenzie Grant and H. W. Venn, forwarded therewith, is of opinion, That a line of railway such as that proposed, running from, say, Roebuck on the West coast to the Negri River on the South Australian border, and thence to Cambridge Gulf on the N. E. coast, a total distance

"of about 600 miles, constructed (worked and maintained for a reasonable period) upon the land grant system, the land to be taken in alternate blocks along the line—would largely promote the development of the Kimberley District and the Colony generally."

MR. STEERE said the question to which the hon. member for Wellington had so eloquently addressed himself was one of very great importance, all must admit,—so important, indeed, that he (Mr. Steere) addressed himself to it with some degree of diffidence. At the same time, he felt bound to state his reasons for not being able to agree with the resolution which the Committee was asked to affirm. The resolution, in the abstract, was certainly one which it would be difficult for the House to disagree with, but they must take this into consideration—the hon. member told them that it was to be followed by another resolution, which meant business; and he (Mr. Steere) thought that those who voted for the present resolution would find it rather difficult, hereafter, not to follow it up by voting for this other resolution, which they were told meant business. The hon. member said the Council had already given its assent to the principle of railway construction on the land grant system. That was true. The House had affirmed the principle of constructing railways on the land grant system; but it had done so under very different circumstances to those which they were brought face to face with in connection with this Kimberley District land grant railway. The House had affirmed the principle as regards a line connecting the present Eastern Railway with Albany—a line that would go through a country much of which was admirably adapted, both by climate and soil, for agriculture and for the settlement of a large population alongside the railway constructed through it. He would ask the hon. member whether that was not an entirely different state of circumstances from the conditions presented by the Kimberley District. This proposed railway would pass through a country possessing a climate which he believed there could be no doubt was not adapted to Europeans, and which he was convinced himself never could be settled by a European population, owing to its

tropical nature. As to its soil, they knew nothing about it, at present—whether it was fitted for agriculture or not. Therefore he said the circumstances of the country were totally different from the circumstances of the country in respect of which the House had affirmed the principle of railway construction on the land grant system—the country between York and Albany, and, he should say, different from the circumstances of any country in the world where the same principle had been acted upon. The hon. member had referred to the Great Pacific Railway in support of his scheme, but that railway passed through some of the most fertile regions of America, and through country fitted to become the home of a large European population. In the letter which the hon. member had read, and which had been addressed to the Governor, it was stated as one of the arguments in support of this project that the proposed railway would lead to a wholesale settlement of the district which it traversed; but, for his own part, he did not believe it would do anything of the kind. He thought it would lead to hardly any agricultural settlement. It was also stated in this letter that the railway, if constructed, would leave but a small space to bridge over to place this Colony in railway communication with the whole of the other Australian Colonies, and within speedy access to the whole civilised world. But it appeared to him we should still be a very long way indeed, even from our next door neighbors, South Australia, if this line were constructed, so far as the settled portions of this Colony are concerned. This railway would traverse a distance of about six hundred miles, through the only part of the district of which we knew anything whatever at present, namely, very nearly along the track of Mr. Alexander Forrest's exploring expedition; therefore we should have to give for the construction of the line almost all the good land that is at present known to exist in the district. The only good land that we know of is that situated a few miles on either side of the proposed route of this railway, which Mr. Forrest estimated at 25,000,000 acres. Now the estimated length of the proposed railway was 600 miles, which, at £4,000 per mile, would involve an

expenditure of £2,400,000; and, basing the value of the land which we would have to give away in return for this expenditure, upon the rate at which Mr. Joubert valued the land in connection with his scheme, namely, 2s. 6d. an acre, we should have to part with about 20,000,000 acres. But it was pointed out by the promoters of the present scheme that the value of the land in the Kimberley District in no way approached the value of land in the more central districts of the Colony, and that, owing to the difficulties attendant upon constructing a railway through a new country like Kimberley, with a climate inimical to Europeans, "peopled by hordes of savages," the cost of construction would be so great that very liberal inducements indeed would have to be held out to tempt capitalists to embark in the undertaking. Under these circumstances, the probability was that we should have to alienate the whole of the good land in the district. Although it did not matter much to us, in the event of this railway being constructed and worked by a syndicate whether it was ever likely to pay the company working it, still he thought this ought to form an element in the consideration of the scheme, for, as practical men, we ought not to invite capitalists to undertake a project which it is apparent to our own mind cannot be a profitable one; and if, as he believed it to be, the land which this line would open up was unfitted for agricultural purposes, what on earth was going to bring in a revenue for this line was beyond his comprehension. It was quite certain that the transport of wool would not make the railway a reproductive undertaking, and he was not aware of anything likely to supply the line with traffic. Some people might say, there would be all sorts of tropical produce, sugar, rice, coffee, and what not; but as yet no one knew whether either the climate or the soil was suited for the cultivation of such products,—in fact, we were in complete ignorance of the capabilities of the district. Under these circumstances, he thought it would be a most unwise proceeding on our part to rush into the construction of railways on the land grant or any other principle, until we knew something more about the country than we do at present. He therefore moved, as an amendment,

upon the resolution submitted by the hon. member for Wellington: "That this Council is of opinion that at the present stage of the settlement of the Kimberley District, and taking into consideration the general want of knowledge as to the material resources and the capabilities of that portion of our territory, it would be unwise to pledge this Colony to the adoption of any principle of payment for public works in Kimberley by a system of land grants."

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. A. C. Onslow) had hitherto imagined that the hon. member for the North was the member of all members in that House who always had a good word to say for that portion of our territory, but having heard the eloquent and fervid speech of the hon. member for Wellington, he was now inclined to think that the accredited champion of the Northern District resided in Bunbury. He was quite carried away by the very idyllic language in which the hon. member described the glories of this strange territory. He could hardly have believed, leading the hard, prosaic, matter-of-fact life we Southerners do, that in any part of the Colony there existed the Arcadian attractions which this wonderful Kimberley did,—a country of waving grass and running streams, and yet a country that had been neglected in the shameful way this district had been neglected. The hon. member's description of the country reminded him almost of the time in which he used, a long time ago, in his boyish days, to run away to see the pantomime at Drury Lane or Covent Garden, with its fairies and its fairy land, and, when all was over, with what neglect and disappointment he returned from the enjoyment of these glorious visions to the cold streets of London. And, after listening to the hon. member's eloquent description of the idyllic charms of Kimberley, he almost regretted having to ask him whether he really believed that this district was such a fairy land as his fancy had painted it? He would do the hon. member justice; having described in the most poetical language possible the sylvan beauties of this Northern arcadia, he was candid enough to say that he was prepared presently to come down from

these fairy realms and to ask the members of this House to deal with "a resolution that meant business." He was perfectly sure, if the business part of the hon. member's project was anything in proportion to the poetical part of it, everybody in that House would be ready to join hands with him, and assist him to carry out his scheme into fruition. He wished to speak with all earnestness of this scheme. It seemed to him that the hon. member had at heart the good of the Colony. It seemed to him that he had brought forward a proposition which, as the hon. member for Swan had said, no one, in the abstract, could disagree with, and a proposition that should receive the most earnest attention of that House. The hon. member for the Swan, who was characterised with as much good, sound, common sense as anybody in that Council, acknowledged that the resolution was one which, in the abstract, no one could object to, and certainly there could be no question about that. He did not think anyone would be unwilling to admit that a railway laid down through this Kimberley District would benefit the district, and tend to develop it. The only thing was, how was it going to be laid down; and he regretted, after having listened carefully to all that had fallen from the hon. poet—he really begged the hon. member's pardon,—that, practically, no light whatever had been thrown by him on this part of the question. He had not yet seen or heard the business part of the hon. member's scheme; all he had told them was that the railway was to be constructed on the land grant system. This was an expression which had been used very much of late, but somehow or other nothing practical seemed to come out of it. It was all very well to talk about and to expect all sorts of wonders from railways constructed on this principle, and to say that they had succeeded elsewhere. That might be, or it might not be, and, in any case, the success or otherwise must depend upon the surrounding conditions. As to the Great Pacific Railway, he was inclined to think that that railway was not built on that system—at any rate he had serious doubts about it. He was aware that the line was a great success, and a great success although carried through what was for the most

part he should think entirely uninhabited territory. But there was an extraordinary reason for this—a reason which he had never been able to understand and which he had never heard satisfactorily explained. The success of American railways traversing new territories depended upon the altogether different system of construction which American engineers employed from that of English engineers. Their railways were made, in the first instance, for temporary purposes only, and at a ridiculously low cost compared with the cost of English railways. They were very roughly laid down at first, but if they were found to pay their way after a certain time the lines were relaid on a more substantial system, and he believed he was not wrong in saying that the whole of these tentative or experimental lines were, in the first instance, constructed in America at a cost of not much more than about £1,000 a mile. English engineers would not submit to that system of railway construction: they always insisted—and he did not mean to say they were wrong, or that they had not good reason for insisting—upon building their railways from the very first upon the most substantial and expensive system. They would not consent to the temporary expedients resorted to by our American cousins, and, as this proposed Kimberley railway would of course, if built at all, be built upon the English principle and by an English syndicate, it was unreasonable to suppose that it would cost less than say £4,000 per mile, regard being had to the many drawbacks under which a line in a distant territory like this, uninhabited by any civilised race, must necessarily be constructed. This would involve an expenditure of about two millions and a-half of money, or its equivalent in land, and he must say, notwithstanding the vastness of our national estate, this was a very large amount indeed to expend upon an undertaking which after all could only be regarded as a tentative enterprise. For his own part he failed to see why, if we had such a railway constructed at all, it would not answer every purpose to have it built on the American “rough and ready” system, at a cost of £1,000 or £1,500 a mile. That, however, was a question which he must leave to American and English

engineers to decide between them. He could not help thinking that this House would be delighted to see a railway built in the direction suggested by the hon. member for Wellington, but he did think the House should not pass a resolution of this sort without having before it some more business-like scheme than the hon. member had yet thought it worth while to submit for their consideration.

After a considerable pause,

MR. MARMION said he had been in hopes that some of those who were prepared to support the resolution would have interposed a word in its favor, after the opposition offered to it by the hon. members who had last spoken; but as no one seemed inclined to do battle for the cause so eloquently espoused by the hon. member for Wellington, he was afraid he would have to join in the opposition already offered to it. It was true that the proposition put forward by the hon. member only dealt with an abstract principle, as to whether or not it would be wise to adopt a system of railway construction on the land grant system in this district; but this abstract principle was placed before them in connection with a more practical proposition, embodied in the letter addressed to His Excellency the Governor by the promoters of the scheme, and which was now under the consideration of the Committee. It was chiefly in relation to this, what he might call the business part of the proposition, that he proposed to address himself in the few remarks which he felt called upon to make. They were told in that letter that this Kimberley District at present represented “a very small material value;” but he would ask whether in the eyes of that House, or in the eyes of the colonists generally, that was a fact? Could it really be said that a district containing so many millions of acres of land, which that House in its wisdom, and which the Government and the Secretary of State in the exercise of their discretion, thought proper to value at the rate of 10s. per acre,—could it really be said that a territory like that was of “very small material value?” They were also told that the district at present contributed but a small item to the revenue, in comparison with the enormous amount that would accrue to

the Colony on the success of this project. That, of course, was presuming that the district contained within it those elements which were necessary to the success of the project—that it was suited for the growth of tropical products and other agricultural purposes. But that was an assumption in support of which the hon. member had furnished them with no proof. As to the district being at present the source of no material revenue to the Colony, hon. members were aware that the district had only been opened up within the last two or three years, and that we had already derived about £20,000 in the shape of territorial revenue from it, which could hardly be said to be a very small item, seeing that it represented about one-tenth of the whole revenue of the Colony, derived from all sources. With reference to the proposed route of the railway, they were told that it was to start from the newly discovered port at Roebuck Bay, thence striking direct to the Fitzroy River, following that river up through the territory recently discovered by Mr. Alexander Forrest, through the Nicholson Plains to the South Australian border, and thence traversing the country in the direction of the Ord River to the navigable water at Cambridge Gulf,—a distance in all of something between 500 and 600 miles. But none of this country had yet been even surveyed, and all we knew about any portion of it was simply from the report of the explorers who had passed through the country. They were told that the line was to follow the course of the Fitzroy River; but, should this river prove, as many people believed it to be, navigable during some portion of the year, the railway would not be required. Let them again take the other terminus of the line—Cambridge Gulf and the Ord River. Here also they were met with the same facts. Cambridge Gulf was utterly unknown; it had never been surveyed, no one knew whether it afforded a suitable port for shipping, and they did not know whether the Ord River might not prove to be a navigable stream. If it proved to be so, then the necessity for this railway would in a great measure be removed, at this end as well as in the Fitzroy country. In another part of this letter they were told that “the extent and value of the Kim-

berley District cannot be over-estimated.” He had written “hear, hear” in the margin of his copy of the letter, opposite that. He was entirely in accord with the promoters of the scheme on this point. He believed that the extent and future value of this territory could not be over-estimated, and, believing so, he thought it was altogether premature on our part to deal with it at present, and to barter it away by alienating it, wholesale, in the manner here contemplated. Even allowing that portions of this immense territory may be adapted for the growth of tropical products, he would remind the Committee that they did not yet know whether that portion of it which this railway would traverse was in any way adapted for the growth of such products, and it might turn out that we had alienated a large extent of valuable territory for the purpose of having a railway which would prove to have been constructed in the wrong place altogether, or which, owing to water communication being available, would be comparatively useless. If there was any part of this district well suited for the cultivation of tropical products, his own idea was that it would be found much farther North than the proposed route of this railway. Considerable stress was laid in the letter under review, upon the fact that proposals had already been made to the South Australian Government, for the construction of a railway on the land grant system from Beltana to Port Darwin, and they were told that doubtless this work would be carried out, and that it would enhance the importance of this Kimberley project immensely. It was hardly necessary that he should remind hon. members that the proposals referred to had not met with the favorable consideration of the South Australian Parliament, and, for his own part, he did not think there was the slightest prospect of the line in question being constructed on the land grant system. At any rate, it was a fact that successive Ministries had given it as their opinion, and that opinion had been endorsed by the country, that it would be a wiser plan to have the line built out of loans, in sections, as the Colony could afford it. They were next told that the Kimberley railway having reached the South Australian border, would leave but a small space

to bridge over to place this Colony in railway communication with the whole of the Australian colonies, and within speedy means of access to the whole civilised world. That was all very well, and no doubt sounded very grandly; but would it really be the case? As had been pointed out by the hon. member for the Swan, would it bring this part of the Colony, would it bring the settled portions of Western Australia, into closer communication with the other colonies? Not in the slightest degree. It was true that this Kimberley District was at present very much isolated from the rest of the Colony; but it should be borne in mind that the construction of this railway would still leave it in the same isolated position. It would not connect the district at either end of the line with any large centre of population, and it would still require steamer communication along the coast to connect it with this part of the Colony; and the same, on the other hand, to connect it with the Eastern colonies. It was proposed to construct this railway on the land grant system,—a system which, whatever advantages it otherwise presented, was certainly open to this very serious objection; it resulted in the Colony parting with a vast extent of territory which the concessionnaires were able to throw into the market to compete with the State, and, having obtained this land at a much lower rate than the upset price of the Crown Lands, they were in a position to undersell the State, in addition to being able to make a profit on the work of constructing the line. The promoters of this scheme told them that the value of land in the Kimberley District did not in any way approach the value of land in the Central districts of the Colony. The Government, at any rate, and the Legislature, valued the Kimberley land at the same rate as the land in all other parts of the Colony, the upset price fixed upon it being 10s. an acre, the same as in the Central districts; and, if our expectations with regard to the adaptability of some of this Kimberley land for tropical productions should be realised, it must necessarily still further enhance the value of the land. Under all these circumstances, it did appear to him that any proposition to bind the House to the

construction of railways or any other public works in this district, upon the land grant system, is premature. As to the estimated cost of the proposed railway, they had been told by the hon. member for Wellington that this scheme had been received with a responsive echo by the Press of the Colony. Now as the Press of the Colony must have derived its information from some source, and could hardly be supposed to have jumped at any haphazard conclusion as to the probable cost of the undertaking, he presumed some reliance must be placed on what appeared in the columns of the Press on the subject, and he noticed that one of the papers stated that the cost was estimated at £5,000,000. If we accepted the valuation put upon the land by the modest gentleman who offered to construct the Albany railway (Mr. Joubert), namely, at the rate of eight acres per pound sterling of expenditure, it would be seen that this Kimberley project would cost the Colony no less than 40,000,000 acres, which would practically be giving away the district. He would ask the House, was it desirable, was it expedient, that they should pledge themselves in any way to any resolution which may lead to the adoption of what to his mind could not be characterised by any other term, looking at the present condition of the Colony, than as a wild and visionary scheme. He was sorry to have to characterise it as such, for he was sure that the gentlemen who had taken so much trouble to mature it and bring it before the House and the country were animated solely by a desire to promote the interests of the Colony, and it was with a feeling of regret that he felt himself bound to oppose the scheme in any way. But he was impelled to do so by a sense of public duty.

MR. BROWN was sorry to find that the resolution submitted by the hon. member for Wellington had met with opposition from any part of the House. It appeared to him the hon. member had taken a very proper and business-like course in moving this resolution as the first step towards the attainment of the object in view. He thought it would have been unwise on the hon. member's part had he put forward the details of his scheme before he ascertained whether the House was likely to affirm the abstract principle

that a railway was a necessary adjunct to the development of this district, and that such railway ought to be constructed on the land grant system. The hon. member for the Swan feared that those who supported this resolution might hereafter consider themselves called upon to support the more business-like proposition which the hon. member for Wellington expressed his intention of introducing, in the event of the present resolution being affirmed. He could not see the matter in the same light. He could not see that this address would bind any single member to anything. On the other hand, what would the Committee be doing if it negated this resolution? It would be doing this: it would be saying, in effect, and proclaiming it to the world at large, that we have a hundred million acres of land in a newly discovered portion of our Colony, that we are possessed of a huge territory capable of supporting a nation, which can do without railway communication—that railways would in no way serve to develop the resources of this enormous territory. That was the converse of the proposition before the Committee, and which the hon. member for Fremantle said was premature. So far as he (Mr. Brown) could see, there was nothing premature about it. The construction of a railway could not do otherwise than tend to the development of any country, and this was all the Committee was asked to affirm as regards this Kimberley country. He possessed an advantage probably over every hon. member of the House in having seen this country. Nineteen years ago, in common with another member now holding a seat in the House, he expended money in sending an exploring expedition to examine the district, and a considerable period of time was expended, and many miles of the territory were traversed by that expedition, full reports of whose proceedings appeared in the public newspapers of the day. A little later, in 1865, he himself travelled in the district, in the neighborhood of Roebuck and Legrange Bay; consequently he was in a position to speak from personal observation as to the capabilities of this part of the district; and the conclusion he had arrived at, from all he had seen and all

he had read, was that it was impossible for the Kimberley District to make any progress, commensurate with its immense extent of territory, unless some such facilities as were contemplated by the hon. member for Wellington were afforded it. He ventured to say that, without fear in any way of contradiction. Without means of transit, in the interior, the district could never prosper or its sources be developed. It was to the interior that we must look for country adapted for the extension of pastoral pursuits, inasmuch as the land on the seaboard was unfit for pastoral settlement, or at all events for depasturing sheep. What had been the history of the district, so far as its seaboard territory was concerned, ever since the first attempt was made to settle it? Eighteen years ago, it was blazoned abroad as a marvellously fine country, and capitalists and others were attracted to the district. A very good start was made, and the Government of the day in its wisdom felt it was its duty to extend a helping hand to those early pioneers, and they formed a Government establishment there, with a Resident Magistrate and a police force. These pioneers tried the country with stock, fairly tested its capabilities for pastoral purposes, remaining there for a period of eighteen months or two years, with what result? They had to abandon it. Magnificent soil, undoubtedly—soil which hereafter will be found to yield a wealth of tropical produce; but, so far as their experience went of the land on the seaboard, north of Roebuck Bay, and bordering on Camden Harbor, it was unfit for sheep; and some of them were ruined. Others, with enough means left to enable them to fly the district, fell back upon Nicol Bay, and, he was happy to think, had been rewarded for their perseverance and their pluck. Another company, subsequently, tried Roebuck Bay itself, who had as their manager a thoroughly practical man, possessing as good a knowledge of stock and station management as could be found anywhere. This company remained in the district for three years, and tested its fitness for sheep breeding in every way, but with what result? Their sheep gradually dwindled away and eventually that settlement also was abandoned. The

land being on the seaboard was not capable of being utilised for pastoral purposes, and he ventured to say, as regards any land situated in similar latitudes in any part of the Australian continent, no matter how good its quality, it will be found unfitted for sheep breeding. In Queensland, they all knew such was the case. Now the route proposed for this railway struck right into the interior of the district, and, for 200 or 300 miles of its course, through country hundreds of miles distant from the sea coast, opening up territory which it would be impossible to open up for settlement without a railway or roads; and, for his own part, he preferred the former to the latter, as affording not only a more expeditious means of transit, but he also believed less costly in the end. Some hon. members might say, why build a railway if the country is only fitted for pastoral purposes? They did not know that yet, but, for his own part, he would be inclined to have the railway constructed, even if it only conduced to pastoral settlement, and chiefly for this reason—the district would never become settled unless we have pastoralists as pioneers. It was absolutely necessary that stock-owners should go there first to occupy the land, before others followed in their wake. That had been the history of Australian colonisation everywhere. The hon. member for Swan said, if we were to accede to what he supposed will be the terms of the promoters, we should have to give away the whole of the land of which we know nothing at present; but that was a mistake. The present proposal before the Committee, as embodied in the letter addressed to the Governor, merely contemplated, so far as he understood it, that the land granted to the railway contractors should be granted in alternate blocks, along the route of the railway, so that only a portion of the land would be alienated,—one-half, in fact—the remaining half being still left for the Government to dispose of. And, surely to goodness, that other half would be worth twenty times more, even if put into the market, with a railway running through it, than it ever can be without a railway. One thing was very certain—it was certainly out of the question for this Colony to construct this railway except on the

land grant system; with a population of 30,000 souls, all told, we could never attempt such a gigantic undertaking upon any other system. The hon. member for Fremantle objected to the proposal because Roebuck Bay and the rivers in the interior had not yet been surveyed; but there was no hard and fast line drawn as to the route which the railway should take. The precise route would be a matter for arrangement hereafter between the Government, as representing the people of the Colony, on the one hand, and the promoters of the scheme on the other, and there was ample time yet to fix upon the best route. This could not be done without an examination of the country, and probably a preliminary survey, and a considerable time must necessarily elapse before any agreement would be arrived at as to the route which the railway should take. The same remark applied to the objections raised by the same hon. member with regard to the rivers being navigable. If they should be found to be partly navigable, all the better for the country; but, however far they may be so, that would in no way affect the question as to whether it would be desirable to open up the back lands of the district by means of a railway. He therefore hoped the Committee would agree to this resolution, for, unless they did so, it would be impossible for us to ascertain whether the terms of the promoters are likely to be reasonable or unreasonable. He should certainly not think of supporting any unreasonable proposals, but at the same time it would be interesting to him to know what their terms were going to be.

MR. CAREY also hoped the Committee would adopt the resolution submitted for its affirmation by the hon. member for Wellington. The hon. member for Fremantle talked about the project as a "wild scheme,"—there was no scheme at all, wild or otherwise, before the House as yet; the resolution, as already said, only involved an abstract principle, which everybody would agree to, and the objections which had been urged against the proposal were objections that travelled altogether beyond the scope of the present resolution. The Attorney General expressed a hope that some more business-like proposition would be submitted to the House; let

the Committee adopt the resolution now before them, and they had the word of the hon. member who put it forward that a resolution which meant business would follow it. The hon. member for the Swan urged, as an argument against the proposal, that the country where the railway was intended to be constructed was a tropical country; but what if it was? Surely it would not be the only tropical country where railways were constructed, or which had been settled, and successfully settled.

MR. CROWTHER would vote for the resolution, but on the distinct understanding that he did not consider himself in any way pledged in regard to any other proposals that might follow. Those proposals may be reasonable or they may be unreasonable, and he should support them or oppose them just as they appeared to him to be reasonable or unreasonable. As to giving away land, why, we have had it now for fifty years and made little or no use of it, and unless we utilised it in this way he did not suppose we should make much use of it for the next fifty years. It appeared to him that some hon. members had gone a good deal out of their way to build up arguments against the proposition before the Committee simply for the purpose of knocking them down again. He could only regret, for his own part, that the business part of the project had not been put forward in conjunction with the present resolution, so that the Committee might have had an opportunity of discussing it on its merits. He thought it would be a great pity if the House were simply to affirm a mere abstract proposition like this, for it would only unsettle people's minds as to taking up land in the district, unless some definite scheme were accepted or rejected. In order to have such a scheme brought forward, but without in any way pledging himself to support it, until he saw what it was like, he would give his vote in favor of the resolution now before the Committee.

MR. BURT said they were simply asked to say that evening whether or not it was desirable to open up the Kimberley District by means of a railway, and he for one, did not feel justified in saying No to the question, for in doing so he should be stating that in his opinion

it was inadvisable so to open up the district, which would be absurd. His opinion was this: it was desirable to open up every district in the Colony. What seemed to oppress the hon. member for the Swan was, that no scheme, no reasonable scheme, no practical scheme, could be devised at the present moment which would have this effect as regards the Kimberley District, and therefore the hon. member thought it would be only misleading people outside the Colony to seriously consider a project which in his opinion there was no chance of carrying out to a successful issue. No doubt there might be something in that view of the question; and it struck him that the terms which he would be inclined to accept, in connection with the construction of this railway would differ very materially from the terms sketched out in the letter addressed by Messrs. Grant and Venn to the Governor. Reference was made in that letter to the proposal made by Mr. Joubert for the construction of the line from York to Albany, by which payment was estimated at the rate of eight acres of land for every pound sterling of expenditure; but that was certainly a proposal which he, for one, could not agree to. He would not estimate the quantity of land to be conceded on the basis of the amount expended in constructing the line—which would simply be offering a premium for extravagance; he would have the payment based upon the length of line constructed—so many acres for so many miles. He was aware they were not now called upon to discuss the terms upon which land should be granted in consideration of the construction of the proposed railway, and he had simply referred to it in order to show that he did not agree to this resolution on the same terms as the hon. member who put it forward did; but, as an abstract proposition, he saw no possible objection to it, and he felt bound to vote with those who maintained that the construction of a railway through the Kimberley District would tend to benefit that district.

MR. MARMION pointed out the injurious effect which the mere fact of a project like this being seriously mooted, and kept hanging over the heads of the people for years must have upon the settlement of the district, and the dis-

couraging effect it would be bound to produce as regards the lessees of land undertaking any improvements, when they did not know what moment their land might be taken from them. Had hon. members considered this view of the question? Was it likely that pioneers would embark their capital and their stock in the settlement of a district, when, before they reaped any profit from their venture, their runs might be taken away from them, wholesale? What would be the result? Simply ruination, in a great many cases. While this ponderous scheme is dragging its slow length along, we could not expect to see any further settlement of the district.

MR. VENN: Bosh!

MR. MARMION was very sorry to hear the hon. gentleman say "Bosh." He might not have the hon. gentleman's poetical flow of language and vivid imagination, but he hoped he was gifted with common sense. Reference had been made to the proposed Queensland trans-continental line, but there was no analogy at all between that line and this project. The Queensland line, if constructed at all, would start from the present terminus of the railway system of that Colony, and finish at the terminus of the New South Wales railway system.

MR. VENN: Nothing of the kind.

MR. MARMION said he was open to correction. At all events there was no analogy whatever between the Queensland project and the scheme now under discussion.

MR. VENN said, as to pledging hon. members to support what had been called the business part of the scheme, he had no intention whatever of asking any hon. member to pledge himself in any way, until he was in possession of the details of the scheme. If the present resolution were passed, it would simply show the outside world that in our opinion a railway running through the Kimberley District would be a very fine thing for that district, and, if we affirmed that proposition, it would open the way to what he might call business. It would lead to capitalists turning their attention to the Colony, and possibly to some terms being offered which it would be wise and prudent on our part to accept. The objection started as to interfering with the rights of existing

lessees would have tenfold more weight a few years hence, and, if such an argument as that was to form a serious element in the consideration of this question, the district would never have a railway. So far as the cost of constructing the line went, he had kept entirely aloof from that part of the scheme, and advisedly so. That would have to be considered hereafter, and he would be fully prepared to deal with it. What the House was now asked to do was simply to affirm a principle, and, in passing this resolution, hon. members would not be committing themselves to anything beyond an expression of opinion that the construction of a railway through the Kimberley District on the land grant system was a desirable project. As to the financial phase of the question, whatever propositions he might have to put before the House, hon. members might rest satisfied they would be propositions which had received the approval of capitalists, but of course he was not prepared to say whether they would also meet with the approval of the hon. members of that House. If, however, this resolution should be adopted, it would enable him hereafter to submit these proposals for the consideration of the House, and would probably induce others to make overtures to the Government on the subject. Until the House affirmed the principle, it was not likely any capitalists would go to the trouble of entering into the question at all. As to the poetical portion of the scheme, all he could say was, the project had been under the consideration of practical people, who knew what they were about, and were no visionaries. All the promoters of the scheme had in view was the progress and advancement of a district capable of advancement, if given the facilities which a railway would afford, but a district which, without a railway, must, for the next fifty years, as regards a great portion of it, remain a *terra incognita*. This was the view he took of the subject, and he believed it was the view of others well capable of forming an opinion with reference to it.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Lord Gifford) thought it would have been much more satisfactory if the hon. member had given the Committee some idea as to the nature of the business part of his

scheme. [Mr. VENN: Impossible.] They were told in the letter which was now before the Committee that Mr. Grant had placed himself in communication with some of the leading capitalists of the neighboring colonies, and that he had received such assurances from them as to enable the promoters of the scheme to say with confidence that, provided sufficient and reasonable terms were offered, there would be no great difficulty in securing the support of capitalists, to carry out the work. And they were informed by the hon. member himself that there was something behind this resolution which would lead to business. He thought, before the Committee agreed to any resolution committing the House even to the abstract principle of the desirability of railway construction in the district referred to, hon. members ought to have some idea as to the basis upon which these negotiations had been conducted; unless they had something tangible to go upon, it appeared to him that the result of this discussion would be to unhinge people's minds, and to deter them from speculating in land in the district so long as there was a prospect of its being resumed by other people. No doubt railways tended to open up settlement, but an indefinite scheme like this would, in his opinion, tend rather to retard settlement than to stimulate it.

MR. S. H. PARKER said it appeared to him that the initiation of this project, so far from having a prejudicial effect upon the settlement of the district, would tend to enhance the value of existing leases, and it was not likely that the present occupiers, in any case, would be deprived of the whole of their lands, nor would they have to part with any of it for some years to come. A big thing like this was not going to be carried out in a day, especially in a Colony like this, that had no power to do what it liked with its land. Before anything definite could be done in this matter, before, in fact, the project could be seriously considered, the consent of the Secretary of State would have to be obtained, even before we could think of entering into any negotiations with capitalists on the subject. Those negotiations, once initiated, would not be concluded in a day, nor in a month. Then surveys would

have to be made, a route mutually agreed upon, plant and labour introduced—all of which would take time; and the probability was that the present lessees would be allowed to remain in undisturbed possession of their land until their leases expired, before the line would be completed. He certainly failed to see how they would be damaged by the prospect of a railway being constructed in the district; and should it happen that portions of their leases would hereafter be taken from them for the purposes of this railway, it could not be denied that the value of remaining portions would be enhanced tenfold. As to whether patriotism or selfish motives was at the bottom of this or any other public undertaking, it appeared to him that was a question with which we had nothing whatever to do, so long as the terms offered were such as were likely to prove advantageous to the Colony. He believed the land already taken up in the district was, in the majority of cases, simply taken up for speculative purposes, and he would have taken some up himself, for the very same purpose, had he seen his way clear to make anything out of it. He intended to vote for the resolution, as it simply affirmed a self-evident proposition, and he failed to see how anyone could logically vote against it. He would also vote for it, in order to enable the hon. member who had brought it forward an opportunity of submitting his business resolution. It appeared to him that to vote against it would be simply tantamount to moving the Previous Question, a parliamentary expedient occasionally resorted to in order to stifle discussion.

MR. GRANT said he had listened very carefully to the debate thus far, and he certainly had listened to some very extraordinary arguments. It would appear from what had fallen from the noble lord opposite that a railway would be of no utility at all in opening up new country, and that to talk about building a railway in any particular district was calculated to retard the settlement of that district. That certainly was a very novel proposition. The hon. member for Fremantle appeared to be pretty much of the same opinion as the noble lord, and he must say a very strange sort of opinion it appeared to be. As to ex-

isting leaseholders, he believed he was more interested in this district as a leaseholder than any other man in the Colony; directly and indirectly he held more land there than any other leaseholder, and this project, if carried out, he considered would be a great source of profit to him. He frankly acknowledged all that, and he also maintained that it would be a corresponding source of profit to all the rest of the leaseholders. Something had been said about patriotic motives and about selfish motives in connection with this scheme: patriotic motives were very good motives no doubt, but they were not always based upon sound commercial principles, and those were the principles which ought to guide them in dealing with a question of this kind. It had been well pointed out by the hon. member for Geraldton that the only land in this district suited for pastoral purposes was that in the interior, but this land could never be utilised to its fullest extent without the means of communication by rail with some port of shipment. And one thing was very certain—we should never be in a position to furnish the district with this means of communication except by some such plan as was here proposed. Unless we sought the assistance of outside capital to enable us to open up this vast territory, it could not be utilised for years to come, with any advantage, for what profit is land situated 300 or 400 miles from the sea coast, and without internal means of communication, to anybody? It could neither be of use to the Colony, nor of profit to individual leaseholders. There was another thing which this Colony ought to bear in mind in connection with this district: as hon. members are aware, a large area of the country had been taken up by enterprising parties from New South Wales and other colonies, and we may depend upon it unless we take time by the forelock and obtain this railway these people will be in the field before us, and steps will be taken by them to have the country opened up in a direction, and upon terms, which will not be so advantageous to this Colony or to its leaseholders.

MR. RANDELL said that after the long time which had been occupied in discussing the question under consider-

ation he did not like to allow it to go to a division and give a silent vote upon it. He took it that the object of the resolution was simply to affirm that this Kimberley territory would be more likely to become settled, and that its resources would be more likely to become developed, if a railway were constructed entirely through the country, than it is ever likely to be without this adjunct of civilisation. That appeared to him, as an abstract question, unanswerable. He admitted that at the first blush he was opposed to this project, but after mature consideration, he thought better of it, and, although his opinion had not been influenced much in its favor by what he had heard in the course of that evening's debate, still he should be sorry to stand in the way of anything calculated to develop the resources of either the North or the South. He should like to have heard, and expected to have heard, more information furnished with reference to the capabilities of this Kimberley District, and of the ultimate probable results of this project, if carried into fruition, as regards that part of our territory. In the absence of this information he felt some difficulty in coming to a conclusion, whether he should vote for this resolution or not. He could not lose sight of the fact that, although to a certain extent we were entrusted by the Imperial Government with the custody of the Crown Lands, still it must be acknowledged that the ultimate disposal of them rests not with ourselves but with the Secretary of State. But although we have not the absolute disposal of them, we are the local agents, and, as such, the Imperial Government will naturally expect that we shall very carefully consider any proposal having for its object the alienation of these lands. Seeing, however, that any decision arrived at by the House would be subject to the approval of His Excellency the Governor, and to the review of the Secretary of State, possibly no harm could accrue from the passing of this resolution. He should therefore vote for it, but he distinctly guarded himself against accepting any proposal of a more definite kind which may follow, and he should refuse to give any countenance to the scheme if this Colony is to be called upon to expend a sixpence in maturing

the scheme, either in the way of surveys or otherwise. Nor would he vote for any proposition that would entail an additional charge upon the revenues of this part of the Colony for some twenty or twenty-five years to come; for this railway, if built at all, should, in his opinion, remain a charge upon the Northern territory, in whose interests alone it was advocated.

SIR L. S. LEAKE said he had come to the House that evening with the full determination to listen carefully to all the arguments that could be put forward in support of this project, and, having done so, he had no hesitation in recording his vote against the resolution. It could not be seriously supposed by any hon. member in that House that anyone would be foolish enough to imagine for a moment that the construction of railways would not add to the progress and development of any country, if the country possessed the elements of progress within it; but he must say, and he said it in all seriousness, but without any intention to offend anyone's feelings, that, at this stage in the history of the Kimberley District, he looked upon this project as a very wild-goose scheme. Here was an immense territory, representing he believed no less than about 100,000,000 acres of land, settled at the present moment by, he understood, twelve Europeans, and it was proposed to involve the Colony in an expenditure of many millions, if not of money of what to us was equivalent to money—land, in order to build a railway through this enormous territory, of which hardly anything was known as to its capabilities, and whose population, apart from the savage inhabitants of the soil, could be numbered on the fingers of your two hands. As a general rule he was opposed to this land grant system; it appeared to him to be tantamount to saying that our land was worthless. It led people to fancy that if we got a railway or any other public work simply by alienating so much of the lands of the Colony in consideration for it, we were getting it for nothing, forgetting that in parting with our land we were parting with our national estate. Here was a proposition which, if carried out, contemplated the alienation of at least one-fourth of an enormous extent of territory,

of the capabilities of which we were, as yet, in almost entire ignorance, and of the value of which we therefore could form no reliable idea. Beyond the fact that it had been traversed by Mr. A. Forrest, little or nothing was known of it, except that it promised to afford some encouragement to pastoral settlement. We know nothing of its soil, nothing of its mineral resources, nothing of its rivers, and yet we were seriously asked to give up about one-fourth of the whole territory, in return for a railway that may or may not prove of any great utility to the district. Surely it would be wise on our part to wait until we have some further information with reference to this district, until we acquire some practical experience of its capabilities, and of its adaptability for railway enterprise. As he had already said, he had come there that evening fully prepared to listen to any arguments that might be put forward in support of the scheme, but he must confess that he had not heard a single argument that would induce him to do otherwise than vote for the amendment. He did so, to a certain extent, in the interests of those whom he had the pleasure to represent in that House. It had been pointed out to him, and it had been referred to in the course of the debate, that the result of bringing forward a scheme of this sort, with no immediate prospect of its being carried into execution, would simply be to unsettle the minds of intending settlers and deter them from taking up land in the district, while, as regards those already settled there, it would have a tendency to check improvements and enterprise, the result of which must necessarily be that the public revenue would suffer. He was not a speculator himself, he had not one iota of personal interest in the district, except that interest which he felt in everything connected with Western Australia; and, viewing the matter from an altogether unprejudiced point of view, the conclusion he had arrived at was that the proposal now before the Committee was altogether premature. He did not think it was called for; he did not think it was required, at the present time. There was another consideration which weighed with him in this matter: not only was the scheme, in his opinion

premature, it also led to a great waste of time in discussing it, for, after all, this was a matter which did not rest with us to decide: it was a question which must necessarily be left to the Secretary of State's decision, and, we may depend upon it, the Secretary of State will never allow us to alienate this land. The whole of this country at the North would, before long, he was perfectly sure, be taken out of our hands altogether—and, really, so far as he was concerned, he thought the sooner the better—and it was a most unlikely thing indeed that the Secretary of State would allow us to barter it away at the present time, as now proposed. For these reasons he felt bound to vote against the original resolution and to support the amendment.

MR. BURGESS believed the scheme would tend materially to the progress of the Kimberley District, and be as good as five or ten years start for it. He would vote for the resolution with all his heart.

MR. GLYDE said he had intended, at first, to vote for the proposal put forward by the hon. member for Bunbury, but, upon more mature consideration he was of opinion that the scheme was premature,—that it was too early altogether for us to think of embarking upon such an undertaking. It was only the other evening he had voted against the proposed survey of a line of railway between Geraldton and the Irwin, on the ground that he thought it was really not wanted: how much more, then, should he be opposed to the construction of a railway through a part of our territory of which, in reality, we knew nothing whatever.

MR. STEERE said he had observed that some hon. members seemed inclined to support the resolution—and it was an argument put forward by the hon. member who had moved it—because it did not bind them to anything. He thought that was a very loose system of doing business. Such a resolution could not lead to any practical legislation, and, it appeared to him, that it was only throwing time away to discuss it. Another argument which seemed to weigh with some hon. members was the fact that this railway was something in the remote distance,—that it would involve no present expenditure of public money. But

he would remind the Committee that if the scheme received the sanction of the Legislature, there would soon be a preliminary survey and an examination of the country. It might be said, all this would be done at the expense of the syndicate who undertook to construct the line; but he would point out that it would also be necessary to send up somebody to represent the Colony, for it was not likely that House was ever going to be guided solely by the reports of interested parties.

The Committee then divided, with the following result as to Mr. VENN's resolution—

Ayes	8
Noes	8

AYES.

Mr. Brown
Mr. Burt
Mr. Carey
Mr. Crowther
Mr. Grant
Mr. S. H. Parker
Mr. Randell
Mr. Venn (Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Glyde
Mr. Hamersley
Mr. Higham
Sir L. S. Leake
Mr. Marmion
Mr. S. S. Parker
Mr. Shenton
Mr. Steere (Teller.)

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES: The course for me is, clearly, to vote with the Ayes, in order that the House may have a further opportunity of considering the question.

Resolution reported.

MR. CROWTHER moved that the report of the Committee be adopted.

Question—put.

Council divided.

Ayes	8
Noes	6

Majority for	...	2
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AYES.

Mr. Brown
Mr. Burt
Mr. Carey
Mr. Crowther
Mr. Grant
Mr. S. H. Parker
Mr. Randell
Mr. Venn (Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Glyde
Mr. Higham
Mr. Marmion
Mr. S. S. Parker
Mr. Shenton
Mr. Steere (Teller.)

MR. VENN moved, That the House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the whole Council to consider a Resolution.

Question—put and passed.

Question—That the Speaker do now leave the Chair—put and passed.

THE SPEAKER left the Chair.

IN COMMITTEE.

MR. VENN moved, "That this Council having affirmed the desirability of

"constructing a Railway in the Kimberley District upon the Land Grant System, coupled with a condition of working and maintenance for a stated time—which the Council suggests shall be 5 years—respectfully recommends for the approval of His Excellency the Governor, that consideration be made at the rate of ten acres of land for each pound sterling of expenditure upon the construction and equipment of the line, including stations, sidings, wharfages, and appurtenances connected therewith, provided that the land allotted as consideration be in alternate blocks along the line of Railway of not less than 50,000 acres, and that such allotment shall be made from time to time, upon amounts of not less than £50,000 expended to the satisfaction of the Government upon the undertaking."

MR. S. H. PARKER moved, That Progress be reported, and leave asked to sit again on Friday, 15th September.

Question—put and passed.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair.

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES reported Progress, and asked leave to sit again on Friday, 15th September.

Ordered.

STAMP DUTIES BILL.

This Bill was recommitted in order to make a verbal amendment. [*Vide* "Votes and Proceedings," p. 154.]

INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

This Bill was passed through Committee without discussion or amendment.

The House adjourned at half-past eleven o'clock, p.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Thursday, 14th September, 1892.

Increased Grant of Land to Mr. Alexander Forrest—Messages: No. 11 (*Re* Papers relating to Native Question); No. 12 (*Returning Imported Labor Registry Bill for amendment*); No. 13 (*Re* Charges brought against Officers of Railway Department at Fremantle)—Industrial Schools Act Amendment Bill: third reading—Estimates: further consideration of in committee—Reply to Message No. 9 (*Concessions to Jarrahdale Timber Co.*)—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at noon.

PRAYERS.

INCREASED GRANT OF LAND TO MR. ALEXANDER FORREST.

MR. VENN, in accordance with notice, moved the following resolution: "This Council having been informed by the Honorable the Colonial Secretary that Her Majesty's Secretary of State has been pleased to authorise a grant of 2,000 acres of land in the Kimberley District to Mr. Alexander Forrest, would be gratified if His Excellency the Governor would recommend that such grant be increased to 10,000 acres." The hon. member said that when he heard from the noble lord the other day that the quantity of land which the Secretary of State had granted to Mr. Forrest was only 2,000 acres, he could not help thinking it was a very meagre acknowledgement of that gentleman's services—so much as to be almost unworthy of Mr. Forrest's acceptance; and, as it was he who had moved in this matter before, when the question of recognising Mr. Forrest's services was brought under the attention of the House, he thought it was his duty again to submit this resolution, which he hoped the House would affirm. It might be said, that the House having decided on a former occasion to leave the matter in the hands of the Secretary of State, this resolution would not come with very good grace from them now: but he thought the proper source whence should emanate any recommendation on this subject was the Legislature of the Colony, and he hoped hon. members would agree with him that Mr. Forrest was fairly entitled to greater consideration than a paltry 2,000 acres. What was given to his illustrious brother?