

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 28th November, 1899.

Registration of Firms Bill, first reading—Question.
Teachers' Salaries, Public Schools—Metropolitan
Waterworks Act Amendment Bill, first reading—
Mines Regulation Amendment Bill, third reading—
Land Act Amendment Bill (Mining), in Committee,
new clause, etc.; reported—Loan Bill, second read-
ing, debate concluded, Division—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

REGISTRATION OF FIRMS BILL.

Introduced by the ATTORNEY GENERAL (without notice), and read a first time.

QUESTION—TEACHERS' SALARIES IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

MR. ROBSON asked the Premier: 1, How many head teachers received £280 for females and £400 for males, the maximum salary laid down in the Regulations. 2, How many assistant teachers received the maximum salary of £200, and how many received within £50 of this amount. 3, How many head teachers there were in the colony, and how many received within half of the maximum of £400. 4, What was the reason for the apparent disproportion between the regulation salaries and those actually paid.

THE PREMIER replied:—1, None; 2, (a) One; (b) eleven assistants receive £150 and over; 3, (a) There are 196 teachers in charge of schools, of whom 58 have one or more assistants; (b) 33 of these teachers in charge of schools are in receipt of £200 and over; 4, The salaries actually paid are in accordance with regulations, but seeing that the new scale was only introduced this year, and the salaries which had previously been paid were taken as the basis for the new scale, and the increments were to be £10 annually, it is obvious that the maximum could not as yet be reached.

METROPOLITAN WATERWORKS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Introduced by the PREMIER, and read a first time.

MINES REGULATION AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

LAND ACT AMENDMENT BILL (MINING). IN COMMITTEE.

Consideration resumed from 22nd November, at new clause moved by the Premier: "Leases and other holdings granted within timber leases to be subject to rights of timber lessees; amendment of Section 124 of the principal Act."

THE PREMIER: The new clause which he had moved on the last occasion covered the whole ground, as far as appeared to be reasonably necessary. Every timber lease already in existence would be subject to the provisions of any Acts relating to mining for gold or other minerals, so far as those Acts created rights which might be exercised over Crown lands; and the clause provided that every lease granted or claim acquired under any such Acts, and comprised within the area of a timber lease, should be subject to the right of the proprietor of the timber lease to cut and carry away timber, and (with the approval of the Minister of Mines) to make roads, tramways, and so on. The intention of the clause was that a person taking up land for mining within a timber lease should not have a right to molest the timber lessee; also that the holder of a mining lease within that area should have the right to take timber, but only on prepayment to the lessee of the fair value, and this should not confer the right of stripping bark on the land. The arrangement was a fair one, because if the gold-mining lessee or claimholder could only take timber with the permission of the timber lessee, the latter might refuse his consent, and thus paralyse gold-mining in the district. As to the provision that the gold-mining lessee or claimholder should not have the right to strip bark, it was known a great quantity of timber was spoilt by the practice of stripping, which should certainly not be allowed on land leased for timber purposes. Then, circumstances might arise under which the timber lessee required to cross a gold-mining lease with a tramway, railway, or road; and to meet such a case, the clause provided that the timber lessee should do so only with the permission of the Minister of Mines. It would not be right to put the gold-mining lessee absolutely under the foot of the timber lessee; and where there was a diversity of interests, the right of cross-

ing a lease or claim must be exercised in such a way as to meet with the approval of the Minister. This was a compromise which might well be accepted, because the object in view was not to place either the timber lessee or the gold-mining lessee in a disadvantageous position in regard to the other, but to put both on the same footing, in order that they might be likely to agree and to work amicably together.

MR. WILSON: The clause as amended pretty well fitted both the mining leaseholder and the timber lessee, but he did not see why the latter should not, without the sanction of the Minister, have the right of crossing over a mining lease. It would be a great injustice to the timber lessee to be blocked from constructing railways or other means of transit across a mining lease, so as to get timber from an area of country at the other side. The timber lessee, in nine cases out of ten, would probably have no choice but to follow the contour of the country, unable to deviate a chain one way or the other; and if the mining lessee sank his shaft or erected buildings just on the spot required for a railway, the timber lessee might be prevented utilising 20,000 or 30,000 acres of timber land. It would be better if the Premier adopted the suggestion set forth in the amendment of which he (Mr. Wilson) had given notice, giving the timber lessee the right to construct and maintain railways, tramways, or roads on any portion of the land, but not so as to damage or interfere with any workings, buildings, or other erections by the mining lessee.

THE PREMIER: It would give more satisfaction to have some authority to settle disputes.

MR. WILSON: The Minister could not run all over the country-side arranging matters of this kind.

THE PREMIER: It was improbable disputes would occur.

MR. WILSON: But probably the timber lessee might for years have paid for the land in dispute, and it was not fair to prevent his constructing means of transit for timber.

THE PREMIER: If the land were taken away from the timber lessee, the rent would be returned.

MR. GEORGE: As a rule, searching for gold was carried on in or about gullies,

where the best of jarrah was generally found. It was the practice on timber stations not to run railways according to the rules of the Government department, but according to experience, which taught where the most timber could be got at the least cost; and most of the timber station railways were run on sidling ground, the track being made on the face of the gully and the excavated earth used for making a bank. It should be remembered there were other industries besides that of gold-mining; and to sink shafts, probably in the very gullies and over the course a railway might have to follow, would not only be a hindrance to the timber getter, and a probable means of curtailing employment, but a source of danger, because to carry heavy traffic over made ground, unless there was a thoroughly solid foundation, was a very risky proceeding, especially in sidling country, such as most timber country was. Those connected with timber stations had not had too rosy a time in the last twelve months, and were not likely to experience any improvement yet awhile. One large company had already ceased operations, and others might have to do so, and he appealed to the Minister not to throw obstacles in the way of a struggling industry.

MR. A. FORREST: A few gold mines would not hurt the property.

MR. GEORGE: Quite so; always provided the mines did not interfere with railway construction. In his experience at Jarradale, he had known a railway to have to be deviated at a cost of £1,500 or £2,000 because a small piece of ground, half the size of the floor of this House, was the private property of a person who would not give it up.

THE PREMIER: But the new clause gave power to construct railways with the approval of the Minister.

MR. GEORGE: The approval of the Minister did not, he submitted with all respect, convey any sense of security to the bulk of the people of the colony. At the present prices obtained for timber, it was a toss-up with a number of timber companies whether they stopped business or not; and if they did stop, it meant incalculable loss and misery to the men now working on the stations.

THE PREMIER: The Government had given a great deal of attention to

this matter, and had gone as far as they could in order to do what was right between the two interests. The interests of both parties were, however, somewhat the same, and he did not suppose difference of opinion would arise as to crossing mining leases; but if there did, the Minister would be called on to decide. He would remind the member for the Murray (Mr. George) that the land at Jarrahdale to which he had referred was freehold, and did not come within the jurisdiction of any Minister.

MR. GEORGE: The difficulties would be the same, whether lands were leasehold or freehold.

THE PREMIER: But under the proposed clause there would be an authority to decide disputes, and the Minister might be depended on to act equitably between the parties. The member for the Canning (Mr. Wilson) might reasonably accept the new clause, because to try to meet the difficulty in any other way would only encourage disagreement.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: This Bill would make a great concession to timber lessees, as compared with the Act of 1895. Before the passing of the Mining Act of last year the miner had a right to go on a timber lease and take up a mining lease as if it were Crown land, also to use the timber for his own benefit. But at that period no gold-mine had been discovered on any land let under a license for saw-milling purposes; but that state of things having now changed, this Bill provided for mining on timber leases under conditions which had lately arisen, and the provisions were of such a nature that no difficulty was likely to arise under this clause.

New clause put and passed.

MR. WILSON moved, as an amendment to the clause, that the following be added as a sub-clause:

(2.) No such claim shall be acquired and no such lease shall be granted of any land, within 50ft of the surface, which is occupied as a saw-milling station site, not exceeding an area of acres, or upon which a railway or tramway or any other improvements or buildings have been constructed by the lessee of the timber lease, or within one chain of any such railway, tramway, or other improvement, or within five chains of any building.

By leaving blank the number of acres reserved for the site of a timber mill, the figures could be filled in afterwards.

Amendment put and passed, and the sub-clause added.

MR. WILSON, in order to fill in the blank, moved that the area of a saw-milling station be 640 acres. An area of 40 acres, as suggested by the Premier, would be of no use for this purpose, because a timber station extended very often a mile, and to make it less than a mile would be inconvenient. The Canning mill station, for instance, occupied an area of at least a mile in length, the width varying from 30 to 40 chains. A square mile would be a fair area to reserve for this purpose, whereas to make it less might result in mining operations being carried on in such a way as to interfere with the working of the mill.

THE PREMIER: Say half-a-mile square.

MR. WILSON said he would agree to 320 acres.

THE PREMIER: 160 acres would be ample. A mill might be on auriferous country.

MR. WILSON: It could not be desired that the working of a timber license should be shut down without compensation.

MR. MORAN: We must not sacrifice the timber industry for something that might take place, and the timber industry should in this matter have the prior consideration, because the gold-mining industry had a vast extent of country in which to operate without restriction, away from timber leases.

THE PREMIER: We had to legislate for what might happen as well as for what had happened. We knew that timber stations usually did not occupy an immense area, and the length was generally much greater than the width. There should be some limitation as to the shape of the block, because to leave it open might cause a timber lessee to measure the land in a narrow strip, say a chain wide and perhaps ten miles long, and that would be undesirable in auriferous country. A lessee might monopolise places to the exclusion of mining, even if the timber lessee did not want to use the ground himself. He (the Premier) was willing to agree to 160 acres, in the proportion of, say, 60 to 30, or anything reasonable. This sub-clause referred only to a saw-mill site, and not to the whole area of working.

MR. VOSPER: Give the timber lessee the area proposed in the amendment,

subject to the area being brought under the provisions of the Mining on Private Property Act. That would meet the case for both parties.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The Mining on Private Property Act would have to be altered, in order to meet that.

MR. VOSPER: That could easily be done.

MR. A. FORREST: If the Government would agree to make the area not more than 200 acres, the shape to be the same as under the present land laws, the length to be three times the breadth, that would suit the case. There were many loop-lines about a timber station, and a sufficient area should be allowed for working the mill properly. Most of the present timber mills were built on freehold land.

HON. H. W. VENN: The Committee could not be too careful in dealing with this question, seeing the development of gold-mining in the Donnybrook district right on timber leases. Serious difficulties had occurred at Kalgoorlie, and one such difficulty was causing trouble now through want of foresight in legislating as to the right of two parties claiming to use the same land. The Donnybrook goldfield was proclaimed on land that had been leased for saw-milling purposes, and the difficulty to be provided against in this clause had actually arisen.

THE PREMIER: Were not the Donnybrook mining claims on a timber lease now?

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Those mining leases were applied for within the area of a timber lease.

THE PREMIER: Then a timber lessee might block the Donnybrook miners by marking out a mill site of 640 acres on the auriferous area.

MR. WILSON: That was not the reading of the amendment.

THE PREMIER: "Which is occupied" meant land that might be occupied in the future as well as now. It might be so occupied or claimed to-morrow. The new clause had been well drafted, and no specific area need be mentioned.

MR. GEORGE: Some area should be specified. He would not be inclined to give as much as 200 acres, because few sawmill sites occupied anything like 50 acres of ground. From 60 to 100 acres was as much as could reasonably be

demand. The difficulty was that a timber lessee required a long area rather than a broad one. The proportion of three to one, suggested by the member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest), might meet the case. If the timber company were to get compensation, that would be another matter; but if alluvial gold were discovered on the site of a mill or the company's railway, what compensation short of the price of the buildings and plant would be sufficient? Pot-holes sunk near either structure might undermine the foundations.

MR. WILSON: It was useless for the Premier to say that specific areas were not required. The timber stations had such areas and must have them, and to be deprived of them by miners would mean the loss of thousands of pounds. No timber lessee could, under this amendment, drive out miners already in possession, for to do so the site must be already occupied by the building or railway. It would be impossible to carry on a timber station within an area of 30 chains by 10, and station areas were not of uniform dimensions. He was not wedded to 640 acres exactly, but demanded a reasonable area so as not to interfere with millers.

MR. MORAN: The timber lessee should not be harassed. If, in the future, indications of gold were found on timber stations, Parliament could at any time make the provisions of the Mining on Private Property Act apply there. Do that when necessary, but not before.

MR. VOSPER: The whole tendency of this and similar legislation was apparently to create trouble for the future, and to make a quadruple title; for one man might have the timber, another the grass, and a third the gold, and a fourth the water.

MR. MORAN: Nevertheless the industries would be different. That would not be a quadruple title.

MR. WILSON altered his amendment to read "320 acres."

THE PREMIER: One hundred and sixty acres were ample, considering the proviso that the miner could not come within five chains of any building. The hon. member's main object was good, to give the timber lessee better security; but surely none could anticipate the discovery of many goldfields on timber leases, else the Committee would

make the regulations much more stringent. He (the Premier) proposed to add to the new clause: "Any such lease or claim may be resumed by the Government, on payment of compensation to the lessee, to be determined by arbitration." On a small area of land, the mining industry would be of far greater importance than the timber industry, and deserved more encouragement. An area of 160 acres reserved for the timber lessee would be about 60 chains by 26, and surely that was large enough. He moved, as an amendment on Mr. Wilson's amendment, that "160" be inserted before the word "acres," in line 3 as printed.

Amendment on amendment put and passed.

THE PREMIER further moved that in line 3, after the word "acres" the words "the length not to exceed three times the breadth" be inserted. The object of the amendment was to prevent a lessee taking up, say, a piece of land two miles long by 10 chains wide, or it might be 20 miles long by a chain wide, and to confine him to fixed boundaries as under the land regulations, which had been in the land laws for years.

MR. WILSON: A narrow piece of land was no good for a timber lessee to put a station on, and the Premier was drawing an extreme picture when he talked about an area 20 miles long by a chain wide.

THE PREMIER: Then why this opposition to the amendment?

MR. WILSON: Because of the irregular nature of the country in which this industry had to be established.

Further amendment (the Premier's) put and passed.

THE PREMIER further moved that at the end of the sub-clause, the following words be added: "Providing that any such saw-milling timber site may be resumed by the Government, on payment of compensation to the lessee, to be determined by arbitration."

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

New Clause:

MR. WILSON moved that the following new clause be added:

Any person who shall unlawfully fell, cut, saw, split or bark any timber or tree growing or felled upon any land comprised within the

area of any timber lease (whether or not such area also included the area or portion of the area in a gold-mining, mineral, or pastoral lease) shall, on conviction, pay a fine not exceeding £100, and all such fines may be recovered before a resident magistrate or any two justices of the peace in petty sessions.

Power was being given to the miners to peg out claims on forest land where the timber had been reserved to the lessee, who had paid for it; and as claims might be pegged out two or three miles away from a timber lessee's residence, it would be impossible to protect the timber from miners against whom, in the absence of proof, proceedings could not be taken. But if a miner disobeyed the law in this respect, why should there not be the same penalty as was imposed if he similarly disobeyed the law on Crown lands? The new clause was simply an additional protection to the timber lessee, who required all the protection he could possibly get.

SIR J. G. LEE STFERE: Would the new clause affect settlers, who, under Section 119 of the Land Act, could by permission of the Commissioner of Lands, cut timber for their own use.

MR. WILSON: The word "unlawfully" protected the settlers.

THE PREMIER: The penalty imposed seemed to be very heavy, having regard to the difference between the cutting of timber on private land and unlawfully invading Crown lands. Penalties were always higher where the Crown was affected, and to say that the miner who cut down a sapling on a goldfield had to be hauled before a magistrate and possibly fined £100, seemed to be unreasonable. The penalty of £100 imposed in connection with Crown lands, was supposed to deter people cutting timber for sale and otherwise, but in the present case a penalty of £10 would be sufficient.

MR. WILSON: There would be no objection to reducing the maximum penalty to £20.

HON. H. W. VENN: Would it be possible for miners to engage in sinking shafts and cross-cutting, without felling trees? He knew that at Donnybrook it would be difficult for a miner to go in any direction without felling a tree, and the Committee seemed to be complicating matters, and giving rise to much future litigation. The penalty of £100, under the circumstances was absurd, but he did not suppose the new clause would over-

ride the present rights of the settlers as to cutting timber for their own use. It seemed to him, however, that the clause might hamper miners very much if they could not cut timber on the leases granted to them.

MR. WILSON: The Committee had already passed a clause providing that the miner must prepay for any timber he required, and it was necessary to impose a penalty for a breach of that provision.

THE PREMIER: Would the hon. member limit the new clause to marketable timber.

MR. WILSON: That only raised another complication.

THE PREMIER: Why the hon. member should desire more power for the timber lessees it was difficult to see, because the law was quite sufficient at present to meet the cases contemplated. The Jarrahdale and Canning Timber Companies had been able to protect themselves under the present law.

MR. WILSON: But there had been no miners on those leases.

THE PREMIER: There was no reason why more penalties should be put on miners or others than were really necessary. In the case of mining on the Greenbushes tinfield and Donnybrook goldfield, working miners might be "run in" for cutting a bit of timber for a windlass, or some such small thing. Legislation of this kind was too strong, and he would not support the hon. member's proposal.

MR. GEORGE: The amount of rent extracted from the timber companies, at the rate of £20 per square mile, was unreasonably heavy, and it tended to stifle the industry. These leaseholders had now to pay unfairly, and were entitled to every protection. Hardly any of the timber companies were doing more than paying expenses, the market price now obtained for timber not being a paying price.

THE PREMIER: Better leave the law as it stood, on this point.

MR. LEAKE: In all these timber leases, karri and jarrah were the timbers reserved to the leaseholder, and this reservation was not intended to apply to banksia or deadwood. If a miner was allowed to cut timber for mining purposes, he should be forced to deal with the timber lessee.

MR. WALLACE: The Premier's objections to this legislation deserved support. Where the timber was thick, as in the South-West, there would be only little room available for mining, without interfering with the timber; and to pass this sub-clause would prevent the miner from removing timber which might impede his mining operations. If a miner was to be prevented from cutting any timber by this sub-clause, how was he to obtain timber for mining purposes?

SIR JAMES LEE STEERE: This sub-clause should apply only to marketable timber. In such a place as the Greenbushes tinfield, for instance, the whole of the shafts and mines were lined with small timber, such as saplings, and under this sub-clause any person using such timber for mining purposes would be liable to a fine.

THE PREMIER: Under the Act also.

SIR JAMES LEE STEERE: Miners could not carry on operations without using some timber, therefore this sub-clause should apply only to marketable timber. Saplings were of no use to a timber lessee, who would suffer no injury by miners taking such timber for mining purposes, whereas miners would suffer great injury if they could not use small timber for their shafts.

THE PREMIER: Timber leases gave to the lessee the exclusive right to timber by the Act of last year; and, with some exceptions that were specified, everything on the lease belonged to the lessee, except deadwood, which might be taken away for domestic purposes, but not for sale.

MR. MOORHEAD: We were about to introduce a greater evil than the dual title, which had caused so much trouble on the goldfields; for this clause would impose on lessees of timber areas and on the holders of mining leases, rights and interests which would be diverse and opposite. The holder of a mining lease had the right to use all timber on the ground for purposes of mining; and in throwing open these timber areas for mining purposes as well as saw-milling purposes, there would be a conflict of interests between the lessee under the mining lease and the lessee under a timber lease. For carrying on mining, a person must be endowed with a miner's right, which conferred on him by contract with the Government, the

right to cut all timber for mining that was on the ground, as well as for other purposes. How was this to be regulated in this Bill? Apparently no provision was made for the conflict of interests which might arise. Remembering the strong arguments for taking away the dual title to a gold-mining area, the Committee were stultifying themselves in this Bill, which would create a treble title. It would be impossible to carry on mining without cutting down some of the timber in a district such as the Donnybrook goldfield, where miners must cut through the roots of trees which were in their way, and it would be extremely hard to impose a penalty for doing what they must necessarily do for mining purposes.

MR. MORAN: A miner's right gave to the holder the right to search for and take away gold on Crown lands; but these timber areas were not Crown lands in the ordinary sense, because they had been leased already for saw-milling purposes; therefore when the miner went on a lease of this kind, his title was secondary and not primary, the timber lessee having the primary title to the ground and the timber on it. By this Bill, Parliament would be giving a title to one person to take the timber and to another person to take the gold off the same land, and the only duality was in reference to occupying the same particular piece of ground. The member for Nelson (Sir James Lee Steere) had put the matter fairly in saying the timber companies wanted only marketable timber, while the miner wanted small timber for propping his mine; and if the miner wanted other timber he should pay for it.

MR. DOHERTY: If timber was growing on ground leased for mining purposes, the miner should have the right to cut the timber.

MR. MORAN: No; his right should be to cut only the small timber for mining purposes, and he should not interfere with the marketable timber which the timber lessee was entitled to.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Was a miner pegging out a claim on a timber lease to be fined for removing trees on that claim? It was only necessary to provide that such miner should not become a small saw-miller; yet under this clause a miner might be fined for cutting down any par-

ticular tree, even though on his own claim, and though its removal were necessary.

MR. WILSON: He could buy the timber.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Why prevent him from cutting down a tree which was in the way? It would be fairer to ask the timber lessee to remove the tree. Timber cutting outside the miner's claim should be paid for, but there should be no penalty for cutting trees within the pegs.

MR. EWING: The trouble would be met by excluding from the operation of the clause any land included in a mineral or a mining lease. Timber leases were generally large and mining claims small; and the fact of giving a miner the right to cut timber on his claim could not seriously interfere with the vested interests of the timber lessee.

MR. GEORGE: What if there were numerous mining claims on the timber lease?

MR. EWING: In that case we should be justified in saying that the miners had a right to a certain quantity of timber. The amendment (Mr. Wilson's) might be altered by striking out the words from "whether" to "included," and substituting the word "unless," making the clause read, "Unless the area or portion of the area is a gold-mining or mineral lease." The words "or pastoral" should also be struck out.

THE PREMIER: The existing law was good enough.

MR. EWING: The miners at Donnybrook, which was on a timber lease, had, under the Goldfields Act, a right to cut timber within their pegs.

THE PREMIER: But the Land Act was of later date than the Goldfields Act.

MR. EWING: Surely none desired to give that right to two people. Either let the timber lessee have the sole right to the timber, or give the miner the right to the timber within his pegs.

THE PREMIER: A clause previously passed provided that if the miner took timber he must pay for it.

MR. EWING: A miner's right gave the miner the timber on his claim.

THE PREMIER: But that timber had in this case been given to someone else.

MR. EWING: But the timber lessee knew that his lease was subject to the provisions of the Goldfields Act, and gave him no absolute title to the timber as against a miner.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The last speaker was probably unaware that on and after the 1st January 1899, under the Land Act passed last session, the Minister of Lands was empowered to grant timber lessees fresh leases, giving them the exclusive right to all the timber within their leases. He believed these leases had not yet been granted. The Goldfields Act did give the miner a right to go on Crown lands to take timber for mining purposes, and timber leases were Crown lands. There was a difficulty here, and he would not envy the Commissioner of Crown Lands if the troubles arising from this Bill were so great as those with which the Mines Department now had to contend.

MR. DOHERTY: The timber within the mining lease should be the property of the leaseholder. Even now any selector could go on a timber lease, take up a selection, and thus acquire possession of all the timber within the area selected.

MR. WILSON: No; to admit of that, the Government would have to resume the land.

MR. DOHERTY: The Government took the land from the lessees.

MR. WILSON: No.

MR. DOHERTY said he had official notices in his possession to prove that. A miner had an absolute right to all timber on his claim, and why should the miner be fined £100 for taking such timber? Timber leases had not been locked up for the sole benefit of the lessees, and the miner had a perfect right to carry on without being in any way hampered.

MR. SOLOMON: The miner would not cut down trees unless they were absolutely in his way; and if there were trees within the four corners of his lease, he ought to have the use of them for mining purposes.

MR. MOORHEAD: Under the Goldfields Act of 1895 the miner's right conferred large and extensive privileges over Crown lands. The member for the Swan (Mr. Ewing) had already pointed out that the definition of "Crown lands" included, as the Minister of Mines admitted, timber leases; and it was

immaterial that timber licenses had been changed recently into leases, because each tenure stood on exactly the same footing in regard to the construction of the Goldfields Act of 1895. In addition to the cutting of timber for the purposes of mining, a miner under Section 16 of that Act had conferred on him the privilege of constructing races, dams, wells, reservoirs, roads, and tramways through and on any Crown lands, taking or diverting water on Crown lands, and of exercising any rights of the nature of easements upon and over unoccupied Crown lands in connection with gold mining. How did the Minister of Mines propose, after conferring rights under contract with the Government, to fine miners for exercising those rights? The amendment of the member for the Canning (Mr. Wilson), with which he was in thorough sympathy, was not a revocation of repeal of the powers conveyed by the Goldfields Act of 1895; and therefore, there might, as the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) had said, be a quadruple title. There was no doubt in the mind of any person accustomed to construe Acts, that there would be immense litigation if the Bill were passed in its present form.

MR. MORAN: It would be interesting to know whether the authors of the Bill were lawyers or laymen, because the farther the Committee went, the greater confusion there seemed to be.

MR. EWING: It ought not to be possible to point out such flaws and inconsistencies between proposed and existing legislation. Bills ought to be brought in only after mature consideration and thorough investigation at the hands of some members of the legal profession.

THE PREMIER: The Government knew a great deal more about the measure than the hon. member. It was a matter of very great difficulty, which had the attention of a good many legal gentlemen.

MR. EWING: There was no use in the Premier being irritated.

THE PREMIER: To lecture him (the Premier) on the subject was a piece of impertinence.

MR. EWING: There was no desire to lecture the Premier, but whether it was impertinent or not, the fact remained that members were constantly brought

face to face with Bills which were evidently the result of the immature consideration of the subjects on which the Government were legislating.

THE PREMIER: What was there about the Bill that was immature?

MR. EWING: The Bill would create one of the most serious difficulties the community could suffer. The colony had already some unfortunate experience of dual titles.

THE PREMIER: Consideration had been given by him to this Bill for over a month, and he did not like to be told the measure was immature.

MR. EWING: If the Premier had given a month's consideration to the Bill, he (Mr. Ewing) was sorry to hear it.

THE PREMIER: This clause was not moved by the Government, but by the member for the Canning (Mr. Wilson).

MR. EWING: The trouble did not exist in this clause, but in what had been already done by the Government. Leases had been granted for the exclusive right to cut all the timber on certain lands, and miners, at the same time, had the right to peg out a claim inside timber leases. The lessee of timber land had the exclusive right to the timber under one Act, and the man who pegged out a claim or had taken out a mining lease also had a right, under another Act, to the timber within the four corners of his claim. Under the circumstances, it would be better to report progress, and consider the point between now and to-morrow.

THE PREMIER: The member for the Swan (Mr. Ewing) did not appear to have read the new clause proposed by him (the Premier). The subject was surrounded with difficulty, and it was not contended that the clause was perfect; but to say that it had been framed without knowledge or consideration was very far from the truth. Timber leases had been granted at Donnybrook, and gold had been discovered on a portion of those leases; and while there was no desire by legislation to dispossess a timber lessee of his timber, the Government did not want to hamper the gold-mining industry. Under the circumstances, the Government proposed that the timber lessee should be able, notwithstanding the Goldfields Act, to go on the

land pegged out by the gold-miner and take away timber. It was not proposed that the gold-miner should not cut any timber within his lease, but that if he took any timber from the timber lease, he must repay the timber lessee for it.

MR. EWING: Then the miner was being made to pay for what belonged to him.

THE PREMIER: That was not so; unless it was contended that the whole colony belonged to the miner.

MR. EWING: The timber within the four corners of his lease belonged to the miner.

THE PREMIER: At present the miner could take what timber he required from any Crown lands, but it was proposed to restrict him on a timber lease. When the Goldfields Act was passed, it was not expected that mining claims would be pegged out on timber leases, and, under the altered circumstances, the Government had done the best they could. The only alternative to the present proposal would be for the Government to resume the whole of the land, and buy out the timber lessees; but the Government were hardly prepared to do that; and while there might be difficulties about the plan proposed, it would, in his opinion, work well in practice. It would be more accurate to say that the speech of the member for the Swan had not been carefully considered, than to say that the Bill was the result of immature thought, because the measure had engaged the attention of the Crown Law Department for some time, and almost daily for the last fortnight; and there had been conferences with the member for the Canning; so that all the difficulties were known and appreciated. The amendment might be passed and put into print, and before the third reading the member for the Swan would have an opportunity of discovering some means of surmounting difficulties which, however, were in all likelihood magnified by the hon. member.

At 6:30, the CHAIRMAN left the Chair.

At 7:30, Chair resumed.

MR. WILSON asked leave to withdraw his proposed new clause.

Clause, by leave, withdrawn.

Schedule :

MR. WILSON moved that the following be added to paragraph 7 :—" Provided that the lessee may, within six months of such determination, remove from the demised premises all railways, tramways, buildings, machinery, plant, and effects in or upon the said demised premises."

Put and passed.

THE PREMIER moved, as a further amendment, that the words "subject to the provisions of the said Act, and any amendment thereof, and the regulations thereunder, and subject as hereinafter provided, the exclusive right," be struck out, and the following inserted in lieu thereof: "the right (which subject to the provisions of the said Act and any amendment thereof and the regulations thereunder, and of any Acts relating to mining for gold and other minerals, and subject as hereinafter provided, shall be exclusive)."

Put and passed.

THE PREMIER further moved that, in lines 21 and 22, the words "the first of such payments having been made before the execution of these presents" be struck out; also, that in the proviso, paragraph 1 be struck out, and the remaining paragraphs be numbered consequentially; also, that in paragraph 3, line 2, the words "a mile" be inserted in the blank; also that in paragraph 5, line 9, after "thereof," the words "other than a proportionate return and reduction of rent in respect of any land resumed on which marketable timber is growing or standing."

Amendments put and passed.

THE PREMIER further moved that the following be added, to stand as paragraph 5 :

This demise is also subject to the provisions of any Acts relating to mining for gold or other minerals so far as those Acts may create rights which may be exercised over Crown lands.

MR. MOORHEAD: If this amendment were passed in its present form, it would bear out the contention with regard to the construction of the paragraph raised by the member for the Canning (Mr. Wilson). Paragraph 5 preserved to the lessee all the rights enjoyed under the Act of 1895, and the cutting of timber was specially mentioned.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Schedule, as amended, agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments, and the report adopted.

LOAN BILL, £750,000.

SECOND READING—AMENDMENT.

Debate resumed from the previous day, on motion for second reading, and on amendment by Mr. Leake (six months).

MR. GEORGE (Murray): Listening to the debate in connection with the Loan Bill for several evenings, I have come to the conclusion that it is a great pity that each time a question of great magnitude to the country comes before the House, it resolves itself practically into a fight for power. There is a party debate, and for that reason it makes it very difficult for members like myself who do not believe in party business, and who do not believe the interests of the colony should be subordinated to the question of the ins and outs, to discuss the question. The Premier last evening, in addressing the House, instead of, as in my opinion he should have done, giving in a concise form information in relation to the Loan Bill, so that hon. members could form a fair judgment thereon—

THE PREMIER: It was my second speech.

MR. GEORGE: It does not matter whether it was the second or the third speech. As far as the right hon. gentleman is concerned, he could go on like the brook, for ever, when he is attacked. I regret that the right hon. gentleman did not rise to the dignity of his position, and instead of dealing with the question of putting him in or out of office, he should have looked at the question from the true interests of the whole of the country. He told us he had incurred a great deal of odium in connection with this matter, and I would remind the Premier that the diamond itself is rough at one time, and requires polishing; it requires a great deal of hard hitting before it is brought to perfection. I do not know what kind of gem we shall get out of the Premier: we may not live to see. Although I would not like to see the right hon. gentleman out of power, I am not blind to the fact—and there are a number of people alive to this also—that changes at times are desirable in the history of a country; and if we did have a new Government over

this subject, or on any other matter, this session, there would certainly be some advantage to the country, and to the right hon. gentleman. The advantage to the country would be that we should be able to demand from the incoming Government some concise and reliable statement as to the finances of the country; and the advantage to the right hon. gentleman would be that he would have time to rest his liver and get into a more amenable state of mind. I am sorry to say that the right hon. gentleman cannot help giving a hit at private enterprise. It seems to me he is like "the old man of the sea," whenever you talk of private enterprise he will "go for" it, and "go for" everyone who is in favour of it. Where would the country have been during the last 30 or 40 years if it had not been for private enterprise? The timber stations are the result of private enterprise. The industries of the country have been built up by private enterprise, and the Premier himself would be very much improved, if, instead of going on in the same Government routine, he had taken upon himself a little of the responsibilities of private enterprise. I hope the Premier will let that matter alone, as it is a sore point with me, not that it is a question of contracting, but it is a gratuitous back-handed slap at the men who have really made this country. Turning to the Loan Bill, the difficulty I find in connection with this matter is this: here is a Bill for £750,000 which consists of a number of items, many of which, to my mind, would cause the financiers in London or elsewhere to say "this is a peculiar way of dealing with the finance of a large country." Here, for instance, is an item: "Improvements, harbours and rivers, £5,000." Is the great revenue of this country so small that we have to raise a loan in the London market for the improvement of the harbours and rivers to the extent of £5,000? It seems to me the Premier has not been wisely advised in connection with this matter. Then, there is a small item for Albany, £10,000, and an item for Busselton £4,000. If it is necessary to raise this money, at any rate, be politic and disguise the fact from the schedule as to what the money is wanted for. Place the amount under the head of "miscellaneous services" if you like, but I contend that

items of this sort have no right to find their way into a Loan Bill at all. The member for West Perth (Mr. Wood) last night, in his speech, stated he was prepared to vote for the passing of the second reading, but that he hoped to alter items in Committee. I ask hon. members who have sat in this House for several sessions whether their experience has shown them that it is possible to alter items in Committee. There is not the slightest chance of altering items in Committee. I find myself confronted with items for which I honestly cannot vote. There is an item for a railway to Norseman—it gives pain to the member for Dundas (Mr. Conolly) to find anyone opposing that line—but I cannot honestly vote for it. Although I am prepared to vote for a loan, I am not prepared to vote for this item, and I know that there will be no chance in Committee of knocking any item out. That is my opinion, but I may be wrong. There is another thing—and this may seem somewhat inconsistent with what I have already said—the amount of the loan asked for is absurd; it is not nearly enough to do the work that is proposed to be done. What is the use of starting a work if you have not the money to carry it out with? I interjected last evening that there was not sufficient money on the Loan Bill to build the earth works for the new railways. The Premier said there was, and I afterwards, to bring the thing to absurdity, said that there was sufficient to build about five yards; the Premier then replied that he would build those five yards. What is the use of playing with works like that? Take, for instance, the Norseman railway. To take it to the first point where it could really stop, that is half way, the amount of money estimated is £145,000, and yet the Premier simply asks for £60,000.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: There is a portion of the amount for rails and departmental.

MR. GEORGE: There is an amount of £60,000. The grading alone will cost £17,000. Then there is an amount for bridges. I do not know whether there are any bridges on this part, but the amount is £10,000. For building the line and ballasting there is £30,000, and rails £42,000. That amounts to £100,000 odd, without going into incidentals and

departmental work. A sum of £102,000 is required to do this work, and yet the Government ask for a vote of £60,000 for it. If the right hon. gentleman wishes to be consistent he has the right to ask for the money which will enable him to carry out the work. If you take the Leonora railway, the first four items, grading, bridges, ballasting, and rails alone come to £61,000, and there are other expenses to be added to that amount, because the initial expenses in starting a railway, as anyone who has had experience, knows, are tremendously heavy. The remaining work of railway construction is done at a very much smaller percentage of expense; and it is playing with the House to ask us, as reasonable men, to vote money for a railway, when we know the amount asked for will hardly do more than scratch the ground. Taking the Norseman and Leonora lines together, we shall require £227,000 to start the work to the "half-way house," and yet in the Loan Bill we are only asked to provide £120,000, leaving a deficiency of over £100,000. I suppose I shall be told that even if the money be borrowed now, it is hardly be possible to make a start with the work for twelve months, and that some of the money will be spent in making final surveys. I agree with that view, but I do not agree with the idea of asking for less money than we know is wanted. If an authorisation be given to raise the £2,000,000 or £1,500,000, which the work will probably cost, the Government are not obliged to raise the loan all at once, but can wait until the market is favourable.

THE PREMIER: But would that course not hurt our credit?

MR. GEORGE: I am not in a position to pose, like the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth), as a financier. My observations are mainly the result of practical experience in connection with works similar to those proposed, and I cannot figure as an authority as to whether the course I suggest would injure our credit on the London market.

THE PREMIER: We did not do as you suggest in connection with the Fremantle Harbour.

MR. GEORGE: I do not intend to try to teach the premier finance, or how to raise his loans. What I am trying to say is that if we commit ourselves by this

Loan Bill to these railways, we ought to be able to count the cost from the start, and not persuade ourselves that if we raise £750,000 there will be an end of the matter. With the exception, perhaps, of the Leonora railway and the Fremantle harbour works, we have far more important works staring us in the face than those in the schedule. One work absolutely necessary is that of duplicating the railway line as far as Coolgardie; and this question will have to be faced by the Commissioner of Railways at so early a date that I should be surprised to hear the matter is not now under consideration by the Cabinet. There is not only the difficulty of delays in the carriage of goods to the goldfields, but a big strain will shortly be put on the resources and capabilities of the railways in connection with the goldfields water scheme. As to rolling-stock, it is absolutely ridiculous to ask for £165,000, having regard to the requirements of the present railway system. The Commissioner of Railways, a few nights ago, stated that rolling-stock to the value of something like £500,000 was required, and, quite believing that statement, I say further that if we are to continue, as I hope we shall, to go on carrying coal from Collie to the goldfields in ever-increasing quantities, we must remember that our present rolling-stock is not sufficient by one-third to carry on the traffic. To work up a coal trade to the goldfields means that wagons must be out of use for many days; and this question, if properly placed before the House, will be faced in a practical and sensible manner. If it had been proposed by the Loan Bill that £500,000, or even £1,000,000, should be spent on rolling-stock, the House could no doubt have found plenty of arguments for voting the money, and I would support the Government in a policy of the kind; because we have to remember that every mile of railway we add to the present system, means an increasing ratio of delay in the return of the trucks which carry goods up to the goldfields. While we are at present hampered for want of locomotives and rolling-stock of all kinds, as soon as we add other lines to the system, we increase the difficulties of the traffic managers; and the Government would have been well advised, had they found themselves able

to ask for at least £500,000 with which to supply rolling-stock sufficient for the the present work. When the duplication of the line to Coolgardie is undertaken, as it must before very long, we shall require £1,000,000 or £1,500,000 for the work, and adding the £750,000 asked for, which we know means £1,500,000, we find that in connection with railways alone, we shall require very shortly to raise £3,000,000. It is not wise for the Premier to delay the acquisition of rolling-stock any longer than he can help, having regard to the present state of the metal market.

THE PREMIER: When the Bill is passed, the Government will order the rolling-stock.

MR. GEORGE: But £165,000 is a mere bagatelle in this connection.

THE PREMIER: It is something to begin with.

MR. GEORGE: No doubt it is something to begin with, but it is like starting a four-wheel carriage with three wheels and a prop-stick to keep the vehicle from tumbling over. Even more important than the question of how much money can be raised in London, is the fact that while the Premier is dilly-dallying—and I say this with respect—as to the amount of money he should ask for, the manufacturers of locomotives and other rolling-stock in the old country and in America, are raising their prices day by day. If the Premier requires further proof of the truth of that statement he has simply to watch the reports of the metal market published in our daily Press; and I can tell him that pig iron which was quoted at 41s. six months ago, is now at 72s. and 74s., and in every branch of the iron trade prices are rising.

THE PREMIER: What is your point?

MR. GEORGE: I am pointing out that if the Premier were to bring down a Loan Bill providing £500,000 for rolling-stock, I would support the measure, because I would regard such a proposal as businesslike. But if the Premier delays, he may find that not £500,000, but £700,000 will be necessary; and it would pay a great deal better, from a commercial point of view, to pay a higher rate of interest for money borrowed, than to delay the orders, and in the end pay, perhaps, 15 or 25 per cent. more for the stock.

THE PREMIER: Is there no chance of a reduction of prices?

MR. GEORGE: I do not think that for the next 18 months there is any chance of a reduction of prices in the iron market in the old country or America; and that is not merely my own opinion, but the opinion of men who are known and well respected in the iron trade in Great Britain. I have stated I cannot honestly vote for the Norseman line, and I am put into a quandary, seeing I am quite willing to vote the Government all the money they require for legitimate purposes, but am not prepared to vote for the Loan Bill now before us. If this money is not to be raised until wanted, why not ask for an authorisation for sufficient to complete the works, borrowing the money when, in the judgment of the Government, seems best? One thing I have never liked in the House, and I suppose it is distasteful to others, is reappropriation. We have had reappropriation Bills session after session, and I suppose that next year, when this money has been arranged for, we shall find another reappropriation Bill brought in.

THE PREMIER: This Bill is not reappropriation.

MR. GEORGE: I know it is not, but it is the first step towards reappropriation; and the Premier has always been consistent in carrying reappropriation as far as possible. For the provision of railway workshops, £20,000 is a mere flea-bite.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: There is £17,000 in the old vote, making a total of £37,000.

MR. GEORGE: Do the department consider £37,000 sufficient to carry out all the work required?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Nothing like it, but it will be a good start.

MR. GEORGE: It will make a start, but what sort of start will £37,000 afford in the erection of new workshops? The operations in the workshops at Fremantle are much cramped for room for machinery, and every piece of work done there costs more than it ought to. If the Government have made up their minds to erect workshops at Midland Junction, why not do so, and give the Railway Department and the country the

benefit of the increased efficiency? To ask for £20,000 for such a work is simply playing with the question; and it is the doubt raised by inadequate provisions, which satisfies me I would not be doing right to vote for the Loan Bill. The little railway from Coolgardie to Bonnie Vale is to cost £10,000; and I suppose no railway has caused so much debate both inside and outside the House. Where does this railway lead to? Bonnie Vale. What is Bonnie Vale? A place where there are supposed to be 800 people, and a number of mines; but how many of these mines are working to-day, and how many are likely to be working 12 months hence? We have a right to ask these questions, and to have them answered; and we also have a right to know whether this line is part of a big railway scheme. If the Premier has a scheme for carrying the railway beyond Bonnie Vale, why does he not take the House into his confidence?

THE PREMIER: Of course the railway will go further on.

MR. GEORGE: What is this railway to cost? What I object to, and what the House has a right to object to, is our being asked to vote these items, which form practically the "first leg in," and which will land us, goodness knows where!

THE PREMIER: You need not go on with the works.

MR. GEORGE: The Premier has told us that no end of times; but as it happens, if we pass the items we must go on, because the credit of the country is at stake, and once we start a railway, there is no question of looking back. I do not want the Premier to think I am doubtful of the country, or am a croaker; I am merely taking the view of a man who desires to be a little cautious. I will go as far as the Premier in endeavouring to develop the country, but if we carry out our duty and pledges to our constituents, we must guard their interests as far as possible. Then what is the Northam to Goomalling line wanted for?

MR. A. FORREST: To carry wheat.

MR. GEORGE: I do not know Goomalling; but this railway has not the excuse that it is going to a goldfield. Why should Goomalling be singled out for a railway? We have heard nothing particular about it, except that there is a cornfield.

MR. A. FORREST: There are farmers all the way between Northam and Goomalling.

MR. GEORGE: Will the Government obtain any increased railway traffic from this line? Did they tell the poor farmers, when the land was taken up, that this railway was to be made?

MR. A. FORREST: Yes.

MR. GEORGE: They pledged themselves?

MR. A. FORREST: Yes.

MR. GEORGE: Then the Government were going far beyond their powers, and had no right to do anything of the kind. I expect the Commissioner of Railways will be speaking directly, and possibly he will give us a little definite information with regard to the rolling-stock and the question of heavier rails for those railways, and the duplication of the line to Coolgardie, if that be possible. It is useless to treat this matter lightly. If the goldfields are to be properly treated, if there is to be an end to these delays, and anything like proper financial working in connection with the railways, we must have facilities in the near future that have never been dreamed of before; and in connection with the Coolgardie railway we require the line to be duplicated right up to Coolgardie. If the Premier does not feel man enough to carry out that work, I can tell him that it is quite possible to find in this House someone who will occupy his seat and who will carry it out without delay. I do not know that I need say more on this question unless I can get some more satisfactory information. I shall vote against the second reading of this Bill, because I feel that if I vote for it, and the second reading pass, there is "Buckley's show" of getting any alteration in Committee.

MR. A. FORREST: Why?

MR. GEORGE: Well, the hon. member's own conscience should tell him why; and he is only a fair representative of a good many others who have got consciences built in exactly the same way—brick upon brick.

MR. EWING (Swan): Before a division is taken on this question, I should like to say a few words. I do not intend to enter into the merits of the various railways and other works proposed in this Loan Bill; but it is sufficient for me to say that in the schedule to the Bill

are to be found several works already in hand, and several works the absolute necessity of which has for a considerable time past been frankly admitted. We find that certain works at Fremantle, the value of which to the community cannot possibly be doubted, require further moneys for their completion; we find that the railway system of this colony is in a congested state, and is likely to be in a more congested state unless some provision be made by which the Minister in charge of the railways can purchase the necessary plant and rolling-stock. We find also that there are many other works, leaving out altogether the question of new railways, which require attention; and I do not hold with those members who think that because this Bill gets into Committee, it will pass in its entirety. [SEVERAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] I believe there is sufficient individuality in the members of this House to enable them to exercise their discretion in voting in Committee for the individual railways and works which are proposed. I should be very sorry indeed to hold the opinion that the fact of this Loan Bill having passed its second reading, meant that we approved of every work mentioned in its Schedule; and if it meant that, I doubt very much whether I should be prepared to vote for it: but there are works here the necessity for which is admitted, and cannot be denied by any person in this House; in fact, the opponents of this measure have to admit the necessity of a great many of the proposals of the Government; and, admitting that, then surely those persons can trust the House, surely they can trust their fellow members, to cut out of this Bill those works which the House thinks undesirable. I wish to say a few words from the local point of view of member for the Swan; and as member for the Swan I am particularly concerned with one item in the Schedule to the Bill. Some hon. members smile; but still, we have had several divisions in this House which have affirmed the desirableness of the completion of the workshops at Midland Junction, and of the removal of the workshops from Fremantle.

MR. VOSPER: We are still on the subject of the loaves and fishes.

MR. EWING: A certain amount of money was voted last year for the Junc-

tion workshops, and a portion of that money has been spent. A balance of some £17,000 is still in hand; and we find it is proposed to raise by means of this Loan Bill a further amount of £20,000 in order to proceed with that work. I am informed that the sum of £37,000, which will be available for the work, is sufficient to make a very substantial start; and when we look at the reports of the Traffic Manager, and the reports of the various officers in charge of the railways, I think we can have no doubt whatever that it is absolutely necessary that these works should be undertaken. We have heard it reported, I think on every reliable authority, that every year the Government permits those workshops to remain at Fremantle, and they remain in their congested state, there is a loss to this community of between £10,000 and £15,000; and we have found that these workshops have been left at Fremantle for some five years: so that the loss to the community, taking the maximum figures, if the authority I referred to be correct, amounts to £75,000 by reason of the delay which has already occurred. It is, I think, admitted that there will be very great necessity for further manufacture in connection with the railways. The buying of rolling-stock means increased work in the workshops. Every line of railway opened means increased work in the workshops. Every piece of Government work undertaken in connection with this department means increased work; and increased work in the present condition of the Fremantle shops means a substantial loss to the community. Therefore I think this also could be classified under the head of absolutely necessary works; though if the Bill provided for this work alone I do not know that I could stand here and say that the Bill was absolutely necessary. But here we find in addition to the workshops contemplated, improvements to existing lines contemplated; we find there are other works contemplated in connection with the Railway Department which it is generally admitted must be done, and I think that these things justify one, although one would hesitate at the present time about the desirableness of raising further loans, in coming to the conclusion that the Government is well advised in proceeding with those works, or in any case, in voting

the money for these very necessary undertakings. Returning one moment to the Midland Junction workshops—

MR. VOSPER: You have never got away from them.

MR. EWING: I should like to refer to the report of Mr. Campbell. In that report he urges upon the Government the absolute necessity of proceeding with this work. The Traffic Manager does likewise; in fact, all the railway officials are urging upon the Government the necessity for completing these works; and in that this Bill contemplates the completion of these and other works that are so necessary, I think we are fully justified in voting for the second reading. In regard to the railways proposed, I should like to say just one word. I do not intend at this stage to commit myself either as to whether I shall vote for any one of these railway lines: I will certainly vote against some, and I do not commit myself to vote for any of them; but there have been certain arguments urged, and they were from this side of the House, to show that the Government were pursuing a wrong course in extending their railway system to Leonora and other districts *via* Coolgardie. It was urged that the railway system should be extended from Geraldton and from Esperance. Although I admit that a centralisation scheme carried to an extreme is bad, my objection to any such proposition is that one must perceive that the Government of this or any other country cannot afford to build two non-paying lines; because, if we are going to lead the traffic down from the goldfields to Esperance, the consequence will be that the whole of the line from Coolgardie down to Northam, and probably down to Midland Junction, will become non-paying; and this is a condition of affairs which I think the Government are well justified in considering; and that is the real objection I see to the decentralisation proposition at the present time. If in the future we find we can make the Coolgardie railway pay without the traffic from Perth to Norseman, then we shall perhaps be justified in diverting that traffic to Esperance. If we find that the railways to Esperance and to Coolgardie will pay without the Leonora line, then we may divert the traffic from the Leonora districts into Geraldton. But I

submit that the Government are wise in their generation in being perfectly certain that one line pays before committing the colony to a number of systems, the direct consequence of which in my opinion would be that, instead of having one good paying line in the community, we should have three or four lines that do not pay interest on the money. I think this is the most serious aspect of the affair: and although hon. members may deem it unwise to centralise the trade of any community upon a fixed point, yet there are conditions in which it is well to do this; and those conditions are, first, how can we reasonably and fairly serve those districts; and how can we serve them without placing upon the shoulders of the community the weight of a number of nonpaying lines? For these reasons it gives me very great pleasure to support the proposition of the Government with regard to this Bill.

MR. WILSON (Canning): To my mind there cannot be the slightest doubt that the debate on this Loan Bill is one of very great importance to the country at large; and I was pleased to hear yesterday evening the very excellent speech delivered by the member for Geraldton (Mr. Robson), when he made a plain, unvarnished, and business-like protest against centralisation and the further borrowing policy of the Forrest Ministry. I think the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) also deserves the congratulations of this House; for certainly, to my mind, he grasped the very grave and serious position in which we are placed, and in his very eloquent speech he told the House that he would not permit his allegiance to the Premier to override his judgment with regard to the Premier's fiscal policy. On that account I think the hon. member is to be congratulated: he has shown that he has the courage of his convictions; and although for years he has faithfully supported the Forrest Government, he now says: "So far and no further will I support you, in this borrowing and spending policy." I cannot help contrasting the speeches of these two members with that delivered by the Premier himself. I think the speech of the right hon. gentleman was one of the most remarkable of his very many remarkable utterances in this House, for he went out of

his way not only to abuse hon. members, but, to my mind, to cast very base and gross insinuations against their integrity. After casting abuse at all and sundry in the House who oppose him in his policy, after attacking friend and foe alike, and after imputing unworthy and to some extent dishonest motives, especially to hon. members on the Opposition side of the House, he practically pleaded guilty to what I may term political jobbery, and he did this inasmuch as he intimated that he had expected support from hon. members in return for honours conferred upon them, and for moneys expended in their electorates. If that is to be the position of politics in Western Australia—

THE PREMIER: I do not think that is accurate.

MR. WILSON: I say if that is to be the position of politics in Western Australia, if that is to be the position of members in this House, then I for one would wish to be relieved of all public duties in connection with Parliament. I refuse to prostitute my freedom of political thought and opinions for works to be done in my electorate or for honours to be conferred upon me personally, and I hope that is the stand all hon. members will take in this House. I hope they will refuse to support the Premier in such a course, and that whether they be Opposition or Government supporters, they will let him know once for all that they intend everything to be clear and above-board, and that they will not put up with such insinuations at his hands.

THE PREMIER: That is exactly what I want.

MR. WILSON: The right hon. gentleman's retort, or his accusation, thrown out to the member for East Fremantle (Mr. Holmes), certainly bears out the construction I put upon his remarks. He stated that the hon. member had gone to him and under false pretences gained an honour, and two days afterwards passed over to the Opposition side of the House and opposed him. Certainly that is not a worthy motive to attribute to any hon. member. And what was the honour conferred upon the member for East Fremantle? I believe he was made a justice of the peace. Does any one in this House think the member for East Fremantle, because he has been made a justice of the peace, is going to support

the Forrest Ministry through thick and thin? It is absurd, and I think the assertion made was beneath the dignity of the position which the right hon. gentleman holds. It appears to me, in looking casually through this Bill, and especially the schedule, that the remarks that have fallen from previous speakers, as to the Bill having been drawn to some extent to stifle opposition, are justified. One cannot help being struck with the fact that in nearly every electorate something has to be done which no doubt to some extent is urgent; and I am in that position. There is a work here which, as the Premier said, I admitted was of an urgent nature. Take the extension of the Bunbury harbour works: I admit that money ought to be expended on the Bunbury harbour works to make them adequate for the large shipping trade which is there now, and which we hope will continue to increase; and a small sum of money put down here for the improvement of harbours and rivers is of very great interest so far as my electorate is concerned, inasmuch as I believe it provides the necessary funds for dredging the River Swan, and thus opening up a better means of communication between the city of Perth and South Perth. But I do not intend for one moment to allow a trifling matter of this description, a trifling expenditure of money in connection with my electorate, to stand in the way of my judgment and decision on the principle of this further borrowing, and I hope and trust that so long as I occupy a position in this House I will be able to rise above this parochial legislation, above the requirements of my electorate, and take a broad view when I am dealing with the finances of the country. I always endeavour to take a broad view, and I think I have managed up to the present to take a much broader view than the Premier himself has taken in this matter.

THE PREMIER: We all know about that.

MR. WILSON: I agree with the assertion that the matter of improving the River Swan should not have been included in this Loan Bill. The reason it stands here is that the promise made to include the cost of the improvement of the river in the ordinary Estimates of revenue and expenditure was not kept by

the Ministry. Pressure was brought to bear upon the Premier, and he agreed to bring down the sum in this Loan Bill. Of course my electors would be sadly disappointed if the work were not carried out. Nevertheless, I am glad to think they will support me in the stand I take in adopting a national view of this question of further borrowing, and in the position I intend to occupy towards this Bill.

THE PREMIER: You always do give opposition. That is nothing new.

MR. WILSON: I think we have to consider this further borrowing policy from two aspects. First I wish briefly to touch upon the point whether we have given railway facilities within reasonable bounds; and, secondly, I think we may judge it from the aspect as to whether we have reached the reasonable bounds of our borrowing policy. I believe everyone will agree that we have given railway facilities, at least as good, if not better than those given by any other of the Australasian group. Up to the present we may lay claim to having carried our railway policy ahead very much faster than the other colonies, and to have given facilities in districts such as other colonies certainly would not have given them in. On that head we may safely say we have given every facility up to the present that ought to be required. Some two years ago I said in this House that if the Premier would adopt as his national policy that of railway construction and opening up the country by means of railways, and would leave such works as the Coolgardie water supply scheme to be carried out by private enterprise, or by those who wanted the water, then he might safely go ahead with his railway policy; and I maintain that if he had carried out that suggestion, to-day, instead of having opposition to the extension of his railways, instead of being troubled with regard to his rolling-stock, and instead of not knowing how he is going to carry the traffic all over the railways as constructed, as pointed out by the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran), he would have had ample scope and ample means at his disposal to carry out all these works and many others of urgent necessity. I take it that in carrying out works of this description we must be very careful indeed not to endanger

our financial stability. That is the main point, and surely if there is the slightest risk of endangering our financial stability, there cannot be any harm in, at any rate, postponing works of this description for 12 months or even two years. The Premier has stated over and over again, and I think he stated last night, that the bulk of these works, at all events so far as the railways are concerned, are payable works. By that, he meant that the works would pay their way; not only pay interest on the amount of money used on their construction, but also sinking fund and working expenses. We have not had the slightest proof in this House that these railways projected by the Forrest Ministry will pay. We have had no estimates of the traffic to be conveyed over them, and no estimates showing what profits he expects to derive from that traffic. The only thing we have had stated here is the right hon. gentleman's opinion—in fact, his certainty—that the lines will prove remunerative. We want something more conclusive than this before we commit the country to further borrowing. We want to get figures and facts as was done by the contractors for the Coolgardie railway before they put in their tender. They went on to the ground and gauged the traffic; they estimated the value of that traffic, and knew to a nicety almost the profit they could make out of the construction of that line. Why have not the Government done the same in connection with these railways? We have no figures of any description to guide us, and, as far as hon. members can judge, possibly these railways may be an addition to the non-paying railways of the country. In fact, the tendency is to come to that conclusion. It is perhaps ancient history that the Premier has on very many occasions publicly stated he would not be found advocating further borrowing until the present authorisations were exhausted, nor indeed until we had a large increase in population. This has been stated over and over again. It was stated by the Premier at Bunbury in March, I think, of 1896 or 1897, at the general election. It was further repeated in this House, I believe, each year when the Premier spoke on his fiscal policy; and yet what do we find? We find that although these statements have been made and reiterated by the

right hon. gentleman, we have been reappropriating moneys, knowing full well that all moneys reappropriated must sooner or later be replaced by further borrowing. What is the position to-day? We have authorised loans of £12,170,000; we have loans and Treasury bills current to the amount of £11,022,000, leaving a balance of our authorisations yet unraised of £1,148,000. What have we to do with that balance? I take it that the very least we can estimate the works to be completed for—and works which must be completed, whether the Forrester Ministry be in power or not—is £3,000,000. We have the Coolgardie water scheme, upon which I think half a million has been spent. Two millions at the very least, if not more, will be required to finish that scheme within the next two years. We have also the Fremantle harbour works, that great national work which any Ministry must of necessity complete, and that, I maintain, will require half a million more than has been expended down to the present time. Including a graving dock, the work of deepening the harbour and other works projected, we shall be lucky indeed if we get off with a further expenditure of half a million.

THE PREMIER: By your action you want to stop the works.

MR. WILSON: In addition to this, on the right hon. gentleman's own showing, we have our rolling-stock so short on existing lines and some of the rolling-stock is in such a state of disrepair that at least half a million pounds will be required to put it in good order, and to properly equip the existing lines. This means that three millions of money must, of necessity, be raised within the next two years, and in addition to that we must raise sufficient money by loan to retire the Treasury bills of £2,050,000 which are now current. This gives us five millions of money to be raised within the next two years. It must be raised by the right hon. gentleman or his successors; and has the Premier not told us more than once, at any rate my memory serves me well when I say once, that the limit of our borrowing capacity with our present population is about £2,000,000 per annum, whereas I have proved we require to raise two and a half millions per annum, and the Premier wishes to saddle the country with a further

loan of a million of money. I think, from the Premier's own utterances, it is proved that we have reached, for the present at any rate, the limit of our safe borrowing powers, and I think that is also proved by the experience of the other colonies, as we find that when all our authorisations are exhausted our debt will be £80, at least, per head of the population, the heaviest of the Australasian group.

MR. MONGER: Provided we do not increase in population proportionately.

MR. WILSON: Very much has been said by previous speakers about the value of our mines, and no hon. member can be otherwise than proud of the achievements of our gold industry, when we consider the output of gold has overtaken the two largest gold-producing colonies of the Eastern coast. At the same time, I wish to join issue with those who have talked about the mines as being an asset against our loans. I fail to see how we can reasonably put down the Great Boulder and the Lake View Consols as security against our loans. Take it this way: supposing the gold production, instead of averaging one ounce to one ounce and a half throughout the country, averaged ten ounces per ton, would that give us any increase in population unless new mines were opened up? Would it give us increased traffic over our railways? Would it increase our revenue? Not one iota. We should derive the same revenue as we do at the present time. There would be the same traffic over our railways if the result was ten ounces as there is with an ounce to an ounce and a half to the ton to-day. Therefore, it cannot be said, because our mines are rich, that is a set-off against the money expended by the Government. The mines are private property, and no matter how wealthy they may be, unless they employ more hands than they have done in the past, we cannot hope for a direct result so far as the traffic on the railways and the revenue of the country is concerned. One point we have to carefully consider is this: should these railways and works prove nonpaying, as they very easily may do at some future time, who is going to bear the burden? Will the mines bear the burden? Will any of the great industries of the country bear this extra burden? They will bear their share of taxation, that is all. It must of necessity

mean this: if our railways cease paying, we must have taxation in some other form to pay the interest on the loans, therefore the burden will come right back on the people. The people who are now to be taxed to find the interest on the loans already raised must be further taxed to find the interest on this excessive loan.

THE PREMIER: The people are not taxed very much at the present time.

MR. WILSON: They may not be taxed directly very much, but the people of Western Australia are one of the heaviest taxed people in the whole of the Australasian group, indirectly. I do not think anyone can gainsay that.

THE PREMIER: Not more so than people in the other colonies: I do not think as much.

MR. WILSON: We have pointed out over and over again from this (Opposition) side of the House that when the right hon. gentleman carried the Coolgardie water scheme it meant a stoppage of all other works in the colony, practically; and as I have proved that we have reached, to my mind, the safe limit of borrowing for the present time, I appeal to hon. members to say if what we said has not come true, if it is not so. Having reached the safe limit of our borrowing powers, the Coolgardie water scheme has decidedly stopped the works which otherwise hon. members would have been pleased to pass. There is another argument I might advance, that in constructing railways it is not only the first cost that has to be considered. This appears to be the case so far as I gather from the remarks of the right hon. gentleman, who said he only wanted an instalment of the cost of construction. Not only has the Premier to get the balance of the cost of construction for the works, but he must not hide the fact that it is not only the first cost we have to consider, but when we get the works completed and the railways in running order, then the Government are troubled with the upkeep of the work and the lines. Taking into consideration at the present time that we must raise money to equip our present railways with rolling-stock, as already borne out by the Premier—in fact I think he hinted that it might possibly be his duty to increase the amount of the Bill to cover the rolling-stock for existing lines—to keep works in

order the Government must spend money to keep the railways in good working condition to cope with the existing trade. I think it most unwise, and a bad policy on the part of the Government and this House, to sanction any further borrowing at the present time. The only thing that will warrant further borrowing is a settled and permanent increase in population. That is the only thing which will warrant us in increasing our authorisations at the present time, and I hope hon. members will take that view of it and see that the Bill is not allowed to pass. I do not say for a moment, and I hope hon. members will agree with me, that the country will receive any injury in delaying this measure for twelve months. The country is not going to be ruined. The Premier accused us of having no faith in our country: we have every faith in the country. We believe in our natural resources, and we believe this is one of the richest colonies on the continent. It only wants careful administration on the part of the Forrest Ministry to bring the colony out of the present cloud of depression and steer clear of any financial trouble. Old Western Australians do not support the borrowing and spending policy of the Government. I have spoken to many of them, and they say that the right hon. gentleman is going too fast, and that is the general feeling throughout the country. It is a question of borrowing and spending until we shall come to a standstill. I hope, in conclusion, that hon. members will endeavour to sink the requirements of their electorates; I hope they will endeavour to rise above parochial legislation which, of course, is very difficult to hide when electors are pulling at hon. members to get this and that done in their constituencies. It is natural that members should be anxious to see items which will carry out works in their constituencies passed; but I trust to-night, when the division comes, that hon. members will rise above these considerations, will take a national view of the finances, and vote according to their convictions, as it will be for the general weal of the country. I certainly shall oppose this second reading, and I hope other hon. members will do the same, so that we shall have no further borrowing this year.

MR. HOLMES (East Fremantle): It is my intention to oppose the second reading of this Bill, and I shall briefly explain my reasons for so doing. I gathered from the remarks of the Premier, the other evening, when moving the second reading of this Bill, that out of present loan authorisations there are about one million pounds available to continue present works. Hon. members will, I think, agree with me that this million of loan money, with about three millions of revenue—four millions in all—will be sufficient for the present Ministry, with the present population, to spend during the course of the present year. Four million pounds will be sufficient with the limited population which we have now.

THE PREMIER: No one said we were going to spend it this year.

MR. HOLMES: The Coolgardie water scheme is the only work demanding a large expenditure of public money which is in hand at the present time. The estimated expenditure on this work, I think, is about one million pounds per annum, or half a million for the next six months. Surely there is half a million available out of the million pounds yet in hand and to be raised, to continue the Coolgardie water scheme until we meet in the early part of next year. The other half million pounds will be sufficient to carry on harbour works, improvements to existing lines, and to give a further supply of rolling-stock. If this were done, and the expenditure in this direction carried into effect in the course of the next few months, in the early part of next year when Parliament meets, the money market may probably be in a better position than it is to-day. We shall know what our requirements are, and what are the most important works to push along with. If that be done, we shall have done very well, because the Premier will be compelled to keep his promise not to ask the country to embark on any further loan authorisation until the present authorisation has been exhausted. That is a distinct promise, made repeatedly by the Premier, and the House ought to insist on his carrying out the promise. I have yet to learn that the railway extension policy, as laid down in the Bill, is desirable. I am prepared to admit a railway to Leonora would be acceptable; but have not each and all of us desired in our

private lives many works of importance and urgency we would be only too pleased to carry out, had we the wherewithal? In such cases, we have to gauge our expenditure according to our income, and a little hesitation has a good effect. The first question is whether we are in a position to undertake the works laid down in the Loan Bill? I am convinced we are not, and consequently I am prepared to vote against the second reading of the Bill. It has been suggested there are hon. members on both sides of the House who dare not oppose the Bill because it contains items of expenditure in their particular districts. Members for Fremantle have been singled out and told that because an expenditure of £70,000 is proposed in that constituency, they dare not oppose the Bill. I will not commit the country to a further liability of £1,500,000 in order that £70,000 may be spent at Fremantle. There is too much of the "sprat to catch a mackerel" business, not only in this House, but throughout the length and breadth of the country; and I for one will try to raise myself above ordinary political considerations, and view matters from a broader point of view than hon. members perhaps give me credit for. Experience teaches us that it is an unfortunate position, whether we be an ordinary individual or a Colonial Treasurer, to have liabilities increasing with no idea how we are to finance them; and that is the position in which the Premier will find himself at an early date, if he does not already find himself there. The effect of this has been shown in a marked degree in our recent transactions with London financial institutions. Have we not been adjusting our accounts and satisfying one creditor by borrowing from another, each time paying an increased rate of interest? That will continue as long as we are compelled to borrow money to meet obligations; and the financiers of London know our position. They knew the Premier had certain Treasury bills to meet on the 1st December, and would have to pay their price, and they made him pay accordingly. How easy would it be for us if we were to first arrange our finances and, after putting them on a satisfactory basis, say to these gentlemen, "We have many works and im-

provements we desire to carry out; and if you are prepared to treat us liberally and fairly we will proceed, but if you are not, we will wait until a more convenient season." If that were done we would be in a position to dictate our terms to financiers, instead of having financiers dictating their terms to us; and it is with the object of putting our finances on a satisfactory basis before incurring further liabilities, that I oppose the second reading of the Bill. I am supported by the fact that the existing railways, over which the increased traffic would have to pass, cannot cope with the traffic of to-day; and if anything be necessary, it is not an extension of our railway system, but a further expenditure on rolling-stock, in order to bring the latter to a proper state of efficiency. If, in the present authorisation, there is no provision for rolling-stock, I am prepared to assist the Government and their supporters in providing means to supply the deficiency; but I must oppose the Loan Bill as it stands. Before concluding, I should like to ask the attention of the House for one moment while I make a personal explanation. The Premier last night showed cowardly, mean, petty spite when he charged me with deserting his side of the House.

THE PREMIER: Are these words parliamentary?

THE SPEAKER: No; I think the expressions are improper for the hon. member to use.

MR. HOLMES: Then I withdraw the expressions. The Premier charged me with deserting his side of the House. Well, I admit the desertion, and have congratulated myself ever since on having crossed the floor. The Premier said I was elected to support the Government, but I would ask hon. members to follow me just a moment while I refer to what I said in my first speech in this House, when seconding the Address-in-Reply. I then said:

Hence my seconding the Address-in-Reply signifies no more than that I will give a general support to the present occupants of the Treasury benches, so long as the policy pursued promises to further the best interests of the country.

MR. HUBBLE: Have the Government not pursued that policy?

THE PREMIER: That speech was made after the hon. member had been returned.

MR. GEORGE: The hon. member could not make the speech before he was returned.

MR. HOLMES: I went on to say:

But I feel sure that this House and my constituents will understand my line of action in thus stating at the outset that I am not a thick-and-thin supporter of the Ministry in office.

That was the first remark I made on addressing the House, and it speaks for itself, and cannot be denied. The Premier made a further statement which I denied at the time, and which I deny now, that I desired honours from him. The Premier knows it is not a fact that I desired honours from him.

THE PREMIER: I say it is an absolute fact, and the member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest) was the medium.

MR. HOLMES: I may tell hon. members that in November, when I was firing shots from the Government side, and making things not too comfortable for the Government, the member for West Kimberley approached me on the floor of the House, and offered to appoint me a justice of the peace.

MR. HUBBLE: I do not believe it.

MR. HOLMES: I refused the offer.

MR. HUBBLE: You would be only too glad to receive it.

MR. HOLMES: I refused it, and the member for West Kimberley can bear out my statement.

THE PREMIER: But the member for West Kimberley had not the giving of the appointment.

MR. HOLMES: I afterwards accepted appointment as justice of the peace, but I did not know the honour was intended as a bribe. The only communication that passed between the Premier and myself on the subject was one letter, which I have here, and in which he said he would be prepared to recommend me for the appointment. I accepted the position as an honour; but I have refused it as a bribe, and have this day tendered my resignation as a justice of the peace of this colony. That was the only charge the Premier could bring against me, namely that I refused to sell my principles because he had made me a justice of the peace.

THE PREMIER: Nothing of the sort.

MR. HOLMES: I refused to be a political mute, and consequently I have brought down the wrath of a vindictive and autocratic Premier.

THE PREMIER: Really! The hon. member must not charge me with being "vindictive."

THE SPEAKER: I think the hon. member for East Fremantle ought to withdraw that word.

MR. HOLMES: I withdraw the word.

THE PREMIER: For his own sake, the hon. member ought to be a little reasonable.

MR. HOLMES: The Premier last night charged me with getting honours under false pretences, and with deserting his side of the House.

THE PREMIER: I do not think I did.

MR. HUBBLE: If the Premier did make the charge, it was true.

MR. HOLMES: The Premier whines because he does not receive the support he thinks he deserves; but if the Premier will conduct the affairs of the country in a more satisfactory manner than in the past, I for one will be found lending him more support than at the present time.

THE PREMIER: I told you I did not want your support.

MR. JAMES: You seem very sorry to have lost it.

THE PREMIER: Sorry!

MR. HOLMES: It is better for me to sit opposite and rebuke the Premier, than to sit behind him and be a traitor to myself and a traitor to the people in assisting him, by means of reckless expenditure, in bringing disaster on the country. I oppose the second reading of the Bill, and support the amendment of the member for Albany.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. F. H. Piesse): It is not my intention to add much to this already lengthy debate; but as several allusions have been made to matters affecting the Railway Department, including the question of rolling-stock and duplication of the Kalgoorlie line, it is due to the House, and also in the interests of the department, that some explanation should be given. If one may judge from remarks which have fallen from the lips of various speakers during the debate, it might be inferred that the Government were not cognizant of the necessity for providing the necessary rolling-stock for the traffic of the railways. A few evenings ago, however, I mentioned that the Government are well aware a shortage in rolling-

stock is causing some anxiety, but that despite this shortage, the business in regard to railway traffic is going on fairly satisfactorily. While it would be better if we had more stock, there have been no very serious delays up to the present, and we have been able to meet most of the requirements. The demands made by the traffic have probably been in excess of what could be fully met on application; but with energy on the part of the department, combined with economy and the methods adopted in discharging goods from wagons, we have so far been able to keep the traffic going, as I have said, fairly satisfactorily. We expect some further improvement during the course of the next few months; not because we shall receive additional rolling-stock, but because we are making arrangements at different places to further expedite the discharge of the goods from the wagons, and are also making arrangements at Kalgoorlie and on the Boulder line by which we shall be better able to deal with the wagons than we can do now. I admitted a few evenings ago that the congestion at Kalgoorlie and at the Boulder has no doubt caused great inconvenience to the public, and it is much to be regretted that we have so far been unable to cope with the difficulty as satisfactorily as we would have liked to do; but arrangements have now been made for the expenditure of about £15,000 in connection with improvements at the Kalgoorlie yard and at the different Boulder stations; and these improvements will, it is hoped, afford us some relief within the next five or six weeks.

MR. MORAN: That does not include the duplicating of the line?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: No. This work is now in hand at Kalgoorlie, and I mentioned, when speaking of it some few evenings ago, that some weeks ago we had been pressed by the people on the fields to commence it immediately; but I pointed out that, owing to the time required for preparation of designs, and with a view of doing the work as economically as possible, some delay had occurred, though I am glad to say the work is now progressing with more despatch, and some very considerable relief should be afforded us almost at once. We have also

made arrangements for special attention to be given to rolling-stock on the fields by appointing an inspector whose special duty it is to attend to the discharge of the stock in that district, and to despatch it as quickly as possible to the coast; and I am informed by the Chief Traffic Manager no later than this evening that there has been a decided improvement in this matter, and that the stock is coming forward very much better than it did some weeks previously. Recently I mentioned in the House that we had already anticipated this demand for rolling-stock by ordering 300 bogie wagons. These will be equal to 600 four-wheeled wagons, and the ironwork for them is in a fair way towards completion in England, and will be in this colony by the latter part of April or the beginning of May next. Of course the difficulty we have to face in the interim is one which no doubt will cause us a great deal of anxiety, but I can assure the House that there will be little interference with the traffic, excepting that there will be individual cases of inconvenience and trouble to the people who have to use the railways, and of trouble and anxiety to the department. I frequently find exaggerated statements made with regard to the delays, and I have one instance before me this evening. Since tea-hour, while sitting in the House, I have received a telegram from Bunbury which states that a steamer will arrive there at 3 o'clock to-morrow morning; that she will have to load 30 trucks of timber; that this timber is now at the mills; that it cannot be conveyed into the port in time; and that the steamer will consequently be delayed. On receipt of this telegram I at once placed myself in communication with the Chief Traffic Manager, and found that this steamer, which it is said will arrive at 3 o'clock to-morrow morning, and which no doubt will arrive at that hour, will not commence loading till 9 o'clock, and that the wagons will be there at 8.30; and that the department are making every provision to bring in the remainder of the timber for the purpose of giving this vessel prompt despatch. No doubt the people who are to shift this timber feared that they would be inconvenienced, and they wired to me at once; but on inquiry we find that the case is not so bad as it is

made out to be, that the department are quite equal to the occasion, and are doing their best to meet the emergency. We know that frequently we find exaggerated statements made as to delays; and I am quite confident, too, that delays do occur, that inconvenience is caused, and that much trouble doubtless is sometimes experienced by customers of the railways in consequence of these delays; but frequently the public are inclined to exaggerate their grievances.

MR. VOSPER: Has this any particular connection with the Loan Bill?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: It has, in connection with the rolling-stock. Everyone else has had his say about the railways and the rolling-stock, and about all the items which affect the railways; and I therefore think that, in defence of my department, and also with a view to allaying the public fear on this question, I am entitled to address the House. That is one of the chief reasons for which I have risen to-night—to allay the public apprehension in regard to the anticipated shortage of rolling-stock, which it is supposed will cause great inconvenience to the public, and great loss and trouble in the conveyance of merchandise throughout the colony. Those who remember the block of 1896 will recollect that we then had most serious trouble. We had at that time only 1,300 trucks; to-day we have 4,300. At that time we conveyed over the railway about 800,000 tons of goods per annum; to-day we carry about 1,300,000 tons of goods, and we have to-day three times as many wagons as we had in 1896, although we have not three times as great a traffic; consequently there is not so great a difficulty facing us to-day as faced us in 1896. We were able to overcome the difficulty in 1896, and I take it we shall be able to overcome our difficulties in 1899 and 1900.

MR. GEORGE: You have an increased mileage.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: I know we have; I recognise that. But it will be remembered, too, that in July of 1896 the goldfields line was opened as far as Boorabbin, and in September of that year it had been opened to Kalgoorlie; consequently the mileage was 385 even at that time; so the hon.

member will see that although the mileage to-day is very great, we had also a considerable mileage in the latter part of 1896. Then, too, we have a very much larger number of wagons, and consequently we shall be able to deal with the traffic much better than we were able to do at that time. At the same time the officers of the department, as well as myself, fully recognise that every possible effort must be made, and that everything should be done by the department to do their duty to the public in regard to the traffic. We have already anticipated our requirements for the future; and I wrote out a few notes giving a list of stock of which indents are now being prepared; and although only £195,000 has been provided for that purpose in the schedule of this Loan Bill, still, as I said, this is a first instalment of the amount required to pay for rolling-stock which will eventually cost something over £500,000. Now with regard to the relaying of the line to Kalgoorlie: we have in course of progress the relaying of a portion, what is termed "the old line," that is the line laid with the old rails for the Eastern railway. That will take us 380 miles, and we have then a distance of 190 miles to complete; and the completion will cost us about £135,000. I think I have already expressed my opinion, in which I am borne out by the General Manager, that no time should be lost in ordering the rails for the completion of the relaying of this portion of the line with heavier metal.

MR. GEORGE: Hear, hear.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: The member for the Murray (Mr. George) knows well that the traction power of such engines as the Class K would greatly assist us by enabling us to take those engines over that section of the line between Northam and Kalgoorlie, thus permitting of a greater load than we are able to draw to-day with our Class G and Class O engines; so that we should economise very much by having additional haulage power besides the engines which are now available, and which would certainly be made use of in carrying larger loads than we are able to draw to-day with the smaller engines we are using. So that the relaying would be a great economy to the country, and it would be a great advantage

to the department to take the work in hand at once; and so, anticipating the necessity for this work, the new rails should be ordered as soon as possible to complete this 190 miles of line. This, I think, will obviate the necessity for duplicating that line for some little time longer; and although we must keep in view the necessity for the duplication provided the business continues to increase, still I would point out that we are able to carry out that work of relaying, and I do not see any reason why we should not be able to carry it out within a reasonable period. Then for some time to come, with crossing-stations placed at convenient distances of about eight miles, we have almost the advantage of a duplicate line. But there is one thing we must not lose sight of. If we could dispense with a good number of these stations, we should do away with a large cost in upkeep which we are paying to-day, and there would be great economy in duplicating the line, and in thus dispensing with those stations; for if we capitalised the cost of their upkeep, no doubt we should more than pay the interest on the money which would be needed to carry out the duplication. The other question mentioned to-night has been the matter of the Boulder railway. This is one of the works we are providing for in the Bill before the House; and with the great amount of traffic which we have upon that line, the duplication of at least that portion between Kalgoorlie and Gumballa, a distance of about five miles, is absolutely necessary, and should be carried out with the greatest possible dispatch; in fact, I am pressed to commence that work immediately, but I fear to do so unless we have the sanction of the House to this Loan Bill. Therefore I say that the provision made in the Bill for the carrying out of the work on this Boulder line is a necessary provision, and one which should be made when the Bill is before the Committee.

MR. MORAN: Is not this work included in "extension?"

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: No; it is not: it is a special appropriation. In the item, "Improvements to open railways," the work in connection with the Kalgoorlie yard will be included, and other works of a similar character; but this work in connection

with the Boulder railway is provided for by a special appropriation under this Loan Bill.

MR. MORAN: Then strike out the word "extension."

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: That is a question to be dealt with in Committee. I hardly think it necessary to deal with any other matters in connection with this Loan Bill, because so much has already been said by others who have spoken on the subject, and it has been dealt with so strongly by my right hon. colleague that I do not intend to detain the House further, excepting in regard to those items which I have already mentioned; and therefore I content myself with saying that if we take the report of the general manager upon the several items—rolling-stock, necessary works, Boulder railway, Coolgardie-Kalgoorlie railway, the relaying of the railway with heavier rails—I think the report of that officer gives such information as will be an assurance to the House that although these works are absolutely necessary, there is no immediate danger—that is, danger to the traffic—in consequence of their not being carried out; but as soon as we can possibly do the work, it should be undertaken. In that statement I concur, and I may say that I have already represented it to my right hon. colleague, who is fully seized of all the facts in connection with this matter; and immediately this Bill passes through the House, as I hope it will, and we are given sufficient funds to carry out the work, no time will be lost in at once putting in hand anything that may be necessary in regard to the traffic in connection with our railways, and in carrying out the works so essential to their completion.

MR. GEORGE: Will you strike out some of those railways in the schedule?

MR. LEAKE: Where are you to get the money?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: There are some works which we can commence if we have the authorisation: we can get the money from other sources provided we have the authorisation; and I think that is the course which the member for Albany (Mr. Leake) knows full well is one which is resorted to frequently, and one which we shall have to resort to in the circumstances. I take it that if he ever "runs"

the Government of this country, he will find himself obliged to adopt similar means, if he has to keep pace with the times in the same way as this Government is attempting to do.

MR. LEAKE: A policy of misappropriation!

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: I have no more to say. I hope the few words I have said in regard to this matter will allay the public fears in connection with the difficulties facing us to-day; and I wish to assure this House that so far as the officers of my department are concerned, so far as everyone connected with it is concerned, they are seized of the fact that the greatest expedition should be used to improve the traffic arrangements; that all due economy should be exercised, and that every effort should be made to facilitate the dispatch of goods, and to cause as little inconvenience as possible to the public. In that I concur, and my best efforts will be made, as Minister controlling the department, to see that the business is carried on satisfactorily.

MR. GREGORY: Does the Engineer-in-Chief approve of £40,000 being spent at Bunbury?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: I should like to answer that question in Committee.

MR. CONOLLY (Dundas): It was not my intention to say anything with reference to this question at the present juncture. In fact I should have preferred to deal with that portion of the Loan Bill which most affects the district I have the honour to represent, when the Bill comes before us in Committee. But in view of the many observations delivered in the House this evening with regard to the goldfield I represent, I do not think it would be consistent with the duties I have in this House, to allow the vote to be decided without enlightening some hon. members on the question. There can be no doubt from the tone of the debate which has taken place every time this Bill has come under notice, that the railways the Government propose cause the most difficulty and are most warmly opposed by many members intending to vote against the Bill itself. It is for that reason that, while there are many important works included in the Bill, I shall concentrate my observations on the

railway portion of the proposals. I do not think those who have spoken with regard to this Bill have any great fears as to the merits of the Leonora line. From what I can understand both inside and outside the House, a large majority of members have expressed themselves strongly in favour of this line, not only on account of the large amount of country that it will open up, but also from its remunerative standpoint, and I do not think there can be any reasonable objection to its construction. The second great work is the line which, as everybody knows, affects the welfare of my district. It is the line over which there has been very considerable controversy. Whatever attitude many members may take up with regard to the port of Esperance, I would like to say my attitude in reference to it and to this Bill is one which is fully concurred in by the people of that town. I think the attitude I have taken up on this question is sufficiently well known to hon. members for them to understand what my feelings are at the present moment. The people of Esperance—that is to say, the remnants of the people now living there, between 300 and 400 out of a population of about 1,600—have at last, I may say, capitulated. They say to the Norseman people, "Very well, if the Government absolutely refuse either to construct this line or to allow other people to do so, we will throw our lot in with Norseman and assist you to get yours." That is the attitude I intend to take up on this question. But I have really risen this evening to enlighten some hon. members as to the value and possibilities of the Dundas goldfields.

THE PREMIER: Hear, hear.

MR. CONOLLY: That is what I am going to speak of this evening. Judging from the speech of the member for the Murray (Mr. George), that gentleman has absolutely no conception of what he is talking about when he speaks of the Dundas goldfield. He has never been there. He has in all probability taken his opinions from prejudiced people, and when he says the Dundas goldfield does not justify a railway, he shows that he knows nothing about that goldfield—what it has done, or what its possibilities are going to be. I regret to have to speak of that hon. member in this way,

but there is absolutely no other course when one hears a member get up in this House and declare his opposition to this line before he has heard a single word about it. There has been literally nothing said in this House with regard to that line, except what the Premier said yesterday evening, and on that occasion the hon. member was not in his seat and consequently did not hear it. Without entering into detail with reference to the merits of this field, I would like to say that this goldfield has given a return of between £300,000 and £400,000 worth of gold in its short career, and every ounce of that gold has been obtained from the stone. There has been absolutely no alluvial gold to swell the return, which cannot be said of any other goldfield in the colony. If hon. members will only go round and speak to those members who did me the honour to accompany me to the Dundas goldfield, they will without the least difficulty be able to form opinions as to the value of that field. All those members who accompanied me on that occasion will bear me out that there was not one member of either of those parties who, when they visited that field some 18 months ago, did not fully realise and declare his opinion that the Dundas goldfield was well worthy of a railway.

MR. GREGORY: What is about the monthly average?

MR. CONOLLY: Last month I think it was about 4,000. This goldfield at the present time employs no less than 700 people directly by its mines, and the individual outputs which the various mines give I shall have much pleasure in stating when the item itself comes before the Committee. But I would like to say that the Dundas field must not be compared with such fields as those at Kalgoorlie. In fact there is no field in this colony, or I may say in the world, that I know of, that is comparable with that great centre. At the same time the Dundas goldfield fully bears out everything the right hon. the Premier said about it yesterday evening, and I think the hon. member who has just asked me the question as to what the monthly output was will agree with me that the Dundas goldfield is worthy of a line. I would like to add one thing, and this is more closely connected with some of my friends from Fremantle. I do not wish

to say anything derogatory of those hon. members. We all know that hon. members are supposed in this House to represent the best interests of their people, and consequently whatever I say, I say with due deference to the duty which I am confident those members feel devolves upon them. But does it not appeal to hon. members, and I appeal more especially to the hon. members for Fremantle, when I say that each time I have stood up in this House during the last two years and appealed to this Assembly to give a line to connect Norseman with Esperance, its closest seaport, the Fremantle members have been the first and strongest opponents? Now that the Government turn round and propose to connect this goldfield with Coolgardie, which will benefit Fremantle, these people again turn round and say "No; that field shall not have it." First they say because it is not justified, and secondly because the finances of the country will not stand it. I would ask them if the finances of the country will stand the vast expenditure on the Fremantle harbour works? Will the finances of the colony stand the immense strain which has for years and years been placed upon them by the vast and important works carried out at Fremantle? We never hear anything about financial trouble in that matter. I simply say it is the old question which the Fremantle people, I regret to assert, appear not to be able to lose sight of, that the Southern portion of Western Australia does not belong to Western Australia, so far as they are concerned. Would they like to sink it or ruin it? I await with interest the attitude that some of my friends from Fremantle will take up on this question. I wait with interest to see whether they are still going to retain that spirit of intense parochialism by which they have characterised themselves so long as they have been before the public, or whether they will show a more broad-minded, a more generous, and a fairer spirit on the question of the railway brought before the House with reference to my district.

MR. MORGANS: What about the position of the member for Geraldton?

THE PREMIER: What about the attitude of your leader (Mr. Leake) and of those other people over there.

MR. CONOLLY: I will answer the Premier, but I do not think it was a well-directed question; for the reason it involves the question why I have associated myself with this side of the House.

MR. MORAN: That is too long: never mind.

MR. CONOLLY: I do not wish to deal with it at any length, but I was charged with it by the hon. member (the Premier) the other evening. The explanation will not be a very pleasant one to give, and I do not think it will be very pleasant to him either. If gentlemen on the Government side had represented the Dundas district as I have done, and the action of the Government had recoiled on the people who sent them to this House, as the action of this Government has recoiled on my people; if they had seen one-half of their constituency absolutely ruined and the other half depending upon a mere promise, which I may say at that time appeared to have very small prospect of being realised, and even now we are depending largely on the loyalty with which the Government supporters support the Premier himself—

MR. MORAN: No fear.

MR. CONOLLY: I ask hon. members what attitude they would have taken up. Could they have supported a Government that had done that to their people?

MR. MORGANS: Will the Opposition help you?

MR. CONOLLY: It does not matter whether they will, but could I associate myself with a Government that had done that to my people?

THE PREMIER: I think we are your best friends yet.

MR. CONOLLY: The right hon. the Premier has to prove it yet. I do not know exactly what opinion to express upon it yet, but I can simply reiterate what I said to my own people at Dundas, and that is that they cannot live on promises. They must have something more substantial.

MR. DOHERTY: They will not have promissory notes, then?

MR. CONOLLY: Provided they are on good accounts we will have them. When this item comes on, I think I shall be able to more fully show hon. members the resources, present and in prospect, of the Dundas goldfield. The

only member who has expressed his opposition to this railway in open and deliberate terms this evening has, I am sorry to say, only just returned to hear me express my opinion of the gold-field.

MR. GEORGE: I have heard it, if you refer to me. I have heard all you said.

MR. DOHERTY (North Fremantle): This debate has revealed some State secrets, for which members on the Government side of the House should require some explanation. I refer to the discourse which took place between the Premier and the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) yesterday afternoon. We want to know why the Premier neglected the Government side of the House, and went across to the other side to offer the member for Central Murchison a seat in his Ministry. That is what we require to know. Several members on this side have ambitions equal to the ambition of the member for Central Murchison; and we want to know why the Premier left us out in the cold, and went across to the Opposition side of the House to try and induce a member to join his Ministry. I understand the Premier said that the only portfolio which the member could fulfil was that of Minister of Religion, and that there was no opening in that line.

MR. GEORGE: That is blasphemy.

MR. DOHERTY: That is the explanation, I think. The Premier did offer some inducement to the member for Central Murchison, and as the hon. member is a teetotaller, he is not under the influence of ardent spirits. Still I believe there was no intention on the part of the Premier to bring the member for Central Murchison over to this side of the House: it was simply a "try on." I do not wish to misrepresent the member for Central Murchison, therefore I hope he will pay attention to what I say, because he is the financial authority of Western Australia, the financial authority of this House, and if I misrepresent him I shall be satisfied to be corrected. The hon. member told the House last night that it would have been better for the Government to have floated a loan at 93 than to have purchased Exchequer bills at 101 at 4 per cent. for two years. That is exactly what the hon. member said, and I would like to analyse that statement. We find

by making the analysis that 93 would be a very bad market to go to. All will admit that. The Premier who would face a market at 93 would bring discredit on the country. But if the Premier did go to the market at 93 for a loan of a million pounds, he would receive £930,000: the £70,000 would be the discount. That of course is very plain. For the term of two years the interest on a million at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent would be £70,000, which would leave to the colony the sum of £860,000; but I say for a Premier to go to the money market at 93 would be ruin. The hon. member said a million at 101 at 4 per cent. interest: that would give the Government £1,010,000. Two years at 4 per cent. would mean a deduction of £80,000, which would leave the Government £930,000 against £860,000. The member for Central Murchison is very strong on finance, but he would sacrifice the financial position of the colony to the extent of £70,000.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: You are absolutely wrong.

MR. DOHERTY: I am taking the hon. member's figures, and I say that I would rather chance the loan at 101 than at 93.

MR. VOSPER: Are you supporting or opposing the Bill, which?

MR. GEORGE: The hon. member is giving a lecture on finance, which you do not understand.

MR. VOSPER: I certainly do not.

MR. DOHERTY: I should like to give the hon. member a lecture on Christian politeness. The member for Geraldton (Mr. Robson) is the Columbus of the party on the Opposition side. He discovered two harbours, one of which was Geraldton. This Captain Cook of the party comes to the House to tell us about our harbours. I have really only taken up a few remarks which have been made by hon. members on the Opposition side, and I say I feel prouder to-night than at any time since I have been in Parliament, because I heard the member for Fremantle to-night say that he was rising above ordinary politics. I rejoiced to-night when I heard the hon. member say that. I do not know what he means, but I am satisfied he is on a higher level than we are. I feel honoured, when we have representing Fremantle a gentleman who will rise

above ordinary politics. We have heard to-day what we have always heard since I have been in Parliament, a fear of the country we live in. People who are either Western Australians by birth or adoption should believe in the destiny of this country: surely we should not be afraid to spend the small sum of three-quarters of a million in a country which is turning out a million of pounds worth of gold per month. It is not asking hon. members to do too much at the present time to spend £750,000. If there was one argument against the railway policy being extended, it was that which was used by the member for North Coolgardie (Mr. Gregory), and that hon. member complained in the House very severely, and criticised the Government, for charging £4 a ton to take goods to Menzies when only a few years ago the charge was £70 or £80 a ton. The Government came into the breach and built a railway, and now the Government have brought upon themselves the displeasure of the hon. member for borrowing money to build railways.

MR. GREGORY: You fail to perceive that what I complained about was the differential rate.

MR. DOHERTY: There are no such things as differential railway rates in this country; there are only preferential rates. That is a preference given to our own colony. If the Government had not opened up this country by railways, would the country be so far advanced as it is to-day? Just complaints have been made against the Railway Department; but in a huge concern extending from Perth to Menzies and from Perth to Cue, it becomes a difficult task to manage such a business. There has been some criticism as to the amount of claims made on the Railway Department, and the Commissioner of Railways told us the other night that £400 was the total amount of claims paid in one year. I doubt this, because if that is the amount it is the greatest record in the world. Anyone who has had any experience of railway management must know that it is a marvellous record for only £400 to be paid in claims in one year.

MR. ROBSON: What about the claims unpaid?

MR. DOHERTY: I do not know whether there are any, but if there are

they may be unjust claims: probably they are. When we consider the fact that only £400 was paid for claims in one year, we have a right to be proud of the railway administration of the country. I am pleased that the sum of £70,000 has been placed on this Bill for the harbour works at Fremantle. I do not rise above ordinary politics when I say this, because it is to benefit my constituents; and I am pleased to know that my constituents are to be benefited. Not only are my constituents benefited, but the entire colony will be by the results which will accrue when the harbour works are completed. Then we shall have the pleasing sight of the P. and O. steamers coming into the river. Therefore we should not begrudge the sum of £70,000, which will be repaid in a short time by light and harbour dues through the increased traffic in the harbour.

MR. VOSPER: We shall have to pay the Jews, instead of the dues paying us.

MR. DOHERTY: The hon. member (Mr. Vosper) tries to be funny. I never heard any wit from the hon. member: the only wit that I know of is contained in his "Vosper Times," or his *Sunday Times*. There is nothing but Vosper in it.

MR. VOSPER: Sweet are the uses of advertisement.

MR. DOHERTY: I believe the word "Vosper" was used so frequently in his newspaper on one occasion that the printers had to cut the "W's" in half to make "V's" of them.

MR. VOSPER: We will give you a "big big D" next week.

MR. DOHERTY: I hope this House will support this Bill with confidence. The railway extensions that have been carried out in the past have been the means of employing large numbers of people. Take the Collie railway, for instance: that has been the means of employing fully two thousand people. In a few months another mine will open up at Collie, and I believe that in a short time ten thousand people will be employed on the Collie coalfields.

MR. GEORGE: The Government have not the rolling-stock to carry the coal away.

MR. DOHERTY: I am sorry they have not; and as a consequence the mines have to be shut down for days. The

Government want more rolling-stock, but the hon. member for the Murray (Mr. George) in his speech was diametrically opposed to this Bill.

MR. GEORGE: I will vote for £500,000 worth of rolling-stock, if a Bill is brought in authorising that expenditure.

MR. DOHERTY: The Government are only asking for £165,000 worth of rolling-stock, and the hon. member offers £500,000 worth. I hope this House will support the Government, even the members of the Opposition, who, I hope will take heart of grace, consider this matter, and seriously support the Bill.

MR. GREGORY (North Coolgardie): I would like to thank the hon. member for North Fremantle (Mr. Doherty) for the way in which he has enlightened me on the financial position of the colony. I can assure him that I thoroughly understand the financial position of this country from the way in which he has explained it, and I hope every other hon. member has understood the explanation of the finances by the member for North Fremantle, because he put it so plainly, much plainer than the member for Central Murchison did.

MR. DOHERTY: I did not touch upon the financial position of the country. Keep to the truth.

MR. GREGORY: And much clearer than the financial statement given to us by the Premier in his Budget speech. In speaking on the railway estimates a few nights ago, I drew special attention to the Government charging as low as £1 16s. 5d. for the carriage of colonial wine, whereas the carriage for South Australian and other wines was £7 16s. It was these inequalities I spoke so strongly about. I feel to-night in a very peculiar position, representing as I do a district in which the Government propose to extend the railway from Menzies to Mount Malcolm, and connected as I am with the Opposition, who have lately acquired much strength and solidity, and have been able to a great extent to keep the Government in check. My position in the House is one in which it is my duty to do all I can to get rid of the present Government as quickly as possible; and I would be very pleased to hear the Premier, in view of important questions which have arisen lately, and the differences of opinion in regard to federation

and other public matters, say to hon. members, "It is time we had a dissolution: the Government are not representative of the people, because times have changed, and having been here three years, we have outlived our usefulness."

MR. DOHERTY: Speak for yourself.

MR. GREGORY: I speak for myself, and I believe for a great many others. We have been told we should pass the second reading of the Bill, and deal with the details in Committee, when we can throw out such items as we think are not desirable. But I know the division is going to be two to one in favour of the Bill, and the Premier, with his great personality and power in the House, can induce the Committee to agree to every line in the schedule.

MR. HUBBLE: Not necessarily.

MR. GREGORY: In the schedule there are "sops" for eleven members, without having regard to public batteries for the goldfields.

THE PREMIER: The "sops" are very small.

MR. GREGORY: Some are small and some are large.

MR. ROBSON: Some members are very cheap.

MR. GREGORY: Still that is the way in which divisions are obtained in favour of the Government. Some of the railways enumerated in the schedule are justified, but the Premier in his opening speech, while telling us all about the Menzies and Mount Malcolm railway, left the other proposed railways severely alone; and I have not heard one argument advanced by any Government supporter in favour, for instance, of the Bonnie Vale line.

MR. JAMES: You can see the argument in favour of that line.

THE PREMIER: What about the Leonora line?

MR. GREGORY: I will tell the Premier about the Leonora line directly. I know the Bill will pass its second reading, and in Committee I shall be able to give the latest particulars and induce members to support the Leonora line.

THE PREMIER: You are like the members for Fremantle: you think the Government will carry the second reading of the Bill for you.

MR. GREGORY: I am certain the Government will carry the second reading of the Bill, because I know how the

division will go. The sum of £10,000 is set down for Albany, and £40,000 for Bunbury. The Premier informed the public the other day that there were two newspapers at Bunbury, both of which supported him; and I should think the people of the district should support him when £100,000 has been spent on the breakwater, and it is proposed to spend £40,000 more.

THE PREMIER: How much has been spent at Menzies?

MR. GREGORY: The people on the goldfields pay for the railways, as was seen in the instance of the Coolgardie line.

THE PREMIER: Who paid for the Menzies railway?

MR. GREGORY: The public to a great extent, and they would have paid a great deal more had I not induced the Commissioner of Railways to insert a special clause in the contract to prevent the contractor making exorbitant charges for the conveyance of goods. The Coolgardie line cost only £56,000 for 120 miles, and it is a disgrace that the people should have been called on to pay ten times more than the Government did to the contractors. There ought to have been some arrangement to prevent the exorbitant charges made by the contractors for the carriage of goods on that line before it was taken over by the Government.

THE PREMIER: Tell us something about the Leonora railway?

MR. GREGORY: I know I am going over old ground, but I feel justified in doing so under the circumstances. The first item in the proposed expenditure of £750,000 is the Boulder railway extension and duplication, and though the estimated cost is £220,000, I have been assured that the work will require over £50,000.

THE PREMIER: The £20,000 is only for out-works, timber, and so on.

MR. GREGORY: The Coolgardie to Bonnie Vale railway is set down at £10,000, but the engineer estimates the cost at £20,000.

THE PREMIER: This is the same thing over and over again.

MR. GREGORY: I told the Premier I would have to go over old ground. For the Coolgardie-Norseman railway £60,000 is set down, but it is estimated that the line will cost £290,000; while the

Menzies to Mount Margaret railway is put down at £60,000, though it will cost £165,000. The total amount of the extras, in regard to the cost of the proposed railways, comes to £407,000. Against that, if I understand the Minister correctly, the rails and fastenings are for the new railways, and £100,000 is put down in the schedule for these, though, according to the estimates of the engineer, they will cost £168,000. But deducting £100,000 from the £407,000, leaves £307,000 additional money which these railways will cost; and I do not see why the Menzies and Mount Malcolm railway, the Boulder extension, and the necessity for rolling-stock, should have to carry all these other items.

THE PREMIER: What other items are there?

MR. GREGORY: There are the Norseman, Bonnie Vale, and Goomalling railways, and the money it is proposed to vote for Albany, Bunbury, Carnarvon, and the Busselton wharf.

THE PREMIER: These are very small items.

MR. GREGORY: They amount to £154,000.

THE PREMIER: The harbour at Busselton is a very small item, and it is no use the hon. member exaggerating.

MR. GREGORY: The sum of £307,000 extra will be required for railways and other works, and, if we pass the Loan Bill, the Government will be given authority to spend, according to my figures, £1,357,000, although the sum has been otherwise estimated at £1,500,000. The Premier ought to have brought down a Bill providing only for works absolutely necessary. The Menzies to Mount Malcolm railway, the Boulder extension, and the rolling-stock are necessary items, which would involve an expenditure of some £750,000; and if the Premier had brought down a proposal to confine the Bill to these works, no great objection would have been made. But it is not advisable to extend our borrowing by £1,500,000 when we are engaged in carrying out the goldfields water scheme, for which latter work £1,000,000 was authorised in January, 1898, though I do not believe any concrete is as yet going into the excavation. The Commissioner of Railways has told us only £400,000 has been spent on this scheme, after all

this waste of time, and I have been assured by some of the engineers that the reason the scheme has been delayed is that they could not get money from the Government to go on with the work.

THE PREMIER: What delay do you refer to?

MR. GREGORY: I have been told that the engineers could not get money to carry on the water scheme more expeditiously.

THE PREMIER: Goodness gracious! Who told you that?

MR. GREGORY: I am not going to give the name of my informant.

THE PREMIER: Do you mean the Government could not pay the contractors?

MR. GREGORY: I was informed that the delay was due to the fact that the Government could not supply the engineers with money requisite to hurry on the work.

THE PREMIER: As Treasurer of the colony, I have no knowledge of that fact.

MR. GREGORY: I understand that up to the present time only £400,000 has been spent on the work. The authorised loans amount to £11,870,000, and the Government have borrowed up to within £450,000 or £500,000 of that authorisation on loans and Treasury bills.

THE PREMIER: Someone just now said it was £1,000,000. Take your figures from the member for the Canning (Mr. Wilson).

MR. GREGORY: You told us last night the country had borrowed £11,500,000.

THE PREMIER: No.

MR. GREGORY: I understood the Premier's speech to be to that effect.

THE PREMIER: I said we had borrowed £10,500,000.

MR. GREGORY: Then I must withdraw, but I was under the impression that all we had left of the loan authorisations was some £500,000, and knowing we shall require £2,000,000 more to complete the water scheme, I think it is time to pause and consider what greater powers of expenditure we shall give the Government. When we understand that the Bill means power to spend £1,300,000 or £1,500,000 we should exercise great care; and if we pass this Loan Bill it will be our duty to afterwards vote further moneys to complete the works.

THE PREMIER: What about the Leonora line?

MR. GREGORY: The Leonora railway is carrying the other railways on its back; but I would like first to speak in regard to Menzies. In Menzies there has been no protest against the extension of the railway; and with the great development in the Mount Ida and Mulline districts, where now 2,000 ounces or 3,000 ounces of gold a month are turned out, Menzies is bound to be a good little town at all times.

THE PREMIER: The output of gold is due to the Government policy.

MR. GREGORY: Niagara, 33 miles distant, which will be benefited by this extension, is a most important district; but the Premier, when giving the gold returns from other places, omitted to mention this promising field. Last month 2,870 ounces of gold, I think, came from Niagara, where there are some very rich mines, including the Cosmopolitan with 30 head of stampers, the Cumberland with 20 head, in all over 80 head in a radius of six miles. There is a reservoir, but whether the department will be able to conserve the water there is a matter of doubt, because, unfortunately, the reservoir is leaking very badly at present, and I would much sooner the Government did not want the water for the railways, but would pump it into Menzies.

THE PREMIER: Why not support the Bill if you want the railway?

MR. GREGORY: I will tell the Premier why I cannot see my way to support the Bill. We are not in the House to follow the dictation of the Premier, and I am now discussing a question which materially affects my district.

THE PREMIER: You are going against your district.

MR. GREGORY: With reference to the Malcolm district, which has also been progressing rapidly of late, I am surprised to think that the Premier, after all his promises, and knowing that this field was the first to give any impetus to the Leonora district, has quietly shelved this railway to Leonora and I think shelved it very deliberately. Possibly the people of Perth have not been able to notice the reason. There have been land sales at Mount Malcolm, and the quotations at one time for land in that district were

based all along upon the promise that this railway was going on to Leonora; but somebody has got the tip, and now we are given to understand that the railway shall only extend to Mount Malcolm. This railway, if carried out at all, should go through the Kookynie district: according to the plan, it will miss a very large and important district. When the railway reaches Mount Malcolm it should also be extended to Leonora, which is the premier portion of the whole of the Mount Malcolm goldfield, and I think deserves some consideration. The Sons of Gwalia mine has been turning out some 1,400 ounces of gold a month, and there is a large number of other mines in full work at that place; and in addition to those, further north there is the Mount George district, in which there are several mines at work with batteries, and there is also the Diorite King district, in which there are some 30 to 40 head of stamps. These form important reasons why this railway should be an extension from Menzies to Leonora *via* Mount Malcolm, instead of to Mount Malcolm only. Then to the north and east of Mount Malcolm there is a most important district. We have the Merton Dale district, some 20 miles north of Malcolm; then there is the district of Murrin Murrin to the east; the Mount Morgan field is coming gradually into prominence; and then there is the Laverton district, also the Earlstoun and the Mount Weld districts. The Laverton district is going very soon to be most important: miles and miles of country will there be taken up, and I feel sure that it is going to be one of the greatest and most permanent fields in Western Australia. Sixty miles north of Laverton we come to Earlstoun, where stamps are already at work; and I should not be surprised if in time this field were found to extend right up to Kimberley; and I protest in this House, when there is such a necessity for this line, that an endeavour should be made to get public money spent on other works. I would appeal to the Premier to withdraw this Loan Bill, and to bring in a Bill for the purpose of constructing this railway to Leonora, and also to provide for the necessary rolling-stock. Nearly every member here will vote for such a measure: I do not think there is anyone who would vote against the construction of that line; but I for

one do object to going into Committee on this Bill. Anyhow, I will be loyal to my party on this question: no matter what it costs me, I will stick to them; and I hope the day is not far distant when some different power will be at work, so that when a Bill of this kind is brought forward it will not be a Bill answering to the same description as that we are at present considering. I hope hon. members will try to induce the Premier to reconsider this question. We have heard the expressions of opinion all round in regard to these numerous railways and to the great expenditure which this Bill will entail on the country; and if the Premier would withdraw the Bill, and bring in a Bill for the construction of the Leonora railway and also for the purchase of rolling-stock, I should be found here ready to give him my support.

MR. A. FORREST (West Kimberley): I do not intend to occupy the time of the House except for a brief period, in order to reply generally to the remarks of the member for North Coolgardie (Mr. Gregory). I am sure the speech the hon. member has addressed to this House is one to which we listened with great respect, because he has advocated the larger items in this schedule—the Menzies-Mount Malcolm railway, the duplication of the line at the Boulder, and the large sum required for rolling-stock.

MR. GREGORY: Those items are absolutely necessary.

MR. A. FORREST: All these are matters in connection chiefly with the district which the hon. member represents. He calmly asks the Premier to withdraw this Bill, and to amend it so as to give him these three items, so that our friends on the other side can vote for the measure unanimously. I hope the Premier will do no such thing. There are many other important matters in the schedule which require the gravest consideration from this House: we must look, not backward, but forward; and I am sorry to hear from Opposition members that they are afraid of a little more debt for works urgently required in this country. The last speaker said nothing about works required at Albany, Bunbury, Busselton, and Carnarvon. He left those out altogether.

MR. GREGORY: I condemned them.

MR. A. FORREST: Well, I am very sorry for the hon. member if he does condemn them, because they are works as urgently needed as the works he has mentioned.

MR. KINGSMILL: They have no right to be in a Loan Bill.

MR. A. FORREST: Where would you put them?

MR. GREGORY: Pay for them out of revenue.

MR. FORREST: Where is the revenue to come from?

MR. VOSPER: Where has it gone to?

MR. A. FORREST: How can you get enough money out of revenue to complete these works? There is not a single item in the schedule which is not required, and I hope the House will have the good sense to agree to this schedule, and more especially to one of the small railways which the member for the Murray—

MR. GREGORY: Bonnie Vale.

MR. A. FORREST: Oh! Do not pick out the smallest item in the schedule: pick out some of the big ones. The member for the Murray (Mr. George) asked where was the railway going to. If he had taken the trouble to look at the map prepared by the Commissioner of Crown lands, he would have seen that there is a large agricultural population in that particular district—tillers of the soil who are doing good to the country, much more good than a great many members of this House are doing, who waste the time of the country by long speeches.

MR. GEORGE: You are wrong. There is no map prepared of the Bonnie Vale line.

MR. A. FORREST: I never mentioned Bonnie Vale at all. You should have listened to me.

MR. GEORGE: I thought you did.

MR. A. FORREST: Am I speaking, sir, or is the hon. member? I expect to get as fair a hearing as the hon. member does in this House. The amount required for this line is not much, especially when we consider the value of the district which this railway is going to tap. I can assure hon. members that they need not be alarmed. This is a big country, a growing country, and a progressing country, and its people are progressive; but I am sorry to find hon. members

opposite trying to stop this colony's onward march. I believe some of them would like to see it go backward, and that it is a great source of dissatisfaction to many of them when they find the revenue keeping up instead of decreasing; for as long as the revenue keeps up and increases, hon. members opposite have as much chance of being allowed to carry on the government of this country as have the South African Boers. I hope the House will agree almost unanimously to the second reading of this Bill. Discussion can take place on the different items in Committee, and it will then be for us to say whether we can throw out any of the items or not; but I say that the whole of them, except perhaps one or two, are urgently required for the benefit of this country.

MR. GEORGE: That means there will be no alteration.

MR. MORAN: I think I seconded the amendment in this debate.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot speak again.

MR. MORAN: I merely wanted to find out that. It has been ruled here that this can be done.

THE SPEAKER: It may have been ruled, but it has never been ruled by me.

Amendment (to postpone for six months) put, and a division having been called for by the mover (Mr. Leake), it was taken with the following result:—

Ayes ...	13
Noes ...	26

Majority against ... 13

AYES.

Mr. George
Mr. Gregory
Mr. Holmes
Mr. Illingworth
Mr. James
Mr. Leake
Mr. Moran
Mr. Robson
Mr. Solomon
Mr. Vosper
Mr. Wallace
Mr. Wilson
Mr. Kingsmill (*Teller*).

NOES.

Hon. S. Burt
Mr. Connor
Mr. Conolly
Mr. Ewing
Sir John Forrest
Mr. A. Forrest
Mr. Hall
Mr. Harper
Mr. Higham
Mr. Hubble
Mr. Lefroy
Mr. Locke
Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Monger
Mr. Moorhead
Mr. Morgans
Mr. Pennefather
Mr. Phillips
Mr. Piesse
Mr. Quinlan
Mr. Rason
Mr. Sholl
Mr. Throssell
Hon. H. W. Venn
Mr. Wood
Mr. Doherty (*Teller*).

Amendment thus negatived.

POINT OF ORDER.

MR. MORAN: I rise again to a point of order, and ask for another ruling. Having seconded the motion for the second reading of this Bill, am I entitled to speak now on the original question of the second reading?

THE SPEAKER: No: not at this time.

MR. MORAN: Not on the original motion?

THE SPEAKER: No; not now. A division has just been taken on the question.

MR. MORAN: But I think the original question is now before us.

THE SPEAKER: Oh, no.

MR. MORAN: But, sir, I never spoke on the second reading of the Bill. I seconded the amendment.

THE SPEAKER: A member who seconds an amendment cannot speak on the original question again. Neither the person who proposes nor the person who seconds can again speak on the original question.

QUESTION.

Question (that the Bill be now read a second time) put, and passed on the voices.

Bill read a second time; also, the consideration in Committee made an order for the next day.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10.30 o'clock until the next day.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 29th November, 1899.

Papers presented:—Subiaco Tramways Bill, second reading, in Committee Constitution Acts Amendment Bill, recommitment, reported—Petition of Federal League, motion to approve (words struck out), amendment moved (adjourned)—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the COLONIAL SECRETARY: 1. Annual Report of Government Storekeeper, 1899. 2. Amendment of Schedules 11 and 22 to regulations and monthly return, under Goldfields Act.

Ordered to lie on the table.

SUBIACO TRAMWAYS BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. G. Randell) in moving the second reading, said: This Bill has been introduced in consequence of an arrangement having been entered into between the Subiaco Municipal Council and the Tramway Company. I have satisfied myself that the Subiaco Council are entirely in accord with the Bill. This tramline will traverse Broome Road, which is the continuation of Hay Street, and Rokeby Road, which crosses and goes down by the railway line; the line then proceeding along Hammersley Road to the gates of Perth Park. This arrangement is desired by the Municipal Council in the interests of Subiaco, and by the Tramway Company in the interests of that company. I believe it will be a most desirable line, although it will affect prejudicially the omnibuses which are now running along that road; but the omnibuses will no doubt find some other sphere for their operations. I believe the Bill will secure the approval of the House, therefore I need say no more than move the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE.

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