

the report carefully himself, and was therefore not prepared at the present moment to speak on the recommendations of the committee. A great deal of care had been taken by the committee to arrive at their conclusions, and some important evidence which concerned the port of Fremantle and the safety of shipping arriving there had been collected. The report dealt with the Harbour Master's Department, and with the pilot service at Rottnest, which was under the Harbour Master, and the report embodied statements or facts which were of great importance to the port of Fremantle; therefore it was only right that members should have time to consider the report and read the evidence. It was possible some hon. members might cavil at the conclusions come to: he did not say they would, but it was desirable that hon. members should thoroughly consider the report and the evidence which was now before them. If hon. members came to the conclusion that the recommendations of the joint committee should be adopted, then the report would occupy a higher position in public estimation than if the House adopted the report to-night in a perfunctory and hurried manner. He moved that the debate be adjourned until the next Wednesday.

HON. D. K. CONGDON: There was a good deal of evidence to go through, and the subject was of importance to the colony. Hon. members should have sufficient time to consider the report, so as to be able to lay their views before the House if necessary.

Motion put and passed, and the debate adjourned accordingly.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

On motion by the COLONIAL SECRETARY, the House adjourned at 8-27 o'clock until the next Tuesday.

## Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 25th October, 1899.

Motion: Extra Sitting Day Motion: Transvaal War: Fund to Relieve Distress (negatived) Motion: Federation, to Defer new Public Works (negatived) Papers presented Motion: Cattle Restriction, Northern Territory and East Kimberley—Motion: Railway Administration, Censure (debate adjourned)—Cottesloe Lighting and Power (private) Bill, Select Committee's Report Immigration Restriction Amendment Bill, second reading, Division (negatived)—Imported Labour Registry Amendment Bill, second reading, Division (negatived)—Adjournment.

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

#### PRAYERS.

#### MOTION—EXTRA SITTING DAY.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. F. H. Piesse), in the absence of the Premier, moved:

That the sessional orders be amended, so that this House shall, for the remainder of this session, sit on Mondays from 7-30 p.m.

It was now desirable, owing to the session drawing to a close, that we should sit as often as possible, and take the opportunity of sitting on Mondays, thus getting an extra day during the week. He hoped there would be no objection to the motion.

MR. LEAKE (Albany): Personally, he was not in favour of the motion, because he thought that if the work was brought down to the House it could be done perfectly well without encroaching on Mondays. Busy men in the city found it very difficult even now to attend to their private business and the business of this House, for practically three days were occupied in parliamentary work. If the Government desired to get through the business more expeditiously, we might undertake to sit until midnight on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, instead of adjourning so early as at present. In his opinion, we could get through more practical work after 10 o'clock in the evening than by sitting two or three hours on Monday. Parliament had been sitting for four months, and, with the exception of the Constitution Bill, he did not think we had passed any measure of great moment outside purely formal business. Even now, the Government had one or two important measures to propose. He urged the Government to

bring down their railway policy Bills at once, and their Loan Bill.

**THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS:** If Fridays would do, the Government would not object to substitute Fridays for Mondays as the extra sitting day.

**MR. LEAKE:** There was objection on his part to have sittings on either Mondays or Fridays. The way he suggested out of the difficulty was to sit later, until midnight if necessary.

**THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS:** We could not keep a quorum, so late.

**MR. LEAKE:** It was for the Government to keep a quorum. There was always a fair sprinkling of members on the Opposition side.

**A MEMBER:** Very few.

**MR. LEAKE:** At any rate, the Opposition did not feel disposed to throw any obstacles in the way, or to render too great assistance to the Government in passing their measures. They protested against the delay in bringing down most important and contentious legislation, and other work.

**HON. H. W. VENN:** The idea of holding sittings on Mondays was one he could not fall in with. He agreed very much with what had fallen from the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Leake), that if we sat later we should get through the work much better. An extra day was not only a source of trouble and a tax on those who came in from the country, but also a great tax on those gentlemen engaged in business in the City. The Government might well take advantage of the suggestion thrown out, and if necessary the House should sit until twelve midnight instead of thinking about adjourning at a quarter or half-past ten. A great deal of work could be accomplished in the extra hour and a half.

**THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS:** Members were not in a fit state to sit all night.

**HON. H. W. VENN:** If we had worked more expeditiously during the early part of the session, we would have been away long before this.

**MR. A. FORREST:** Members would, he hoped, agree to the motion. It was all very well for the member for Wellington (Hon. H. W. Venn) to say it was inconvenient to sit on Mondays. Doubtless it was, but it would be more incon-

venient for people in business in Perth and Fremantle to be here to so late an hour as twelve midnight or one o'clock in the morning, and have to carry on their avocations next day. It would be more convenient to the majority of members to come here at 7-30 on Mondays than to sit after midnight on three nights a week.

**MR. ROBSON (Geraldton):** Hon. members had heard the views of town members, and those who lived close to Perth. Still there was another side to the question, the side of the members who came from the country and had to live four or five months in Perth, members who had not to leave their businesses for a few hours, but for the whole of that time; therefore it was only right the Perth members should give the country members some little consideration. The motion did not ask that the members who lived in Perth should give up Monday afternoon, but that they should attend in Parliament in the evening. Country members who had so much idle time on their hands would be only too glad to come forward and assist in getting through the business of the country. There was a great deal in what had been stated by the member for Albany, as to how business had been brought before the House, and the dilatory way in which it had been attended to. Many members were anxious that the session should be closed; and if the Government would bring down all the business they desired transacted, hon. members would attend in their places and perhaps talk less and do more work.

**MR. MITCHELL (Murchison):** A sitting on Mondays would not interfere with the private business of members who lived in Perth. The House would not meet until 7-30, when commercial and other business in the city was concluded; therefore it would not be a hardship for city members to attend on Monday evening.

**MR. SOLOMON (South Fremantle):** It would be rather hard on Fremantle members if the House sat until midnight as suggested, for it would be 1 o'clock before the Fremantle members could get away by train, arriving at their homes at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning. Most of the country members were in Perth on Monday; consequently it would be no

hardship for the House to meet at 7:30 on that day.

Question put and passed.

**MOTION—TRANSVAAL WAR: FUND TO RELIEVE DISTRESS.**

**MR. VOSPER** (North-East Coolgardie) moved:

That in view of the great distress existing amongst our British fellow-subjects in South Africa, consequent upon the Imperial Government being in a state of war with the South African Republic and the Orange Free State, this House desires to express its sympathy with these unfortunate persons, and considers it desirable that the Government should, if convenient, contribute to the Mansion House Fund now being raised for the purpose of relieving these distresses.

In moving the motion standing in my name, I feel it to be unnecessary to offer many words in commendation of it to hon. members. As is well known, when a motion came before the Assembly for sending troops to the Transvaal, I doubted the wisdom and the expediency of that action; and the opinions I previously formed I have seen no reason to change. There are always considerable differences of opinion on a question of that kind, but some facts have come before us which, I think, we should as humanitarians take notice of. War is fraught with misery and suffering to a large number of people, many of whom are quite innocent of the cause, and many are non-participants in the trouble. Among other news which has come to us from the Transvaal is the item that 45,000 persons, people of our own kith and kin, have been compelled to leave the South African Republic in distress, some half-naked, some ruined, and all more or less hungry. This distress has been created right through the British colonies in South Africa; and it seems to me that it would be well if this colony could see its way to set an example to the rest of the Empire, and contribute to the fund which has been opened in London for the relief of the refugees. We should be setting a novel example which others would follow. In taking up arms for the defence of the Empire, we were following an example already set, and which has been applauded by people in the old country and by people in other parts. Still, the fact remains that there is an important section of the public who do

not altogether approve of the action we have taken. It would be otherwise with the motion which I have charge of to-day. In England, the peace party as well as the war party would applaud this action on the part of the colony, as we do not seek to injure anyone, and do not take a bellicose attitude in any way; and seeing that war is fraught with great suffering and misery to fellow colonists, it would be well if we could contribute towards their relief. If it is justifiable to send troops to fight the Boers, it is equally justifiable, and more humane, to send funds to assist those who are distressed by the war. I am sure this motion will appeal to the good sense and humanity of the House, if the Government will accede to the request of the motion and do what is asked. If there are difficulties in the way of the Government doing this, then I ask that the Government should do their best to overcome those difficulties. I think if this were done, we in this colony would set a noble example to the other colonies. In the first place the Government could bring down a message from the Governor, and then contribute a certain amount of money: this could be followed up by the member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest) opening a fund as mayor of the city of Perth for the purpose of receiving money for the relief of distress in South Africa. In this way I think we could raise a considerable sum of money. The amount raised by the Mansion House Fund, according to last accounts, is £65,000.

**MR. KINGSMILL:** One hundred and thirty-seven thousand pounds.

**MR. VOSPER:** I thank the hon. member for the correction. That is a high testimonial to the charity and good feeling which prevails throughout the British Empire. I am glad to see that the British Government have checked the manifestations of applause for successes won in the Transvaal, because these victories have caused great suffering and loss. I join with other hon. members in expressing my hearty joy and gratitude that so far the war has resulted in successes for the British army, and I hope these successes will be continued, so that the war may be brought to a speedy termination, and peace soon restored. It would be a good thing if the Government

could give £1,000 or so towards the Mansion House Fund. It would not hurt us as a colony, and it would set an example to the other citizens of the Empire, and place Western Australia in the front rank in initiating a novel movement, and taking upon ourselves an action which would win for us applause and admiration throughout the British Empire. I have very much pleasure in commending the motion to hon. members.

**THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS** (Hon. F. H. Piesse): Although the Government are in sympathy with the object of the motion which the hon. member has brought forward, I think the House can hardly expect the Government to be in accord with the motion, as it would establish a precedent which it would be difficult to overcome in the future. The fund should be provided by the public and not by the Government of the country, and the instance mentioned by the hon. member proves that to be the fact. Although a large fund is being raised in London—what is called the Mansion House Fund—it is being done at the instance of the Lord Mayor of London, and that fact should also influence us in the course to be taken in this colony. If people here sympathise with the unfortunate people in South Africa, and no doubt many do, it should be for the people to take up a course similar to that taken at home, and a fund could be established which probably might be originated by the mayor of the city of Perth, or some person outside the Government; in that way money could be raised which would help the people in South Africa who are in distress. I certainly think the House should not ask the Government to make provision for such a fund. In no instance have we been called upon to do such a thing as this, and we are not prepared just now to accede to the motion placed before the House by the hon. member. As I said just now, this matter should be taken up entirely by the public privately, and something done to raise money for the fund named. The Government should not be asked to originate such a fund. On behalf of the Government I am not in accord with the motion.

**MR. A. FORREST** (West Kimberley): I should just like to say a few words in regard to this motion. I feel inclined to

support the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper), because if we are contributing soldiers, the least we can do is to help, if any troops are lost, to relieve those left behind. It has been usual, before the mayors of large cities and towns have taken any action in collecting subscriptions for relief purposes, that they should be asked by those in authority in the old country, or other parts, to do so. At the time of the Indian famine, we were asked particularly by the Lord Mayor of London to open a fund, and if we do receive any intimation on this occasion, then we would gladly open a subscription list, and no doubt the people of the colony would subscribe most liberally. I do not know whether we could establish a fund unless authorised to do so. I should not feel called upon as mayor of the City of Perth to inaugurate a fund, unless authorised to do so. The Government have given away large sums of money to people in distress, and for people who have lost their breadwinners this House has contributed most liberally to those left behind; therefore I think this is a case in which the Government might place a few thousand pounds on the Estimates, and no doubt the House would pass the amount unanimously.

**MR. MORAN** (East Coolgardie): There is something in what the member for West Kimberley says. His desire is to provide for those who are left behind in case of loss which may occur in our own enthusiastic little corps; but this motion will not cover that.

**MR. A. FORREST**: It will cover everything.

**MR. MORAN**: The hon. member who introduced the motion desired the Government and the people to subscribe to help generally the distress created in South Africa. In the other colonies, as I understand it, the money subscribed is to be used first of all to relieve the dependents of those sent from these colonies in case of loss; but the remarks which have been made by the member for West Kimberley do not seem to indicate that. The Mansion House Fund will be a general fund for hospital and other purposes, and for the purpose of relieving distressed people and providing food and so forth to refugees in South Africa. The member for West Kimberley (Mr. Forrest) is miss-

ing the point if he thinks his suggestion would help our own soldiers or their dependents left behind in this colony.

MR. A. FORREST: We have not lost any soldiers yet.

MR. MORAN: The probability is that we shall lose some, even if only in the bush on the way to the seat of war. "Charity begins at home," and we should first provide for the dependents of those we are sending away. I would like an expression of opinion as to whether the motion ought not to be turned into one providing for casualties in the ranks of our own soldiers, because if the 125 members of the contingent happen to fall foul of a Boer ambushade, the whole of them may disappear, and we will have a heavy bill in providing for their friends and dependents. I quite sympathise with the motives of the member for North-East Coolgardie, and such a motion is fitting from him, because he was one of those who opposed the sending away of the contingent, not from any disloyal feeling, but because he does not think Australia is called upon to take any active part; and he now submits this motion to show that his loyalty is not less than that of any hon. member. But we do not know where this war is going to end; and as Mr. Chamberlain has given us to understand we must keep the contingent up to its full fighting strength, we may lose the whole 125, and have to make the number up again, and I suggest we should consider the advisability of first looking after our own.

MR. CONOLLY (Dundas): The debate has been conducted on two different issues. The issue brought forward in the motion is that the Government, representing the colony, should contribute to the Mansion House Fund in London for the relief of the destitute in the Transvaal; and now a question has been mooted of raising a fund to provide for the dependents of members of the contingent we are sending to South Africa. I am much in sympathy with the motion, which displays a kindly spirit, more especially coming from the member for North-East Coolgardie after the somewhat indifferent manner in which he supported the motion to send away the contingent.

MR. VOSPER: I did not support that motion at all: I opposed it.

MR. CONOLLY: I did not know the hon. member opposed that motion, although I knew he had spoken indifferently about it. It seems to me that if a contribution can be made to the Mansion House Fund, we ought also to be prepared to raise a similar fund in this colony. There is some reason in the contention advanced by the Commissioner of Railways; but I do not agree with the member for West Kimberley (Mr. Forrest), who is also mayor of Perth, that there is any necessity to wait until we are asked to organise a fund of the kind. It would be more generous to spontaneously raise a fund.

MR. A. FORREST: We have no authority to do that.

MR. CONOLLY: From whom does the hon. member expect to receive authority? Surely this is a matter which the councillors of the city have within their jurisdiction, and they can by resolution give authority to raise a fund; and the citizens of Perth could show their approval or otherwise of such a step, by the manner in which they support it. If people do not approve of the step, they will not contribute; but if they do approve, I have no doubt there are many in and around Perth who would respond in a generous manner. I scarcely know whether I shall support the motion or oppose it, although the spirit of the proposal is excellent.

MR. VOSPER: Follow your generous feelings.

MR. CONOLLY: I really feel inclined to do so, although I do not for a moment suppose the question will go to a division. I would like to see the mayor of Perth, in his official capacity, open a subscription list towards the Mansion House Fund.

MR. MITCHELL (Murchison): I think we are getting off the track somewhat. I take it that directly the contingent leave our shores they become Imperial soldiers, and the fund to which the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) has asked the Government to contribute is a general fund to help those who may be wounded, whether they be soldiers of this or any other British country.

MR. MORAN: The fund is not for soldiers at all.

MR. MITCHELL: Then it is for the friends and dependents of soldiers. The Government might head a subscription list with a certain amount, and then the mayors of Perth and other parts could follow suit, and in this way a respectable fund would be raised. If we are unfortunate enough to lose some of the contingent, though I hope that will not be the case, it will be time to meet the blow when it comes; and there is nothing to prevent our coming forward to help the dependents of our own men. The Government ought to give something towards the Mansion House Fund, and I have much pleasure in supporting the motion.

MR. SOLOMON (South Fremantle): I have much pleasure in supporting the motion, which seems to be somewhat misunderstood. The Mansion House Fund is solely for refugees from the Transvaal, amongst whom are a great number of Australians. For years past Australians have emigrated to South Africa, not only from this colony, but the other colonies; and by contributing to this fund, we should be assisting our fellow-colonists. I do not wish to anticipate what may occur to those who are enlisting as soldiers in the contingent, but we must remember the motion proposes to assist refugees, many of whom, as I say, are Australians who have been obliged to leave the Transvaal owing to the war.

MR. RASON (South Murchison): I am heartily in accord with the motive of the mover, because it is desirable this colony should contribute to the Mansion House Fund. But subscriptions ought to be voluntary from the residents of the colony, and not from the Government. I never yet heard of a Government contributing to such a fund, which is entirely in the hands of private individuals and controlled by the Lord Mayor of London. The fund has reached a large amount from voluntary subscriptions, and a fund could be raised in this colony in a similar manner. I hope some action will be taken in this direction, because it would not be advisable for the Government to make a special contribution. The member for North-East Coolgardie may be able to attain his object in a different way, and I have no doubt, if an appeal be made, the inhabitants of Western Australia will contribute largely.

MR. KINGSMILL (Pillbarra): I have listened with a good deal of attention to those members who cannot see why the Government should take the step indicated by the motion; but I have heard absolutely no reason why the Government should not contribute in the way proposed, except the reason that this is a somewhat novel proposal. But everything must have a beginning, and Western Australia should be proud of being the first to take a step in a good cause. I attach a good deal of weight to the contention of the member for South Fremantle (Mr. Solomon), that a great number of refugees who have lost practically everything, and are homeless and starving—and it would appear, so far as Western Australia is concerned, are more or less friendless—are Australians, and possibly some of them West Australians; and we could not do better than support the motion in its entirety.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Central Murchison): I am in entire sympathy with the motion, but I would like it to be distinctly understood that the conditions and circumstances are peculiar and entirely unusual; and that if Parliament decide to take a step of the character proposed, it should not be accepted as a precedent. We must not at all times and under all circumstances wait for precedents. This Government is somewhat famous for making precedents—some of them not remarkably good ones, either. There are really several subjects before the House, which have become rather mixed together, and I think we ought to try to get a clear conception of what we are doing. In regard to our soldiers, it is desirable that the Government should follow the example set by the other colonies, by insuring the lives of those men who are leaving our shores. The cost would not be very great, and at the same time some definite compensation would be secured for the friends of those who may be called upon to lose their lives.

MR. MORAN: They are going to what is for them the safest place in the world.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The Government have that matter practically under their control, and there is no necessity for a motion to enable them to adopt my suggestion. So much for one question. In regard to the casualties which may

take place, and in consequence of which this House may be called upon for financial assistance, that question comes as a sort of necessary corollary to the steps already taken. If accidents occur and contingencies arise, this House will have to do its part in providing for them, and must be prepared to do so, pecuniarily or otherwise. I now come to a question which is entirely different from the other matters I have discussed; for this is a question of pure humanity, arising out of the peculiar circumstances of the residents of some of those places in South Africa which are within the sphere of these disturbances, some of those people having been Australian colonists.

MR. MORAN: That is a rather narrow-minded view. Are we only to do this for Australians?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Never mind the narrowness: we will see whether the view be correct. There are certain lines which are correct, although they may be narrow. We can run a 3ft. 6in. railway as well as a 5ft., and both lines may be effective. It is no argument to say that a view is narrow. Dealing, however, with the question before the House, I say there are some persons in the Transvaal who are Western Australians, and, in addition to the Western Australians, others of the sufferers are Australians. We are dealing with the absolute fact that some thousands of persons have left Johannesburg and other parts of the Transvaal and are absolutely destitute, have lost their all, and are now in Cape Town or in Natal, in a destitute condition. The Mansion House Fund is raised to relieve those persons; not to provide in any way for soldiers or for other contingencies connected with the war. This is not a warlike question at all; but as a consequence of this conflict, a large number of people have had to leave their homes hurriedly, very often penniless, sometimes only half dressed; and they are now in other parts of South Africa, having lost all their means of livelihood and being in distressed circumstances. Can there be anything wrong in the proposal of the motion? We are here as trustees of the public funds. Can there be anything wrong in devoting a portion of those funds with which we have been entrusted by the people of this colony to relieve a

distress of this kind? We should have no hesitation I presume in voting, if it were necessary, for the relief of the sufferers in any large catastrophe which might happen in any part of the British dominions.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: But this is without precedent.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It is not wholly without precedent; but even if it were, I contend that is not a good argument at the present stage. I have already remarked that the Government can make precedents; we have had evidence of their ability to make them; and this is another one, and a good one too.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Has the Imperial Government contributed to the Mansion House Fund?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I am not aware that they have. I imagine that the Imperial Government at present have just as much as they can do to deal with the larger question.

MR. MORAN: They are providing the corpses.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: But the people of London, who represent British feeling to a very large extent, have most generously responded in the way that is most usual. Large subscriptions were raised by the London Stock Exchange: that is natural, because the Stock Exchange is heavily interested in Johannesburg; and large subscriptions have been handed in to the fund that has been established by the Lord Mayor of London. If this distress be sufficiently relieved by that fund, though I hardly think it can be, there will be no necessity for us to add to the subscriptions; but I think we might very well give our quota. We are only a small people, and a large number in this community would be glad to assist in their own little way in this direction; but it is impossible to collect subscriptions from everybody, and the only way in which everybody can contribute is for some portion of the subscription to come out of the general revenue: then everybody contributes something and everybody feels interested in the result. The suggestion I have to make as to the *modus operandi*, if the motion be carried, is that the sum which this House provides should be handed to his worship the Mayor of Perth as the nucleus of a fund which shall appeal to the best feelings of

the people of this colony, and that as each sum of £500 or £1,000 is raised, the fact be telegraphed to the Mansion House by his worship the mayor. This House should ask the Government to devote to the fund a sum such as £500 or £1,000, as the Government may determine, to be handed to the mayor as the nucleus of a fund to be raised by the general public.

MR. MORAN: Why should the mayor send it home? The Government could send it.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I would ask the hon. member not to keep up a running fire of interjections. Occasional interjections I do not mind, but perpetual interjections going on at the same time as one's own speech make matters somewhat difficult. I admit the course I have just suggested is unusual; I know it is somewhat of a precedent; but we can make our own precedents, and I think we should be taking a very good step in carrying this motion. As to the amount of money to be given by the Government, of that we can take no note at the present stage, as to do so would be beyond our powers; but the Government, judging by the feeling of the House, will no doubt act in a way which will be to the satisfaction, not only of the House, but of the country at large. Taking this view of the question, I heartily support the motion.

MR. VOSPER (in reply): I have to thank hon. members for the kindly reception they have given to the motion, and I can only say their speeches do every credit to the humanity of their sentiments, and show their desire to assist those who are suffering in other parts of the Empire. I regret the attitude the Government have taken on the question. I am not at all inclined to impute to them wrong motives, for I suppose they consider it their duty to conserve the public funds as much as possible; but I think on a small matter like this, not involving more than £1,000 at the outside, where a great example has been set us, and where Western Australia might at once come into a prominent position by taking this step, it would perhaps be just as well to waive such objections for the time being, till some more convenient occasion. With regard to the arguments used in reference to the want of a precedent, I can only say there was a time when even the sending

of troops by a colony to the assistance of the mother country was entirely without precedent; and if hon. members will cast their memories back, they will recollect that when Mr. W. B. Dalley, of New South Wales, first proposed that troops should be sent to the Soudan, his suggestion was opposed by the Government of the day; but the popular enthusiasm was too strong, the idea "caught on," and troops were sent in spite of the Government; and, in fact, the Government incurred some considerable odium for opposing the proposition, and Mr. Dalley, as we know, had honours conferred upon him by the Imperial Government for his action. We have no precedent in this colony for sending troops anywhere, and the only precedent we have has to be taken from outside our own borders, from New South Wales. The same may be said of all other Australian colonies; yet, all over the empire the justice of the principle is universally acknowledged, with the exception of a very few dissentients, among whom I must be classed. With the exception of those few and insignificant dissentients, it has been universally acknowledged that the colonies are justified in assisting the mother country in her present situation, as they would be in a matter of greater moment. What I think is so deplorable about the attitude of the temporary leader of the Government (Hon. F. H. Piessé) is that, while we are told in this House, and while the world at large is told, that it is quite within the functions of this Government to send men and money and munitions of war to the Transvaal for the purpose of perpetrating slaughter upon the inhabitants of that country, and that without knowing anything at all about the merits of the quarrel; while we are told it is perfectly just to take that departure in the name of loyalty to the Empire, yet on the other hand we are to do nothing at all, it is outside the functions of the Government to do anything, to assist the cause of charity. It seems to me that this is simply a revolting doctrine. We are told that the soldier and the ammunition-maker can have as much of our public funds as the Government choose to give them; but when we make an appeal on behalf of the starving, the homeless, the friendless, and the destitute, when we

ask for money for hospital nurses and for the aid of the sick and the succour of the distressed, we are told that such provision is entirely outside the functions of the Government. If that be the case, I am sorry the functions of the Government are so restricted. The Government can use funds for warlike purposes which cause every thinking man a feeling of regret, for while he may admit the necessity he must deplore that necessity. On the other hand, the Ministry find it absolutely impossible to do anything at all to assist the weak and suffering victims of the war who, though they have done nothing to cause the trouble, will perhaps suffer most of all. Among those people, too, are a great number of our own kith and kin, persons who have gone from Australia to the Transvaal, have settled down there as peaceable citizens, and have, perhaps, had very little to do with the politics of that republic, but who, through no fault of their own, now find themselves absolutely deprived of their homes, their properties, and of all that makes life worth living, and cast adrift in Cape Colony or Natal as houseless refugees. We come to this House, make an appeal to the Government for assistance, and we are told it is outside the Government's functions. Although the Government can create a precedent when it is a question of assisting in slaughter, they cannot do so when it is proposed to mitigate the evils resulting from that slaughter. I appeal to the fine sense of humanity which pervades this House, and I appeal to the leader of the Government, to say whether that is not rather a fallacious and altogether a preposterous argument.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: As I said before, there are other means of raising these funds.

MR. VOSPER: I know there are other means of raising these funds.

MR. MORAN: This is a matter for the Imperial Government.

MR. VOSPER: But we must remember that the Imperial Government are bearing the greatest portion of the cost of this war, practically the whole of it; and the cost to Great Britain cannot be much less than half a million a day. The cost of war is enormous, as hon. members can see by consulting statistics; and that being so, in the mother country it is

recognised that where work of this sort, charitable work, is to be carried on, it should be carried on by private munificence. Besides, the Imperial Government do perform ambulance work on a very large scale. Both the army transport and the army medical staffs are very expensive items in the equipment of troops; and owing to the defective condition of the Boer ambulance, the British Government are practically taking care of the wounded on both sides, which means a heavy financial burden.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: We shall have to bear a portion of that expense.

MR. VOSPER: But that is a small thing. While the British Government, in fighting the battles of the whole Empire, are defraying the whole cost of the war, I say they are quite right in leaving matters of this description to private benevolence; and bearing in mind that the cost of our own contribution of soldiers will be so insignificant as compared with the general total as to practically amount to nothing, we might well add to the cost we are incurring by endeavouring to do a charitable action. Hon. members talked loudly the other day about loyalty and imperialism in this House, and although I do not approve of the policy which led to this present war, yet if occasion arose I should be found just as loyal to the Empire as if that policy were one of which I did approve. I ask, in what way can we better conserve the Imperial sentiment than by passing a motion of this kind, which would give an example to the British Empire and the world at large, showing that we are not only prepared to assist in defending the Empire, but also to assist those who are subjects of the Empire, and who through no fault of their own are brought into distress by the exigencies of war? By passing a motion of this kind, we should be doing our best not only to assist in obtaining victory, and also to assuage the evils which necessarily arise out of the war: we should be endeavouring to show our humanity as well as our imperialism. In what better way can we give effect to our sentiments than by mingling our imperialism with our benevolence? The British Empire has been celebrated throughout the world for its benevolence, humanity, and justice;

and we should be acting up to the highest principles of the Empire by passing such a motion as this. I know for a fact that at the time notice of this motion was given, it was telegraphed to the other colonies—I do not know whether it was telegraphed to England—and, whatever the fate of the motion, Reuter's Agency will see that the information reaches London in due course; therefore would it be a pleasant thing for Western Australia to be reported as having had a motion of this kind laid before the Assembly, and that the Assembly had defeated it on the ground that there was no precedent for it, or on account of some feeble excuse of that kind? I do not think such a decision would do the colony good in the eyes of the British nation; and it would have been better for the motion not to have been tabled than for it to be defeated. At the same time I cannot help that. I expect the Government to look at the matter in a broad light, and to set a great example. If they will not do so, the responsibility rests with them and not with me. For all these reasons, I hope and trust the Government will withdraw their opposition to the motion. I do not wish to dictate to them, and I am sure the House will not do so at all, but will leave the whole matter with the Government. Something ought to be done, and we leave it to the sense, humanity, and justice of the Government. That being the case, I think the motion should not be withdrawn, because in my opinion it would not be honourable to me or the House generally if a motion of this kind were withdrawn. The sense of the House should be taken, and if the motion is defeated, the responsibility must rest on the Government, and on the Government alone. I trust they will not take upon themselves such a responsibility, and that the motion will be passed, whereby we shall be doing a great deal to advance the fair fame of Western Australia, the object being the alleviation of a considerable amount of misery caused by the war.

MR. ROBSON (Geraldton): I had not intended to join in the debate on the motion; but I may say that from the outset I felt strongly inclined to oppose it. Having listened to the defence of the motion by the mover (Mr. Vosper), I cannot help saying a few words on the

subject. It seems to me strange that a member of this House should accuse the Government of inhumanity, simply for the little reason that they do not feel inclined to support this motion. On whose behalf are we sending the men to the Transvaal? On whose behalf did the men of this colony volunteer to go to the Transvaal? On behalf of the very refugees for whom the hon. member wishes subscriptions to be raised. Is it not more honourable for men to go forward and fight for their fellow-colonists than merely to raise a vaporous motion in the House for subscriptions, and to work upon that enormous bump of benevolence we all have when paying with other people's money? Is this colony not acting in a manly way in sending forward its proportion of men? It is said that Great Britain is bearing the total cost of this campaign, and that the war is entirely on behalf of the Empire. Surely Great Britain can afford to bear a much larger cost than we can. We are sending a few men, and are willing and proud to bear the cost of them; and it seems to me ridiculous that the Government should be accused of inhumanity, and that we should be told we are absolutely ignorant of the cause for which the war is being waged. I consider that language is an insult to the intelligence of the community, to accuse us of being ignorant of the cause of this war. Surely the hon. member knows this war is on behalf of British citizens in the Transvaal, and that it is to gain for them the same liberties as the hon. gentleman possesses in this House and in this colony, the right which all British citizens hope to have under the British flag all over the world, the right to raise their voice in the cause of justice and humanity. I will say no more on this subject, except that I was at Karakatta camp yesterday, and saw the men who were being drilled, and I have no hesitation in saying that when they are fully equipped and leave these shores, they will be a credit to Western Australia.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. W. Pennefather): The motion that has been laid before the House is, no doubt, one of sympathy, and there is not a man in the Assembly who does not sympathise with those who suffer by

reason of this war; but it is unfortunate that in supporting the motion the hon. member who moves it should, I might say, go out of his way to make such observations upon the conduct of the Government as he has made this evening. The hon. member is not adopting a proper course in taking upon himself the responsibility of moving a motion of this character without consulting any other person in the House, and then endeavouring to force us to carry it by saying, "If the Government do not assist me in carrying this out, then be the responsibility on their heads!" It must be borne in mind that the Government have no object in the course they adopt, beyond that of conserving the funds of which they are trustees for the country. I believe the subscriptions which have been raised in England are obtained entirely from private sources, as will be the subscriptions that doubtless will be raised in the colonies; and I do not understand why, in order to satisfy one hon. member, this House should single itself out beyond all other portions of the British dominions, and pass a vote of other people's money to show its practical sympathy with a section of the British public. I am sure the object of the hon. member is good; but, though that is the case, he must not think every other member is barren of sympathy.

MR. VOSPER: I never said so. I said quite the contrary to all that.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: In addition to that, the hon. member urged—and was supported, I regret to say, by the hon. member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth)—that the House should make a precedent and, so to speak, wipe out some of the mistakes that have been made in the past. That is another peculiar argument. To sum up the point, it simply means this: Is this House prepared, on its own motion, to vote a sum of money for the purpose of showing its practical sympathy, when that can be done by private subscriptions? There is nothing whatever to prevent the mayor of Perth, or any other responsible person, from initiating a public subscription for this purpose. I confess the Government do not see their way to accept the responsibility of adopting the modification suggested by the member for Central Murchison, that an initial sum should be

voted by this Legislature, and handed over to the mayor of Perth, and then public subscriptions be obtained. The proper course is, I take it, for the public outside to start a subscription list, either by the mayor and councillors of Perth—

MR. MORAN: Or any mayor in the country.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Any mayor in the country can do it. The fund can be made a joint one, and be given by the inhabitants of Western Australia for the benefit of those who suffer.

Motion put, and negatived on the voices.

#### MOTION—FEDERATION: TO DEFER NEW PUBLIC WORKS.

MR. HARPER (Beverly) moved:

That in consequence of the disastrous effect the adoption of federation, as proposed, would have upon this colony, by prohibiting the possibility of further land settlement, by paralysing many local industries, and by depleting our revenue and thereby prejudicing our borrowing powers, it is important that this Parliament should not pledge itself to undertake any new public works, nor to expend any more revenue than is required for matters of immediate necessity, pending the result of the referendum. That in the event of the colony deciding in favour of joining the Commonwealth, the continuance of a public works policy would be fraught with extreme danger to the State.

He said: My object in moving this motion is to bring before the House some phases of the question which heretofore have not been much dealt with. Several members who have dealt with the subject of federation assert it is entirely a matter of hypothesis, and that in considering it there are no facts that are of any value at all. I contend that there are some facts of great importance, and I have collected a few with a view of showing the position I consider the farming industry, at any rate, will be placed in by the adoption of federation. I have taken a few of our principal soil products—flour, pigs and poultry, barley, oats, potatoes, and onions—and I have ascertained from the Registrar General's department, checking figures by the customs returns, the actual requirements of this country at the present time; and to make it simpler, I have converted the whole of this into land prepared for cultivation. I find that the deficiency in all these articles, putting them into land, requires an area to-day of 102,000 acres of new

land that would have to be cleared to bring the supply up to the requirements of the present population of this country on those articles only. To bring the supply up to the requirements, there would, I assert, have to be an addition of 102,000 acres actually in crop; but, as everyone acquainted with agriculture knows, it is necessary to have a considerable area cleared beyond that which is in crop. In fact, to put it at a low estimate, you may say it requires double the land cleared fit for cultivation to that which is under crop. The best managed farm usually requires three times the quantity, but I have taken it at the lower estimate of double. This would mean that we should require to-day 200,000 acres of fresh land cleared, over and above that which has been reckoned in the official returns. But there is something to come off, because the returns do not give the land cleared in this year. To show what has been done in the direction of developing agriculture in the way of clearing land, I take the last three years. In 1896 new land was cleared to the extent of 24,000 acres; in 1897, 35,000 acres; in 1898, 40,000; and for this year I have assumed there has been another 40,000, although I believe that is considerably over the estimate, and I will mention the reason why I consider it an over-estimate. Everyone knows there was a considerable depression immediately after last harvest; that those who produced articles from the soil found an extreme difficulty in realising on those articles; and the effect has been to curtail largely the work the farmers were carrying out rapidly before, to supply the produce required.

MR. MORAN: What was the cause of that?

MR. HARPER: I will explain the cause, and it is very instructive. People living on the land for two or three years previously did a great deal, in fact they used every penny, so to speak, in clearing their land and procuring plant and machinery for working it. These people had pledged their crops largely to pay for the machinery before they got their crops; but when harvest time arrived, the banks started to call in money, and it was pointed out by the Premier in his Budget speech that the banks actually withdrew from the people that year the sum of

£334,000. The result was that the traders, who had been accustomed to renew bills or allow accounts from the farmers to stand over, began to press the farmers who had not the cash. The farmers had to sell, and the way in which the farmers had to realise to satisfy the banks was cruel. Perhaps there was something, I will not say worse than that, which contributed to this state of affairs. The traders from the city and the gold-fields purchased a lot of produce on bills, and when the bills became due, the persons who had purchased on bills were either out of the colony or insolvent.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The bills were not met?

MR. HARPER: They were not met, and in some cases the persons who had given the bills were out of the colony. This was done by traders on the gold-fields and in the city; and that is the reason of the great difficulty in realising at the end of last harvest. To show how absurd it was to say there was a glut of wheat, it has been proved since that the produce of wheat was only about 60 per cent. of the requirements of the colony; therefore to say there was a glut of wheat is a term that cannot be applied. The actual fact is that the produce was there to the extent of 60 per cent., but the buyers were not there. That is my reason for saying I think my estimate of 40,000 acres cleared during this last season is an excessive one. All the figures I have taken are the minimum on one side and the maximum on the other, so as to be well within the mark. We arrive at this point, that for the present requirements 160,000 acres of land will have to be cleared before the present number of people in the colony can be supplied with the articles which I have mentioned. If we turn to the report of the manager of the Agricultural Bank, we get some idea of what the clearing of the land costs. I am not giving my own ideas about this. The manager of the Agricultural Bank says that every acre of land cleared has cost on an average about £2 14s. That is simply the cost of the clearing of the land, and I think I am still within the mark in saying that the other requirements in the shape of plant, fencing, etcetera, will bring the amount up to £4 per acre, so that the 160,000 acres of land require an outlay of £4 per acre,

which is equal to £650,000. The member for Albany (Mr. Leake), speaking the other evening on the subject of federation, said that a year and a half or a couple of years would be long enough for agriculturists to be in a position to produce sufficient for the requirements of the people of the colony. The point that must present itself to any person who looks at the matter in a reasonable light is, are people going to lay out all their money on land when they know they cannot get a return for a year and a half, and know that then the return from the land will be reduced to the lowest possible margin by the competition from outside the colony? The immediate introduction of federation will stop at once, if not the whole, very nearly the whole of the clearing which is now going on in the colony. Not only that, but there is another important thing we must bear in mind. The Government have advanced a considerable sum of money through the Agricultural Bank to people going on the land, and everyone who knows anything about the subject of land settlement knows that in the early stages of farming it is one long drudgery for the farmers to try and get ahead of the burdens that are cast upon them. I have no hesitation in saying that if the moderate protection now enjoyed by the farmers is done away with, the country will stand to lose a considerable amount of the money advanced, because it will be difficult for those to whom money has been advanced to keep their heads above water. I have only taken the articles mentioned to show the requirements of this colony, but there is another article of very considerable importance which is required in this colony, and that is butter. I have made a calculation in regard to butter, and find that it will require 23,000 milch cows to supply the amount of butter which is imported to-day. Anyone who knows anything of the stock branch of farming understands that it is through the clearing of land, and the production of wheat, that the farmer arrives at his dairy produce. In this colony we have not the open rich grass land which they have in the other colonies. All the land has to be cleared and cultivated before it is good for grazing purposes; therefore it is through the process of clearing the

land that we can hope to develop the farming industry of the colony. The effect of intercolonial free-trade will be to immediately stop the clearing of land, and it will check the cultivation of land. It will prohibit the development of the stock industry in dairy produce, at any rate. It is even doubtful if there will be much land cleared which is now held in fee simple. Those who have sufficient capital to develop their lands will naturally say that they prefer not to lay out all their money where they see no probability of gain, but a probability of losing some of their capital as well as the interest on their money. With regard to the local industries mentioned in the motion, I do not propose to say much, as it is generally admitted that such local industries as we have—I speak of the urban industries—must to a great extent be injured, if not altogether sacrificed, by federation. The main principle underlying federation is that there will be free-trade between the colonies, coupled with a barrier against the outside world. That being the case, it is obvious if a State is compelled to buy within its borders, and receives no benefit by selling within its borders, that State must be losing every time it purchases: there is no getting away from that fact. Until the State can sell her produce within the ring fence of protection or prohibition, the State must be a loser.

MR. JAMES: Cannot the State sell gold?

MR. HARPER: I do not think the hon. member has considered this question sufficiently.

MR. JAMES: Do not be abusive. Answer the question.

MR. HARPER: The effect of federation will be this, that your neighbours compel you to buy goods worth 16s. for £1, and they compel you to sell where you can get only the market value, which means that you are handicapped to the extent of 20 per cent. Let us take the case of Queensland. If that colony joins the federation it will have a monopoly of the whole sugar market of Australia. The present average duty in the Australian colonies on sugar is £5 per ton, and if Queensland has the control of the Australian market, that colony can surely ensure getting that advance or somewhere

near that advance on her production of sugar. This colony imports about 9,000 tons of sugar a year, which means that this colony is taxed 5s. or 6s. a head, or £45,000 a year, for the privilege of buying Queensland sugar. The revenue will not benefit by this money, which will go into the pockets of those who deal in sugar. That is only one item, but the same remarks apply to textile fabrics. If the Commonwealth Parliament choose, as no doubt they will, to put duties on textile fabrics for the benefit of the trade of the other colonies, we shall have a similar set of circumstances to those in connection with sugar.

MR. JAMES: What textile factories are there in Australia to-day?

MR. HARPER: I do not say there are textile factories, but there are clothing factories.

MR. JAMES: They are not textile factories.

MR. HARPER: But the material dealt with is textile.

MR. DOHERTY: There are woollen factories at Geelong and in Queensland.

MR. JAMES: Do you call those textile factories?

MR. DOHERTY: Yes.

MR. HARPER: The object of federation is to enable the colonies to produce those manufactures. If hon. members will look at what we import in the way of machinery, they will find the quantity is enormous, and there is not the slightest doubt a heavy duty will be placed on machinery, a duty which will not go to the customs or the revenue, but simply into the pockets of the manufacturers.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Do we not import machinery now?

MR. HARPER: Machinery manufacturers have now to compete with the outside world, and they sell us machinery cheaper than they do in their own colonies, but under federation we will be compelled to pay more for machinery, because the federal duty will shut out the competition of the outside world. Besides machinery there is the important item of railway engines and rolling-stock, and if these be added to machinery, we find the value of the importations is about one million sterling per annum.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That will not be added.

MR. HARPER: It is not in the Bill, but we heard something from the member for Albany (Mr. Leake) the other night. Some hon. member declared himself in favour of the principle of doing the greatest good to the greatest number, and the member for Albany applauded that sentiment; and under federation, the greatest good to the greatest number will mean that the capitalists and artisans of the Eastern colonies will dictate what shall be bought without the State, and what shall be bought within the State. There is no doubt the manufacture of rolling-stock for railways will be one of the first industries capitalists will start, and there is no power whatever to prevent the consequences I have indicated. These two items of machinery and sugar, taking a very medium view of the probable tariff, indicate that this colony, under federation, will be compelled, if she purchase the same amount of machinery, sugar, and rolling-stock as she did last year, to pay to the capitalists and labourers of Eastern Australia about £250,000 per annum, not one penny of which will go into our revenue. The point I wish to urge is that if the British capitalists, from whom we wish to borrow money, are told we stand in the position of sacrificing all the profits of trade to the Eastern colonies, they will understand we cannot possibly afford to pay for any more borrowed money. Members on the Opposition side of the House have lately been condemning the Government for borrowing on Treasury bills, at a high rate of interest; but it is more than probable we would not be able to borrow on inscribed stock at a low rate, if capitalists were informed we had given to federated Australia a first mortgage on all our property, and that it was very doubtful whether we had resources with which to repay the money already borrowed. Therefore, it behoves us to look very carefully into this matter, and I feel that joining federation would so impair the borrowing capacity of this colony as to make it doubtful whether we would be able to finish the public works already authorised, unless the money were borrowed at a ruinous rate. I do not propose to say more, but submit the motion, feeling perfectly confident the figures I

have given are absolutely correct, and that my assumptions may fairly be drawn from those figures.

**MR. ROBSON (Geraldton):** In seconding the motion, I regret to again address the House, after just giving hon. members a little lecture about speaking too often; but the fact is that a long while ago, I arranged with the member for Beverley (Mr. Harper) to second this motion. In the first place I particularly call the attention of members of the Opposition to the motion, knowing that many of them oppose, whenever possible, the borrowing and public works policy of the Government. We cannot but recognise that the policy of the Forrest Government from the very start has been entirely one of public works.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** A policy of borrow and spend.

**MR. ROBSON:** When the Premier was making his Budget speech recently, I interjected that "opportunity made the man," to which the Premier promptly replied that in his case that was not so, because he had found the opportunity and taken it. I contend that anybody who has had the power to borrow and spend the vast amount of money which has been spent in the last five or six years, has any amount of opportunity for keeping himself in power and for generally pandering to popularity, and giving sops in the way of roads, bridges, and agricultural halls all over the country.

**THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS:** These public works are given to constituencies represented on both sides of the House.

**MR. ROBSON:** I speak particularly of members on the Opposition side of the House, and urge that this motion is one they may cordially support, with the hope of stopping that sort of public works policy. They must recognise that so long as the members on the Government benches pull the purse strings, the Opposition have not the least chance of crossing the floor. The member for Beverley has so well and so ably put forward the case from the agricultural point of view, that very little is left for me to say. The Government have several proposals to bring down for public works, and amongst these are agricultural railways. We all look forward to the opening up of the country by means of such

railways; but with the figures of the member for Beverley before us, we must ask ourselves what is the use of borrowing more money to carry out works of the kind? The hon. member has proved conclusively that under federation there is likely to be no more land cleared in the colony for a long while to come, and I go even further, and think a good deal of land which has been cleared will be allowed to go back to the thicket stage. It is our duty to remember that during the last few years the Agricultural Department have largely encouraged people to settle in this colony under the existing tariff. These people have invested money, time, and labour in the colony, and so far have had little or no return; and to join the Commonwealth, which means the sweeping away of the tariff, would be absolutely breaking faith with a large number of these people, who would be given the right to turn round and say they had been induced to come to the colony under false pretences. There is another section of the community on whom a vast amount of public money has been spent, and for whose benefit most of the public works have been created. I allude to the people on the goldfields; and if we are allowed to progress and work out our own end for some years to come, it will be for their benefit we shall be prepared to offer further extensions of public works. No doubt the goldfields have made the colony what it is to-day, because the discovery of gold gave the colony a tremendous impetus, and we are now doing well, if we are left alone.

**MR. MORAN:** The country helped the goldfields too.

**MR. ROBSON:** Exactly; gold was found, and if the agricultural portion of the country had not helped the goldfields by means of these public works, for which we have borrowed so much money, the goldfields would never have turned out the splendid dividends they are turning out to-day. I have heard hon. members regretting that so much money in the shape of dividends is going out of the country; but it is only fair to those who invested their money in the mines of this colony, and largely helped in the work of development, that they should earn dividends, and I hope they will earn big dividends for many a long day to come.

If the goldfields will help the colony generally, I, as a member of this House, am prepared to encourage the mining industry and give it every facility and means of transport possible. Already the Government have built railways and constructed roads and dams, and are now carrying out the great Coolgardie water scheme, which many of us have examined and thought over a good deal lately. I am not prepared to agree with this water scheme in its entirety. I listened with interest to the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans), when he told us the people of the goldfields were going to pay for the scheme themselves in 20 years, and that no burden would be placed on the colony.

MR. ILLINGWORTH : I do not believe it.

MR. ROBSON : It is pleasant to hear the words of the member for Coolgardie, but I cannot look on the scheme from such a reassuring point of view. The colony, however, is committed to the scheme, and I suppose we shall have to go through with it; but had I been a member of the House when the Coolgardie Water Supply Bill was brought forward some years ago, I should have raised my voice in protest, because I regard it as inflicting a burden on the country generally for the benefit of only a small portion of the people. After having carried out all public works at present possible for the benefit of the population on the goldfields, what do we find? Pick up any goldfields newspaper to-day, and there will be found nothing but grumbling, abuse, and dissatisfaction, and threats of separation if Western Australia does not join the Commonwealth as an original State. But surely when we see these people on the goldfields whom we are striving to help, and to whom we held out the hand of brotherhood when they came from the other colonies, turning round and apparently anxious to sacrifice the interests of the older portions of the colony, merely for the commercial advantage of their friends and relatives in other colonies they have left, merely for the sake of the sentimental fad which the federation of this colony at the present time undoubtedly is, surely, then, I say it is high time we raise our voices in no uncertain tones, but in tones such as this motion gives forth to-day, and say, "If this is

the way you goldfields people are going to treat us, it is time we put our foot down to the best of our ability, to stop the process." Why, when there is this cry for separation on the goldfields, should the colony continue to build the Coolgardie water scheme? Why should we continue to build railways to Menzies, to Norseman, and to other places, when the goldfields people threaten to cut off their portion of the colony, if possible, from the older and more settled districts? I say again, why should we further pledge the credit of this colony for the sake of people whom I cannot dub otherwise than as most ungrateful? I have much pleasure in formally seconding the motion.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. G. Throssell) : The member for Beverley (Mr. Harper) and myself generally see eye to eye upon all public matters; but I much regret to say I am altogether opposed to this motion, and I will say at the outset that I can conceive nothing more disastrous to Western Australia than the adoption of such a policy as that foreshadowed by the hon. member. The result of its adoption by the Government and by our financial institutions would simply be to create the disaster we anticipate from federation. And what would be that result? The stoppage of all public works in Western Australia, to be followed by a scare on the part of the financial institutions. Men of light and leading, employers of labour throughout the colony, would follow the example of the Government and of the banks; and that example would further be followed by a stampede to the Eastern colonies of a great part of our population. That seems to be the natural outcome of such a policy. I go further and say, with all the earnestness of my nature, that any Government who could be wicked enough to adopt such a policy would not deserve to live a single day: they would prove absolute traitors to their trust. The motion is so opposed to the usually energetic practice of the hon. member in his private life, that I imagine he cannot have seriously thought over the result of such a policy. We are now brought face to face with the question of extending our railways. To my mind it only becomes a question of whether those railways be justified; whether we have

the rich goldfields we are told we possess ; whether we have the rich stretch of agricultural land we have been told we have. If these questions can be answered in the affirmative, our railways must be extended so as to meet and to counteract the evils we anticipate from the adoption, under federation, of intercolonial free-trade. I may say, as I frequently have said, that I can see nothing more regrettable at the present juncture of our history than to have federation forced upon us. When we remember what a handful of people have been able to accomplish in this colony during the nine years of responsible government, when we remember that they have been able wisely to spend 11 millions of money, and to raise this colony from the Cinderella of the Australian group to the brightest gem on the continent, and when we are now told we are to meet the disasters we fear by a sudden abandonment of a wise public works policy, I repeat that would bring about all the evils we anticipate. I am at one with the hon. member as to his figures, as to the quantity of fresh land we should have to put under cultivation to catch up to the requirements resulting from intercolonial free-trade ; but he has, I think, altogether overlooked the law of compensation going on, and the resulting advantages which are sure to arise. When I see many of my colleagues going about with doubtful faces and diminished heads, thinking of the evils to be brought upon us by federation, I would venture to point out one thing by way of compensation. This time last year the Collie coalfields, the goldfields, and the tinfields in the South-West existed, so to speak, only in name ; and I think I am right in saying that at present we have on those fields a population of something like 4,000 souls. He would have been a great prophet who could have foretold, this time last year, that such a state of things would exist now ; and what is the result ? The productions of the centres of the South-West will be required by those 4,000 people, leaving the markets of the colony, as regards the city of Perth and the port of Fremantle, intact for the producers of the Avon Valley and elsewhere. The hon. member in his private life will, I venture to say, meet the coming trouble in a very different spirit. Instead

of ceasing to plant trees, he will increase his clearings and go on planting, preparing for the days when competition, owing to free-trade, will make times less lively with him than they are now. And so I say : to every landowner we will preach the gospel of grit, and hope, and push, and energy—not the gospel of despair that is preached by this motion of the hon. member. Every man who has a large piece of land only partially cleared must be encouraged to go on clearing it, and to increase his income so that he will be able to meet the competition which is sure to come upon him. Our tradesmen, with better appliances and better machinery, will be able to face the competition that will come upon them. And so also with our millers : instead of preaching this gospel of despair and shutting up our public works, we must realise that every mill in the colony will this year have a full year's supply of grain to go on with ; and with the free-trade policy they must introduce better machinery and better appliances, must increase their output, and so grasp the whole of the markets of the colony. If that is not to be the result of my land policy, and the land policy of this Government, then we have utterly failed. Another thing : let us remember that we have the great privilege of a large consuming population at our doors, that nature has so fixed the population of the goldfields that, unless Providence work a miracle for their benefit, they can never produce a sack of flour or a ton of hay while God's sun shines upon them ; and moreover, we in this colony shall always have the advantage of the freights from the other colonies, and the other expenses which must be borne by imported articles ; so that our neighbours in the East, whatever may be their advantages in other respects, will be always to that extent handicapped. An enterprising farmer holding the same views as I in regard to federation has just returned from the other colonies. He is a man of push and energy ; and what was the result of his visit ? I asked him, "What did you find there ?" He said, "I found chaff at £2 a ton, and other things in proportion." "And what are your feelings ?" He said, "I thank God I have lived in a colony where we can get £3 a ton for our chaff, and we

have that so far." And I say again, instead of despairing, let us clear more land, for with free-trade we can still hold our own markets against the producers of the East. If our public works, if the extension of our railways, were stopped, just think of what the effect would be! I say again that, if I thought the Government were foolish enough, wicked enough, to adopt such a policy, and if that policy were to be followed by the banking institutions, and by men like myself who are large employers of labour, if it were to be followed by leaseholders and by large societies, I say we should undoubtedly bring about all the evils we anticipate, and should have the great misfortune of seeing the fulfilment of our own prophecy. I do not conceive for one moment that there is a man in this House who really desires to support this motion of the hon. member. Personally, I think the motion is a sort of little bogey, set up possibly to frighten the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Leake). I am with the hon. member heart and soul in his desire to put off the day of federation. I believe federation would spoil the plan of Providence; I believe we have a trump card in our hands if we are let alone to play it; and I strongly protest against being dragged at the chariot wheels of Mr. George Reid into any federal union. If we had no resources—no goldfields, no rich pastoral resources, no tin resources, no coal resources—we might preach this gospel of despair; but federation will never take away from us our great national heritage; and I feel sure, although I have not consulted him upon it, that if the Premier were here this evening he would echo the views I have put forward, and would say that the Government who adopted such a motion and such a policy would not deserve to live a day. I can only say that if the Government adopted that policy, I would sever my connection with such a Government. While agreeing with the hon. member heart and soul as to the evils which will be forced upon this colony by our federating before we are ripe for it, I oppose with all my energy the adoption of such a fearful and unworthy policy for a great colony like this, as is portrayed in the motion.

At 6:30, the SPEAKER left the Chair.

At 7:30, Chair resumed.

Question (Mr. Harper's motion) put, and negatived on the voices.

#### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By THE MINISTER OF MINES: Report of Mines Department, 1898.

By THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Return showing land under crop in various districts of the colony, 1898-9.

Ordered to lie on the table.

#### MOTION—CATTLE RESTRICTION: NORTHERN TERRITORY AND EAST KIMBERLEY.

MR. MONGER (York) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable that the prohibition against cattle in the Northern Territory of South Australia from entering into Western Australia be removed.

He said: In submitting this motion, I do so feeling somewhat assured it will receive practically the unanimous support of hon. members. It must of course be quite fresh in the recollection of hon. members that a lengthy debate on this question took place last session, and on that occasion some members on this and on the other side of the House predicted that all sorts of ruin would fall on the people who were interested in the cattle industry in the southern portions of the colony. I think, however, that every person who has watched with great interest the arrival from time to time of cattle from East Kimberley district into the southern markets, must now have come to the conclusion that all the harm which was prognosticated last session as likely to occur in the southern portions of the colony has not been realised, and that those fears were absolutely without foundation. One hon. member now interjects that we are "not out of the wood" yet; but backed up as I am in this motion by the recommendation of the Chief Inspector of Stock, an officer whose best efforts have always been used in keeping back as far as possible anything which might tend in any way to be disastrous to stock in the colony, and when I inform hon. members that this officer is in entire accord with the motion, I think that, if for no other

reason, his recommendation should be sufficient to commend the motion to hon. members. I would like, however, to inform hon. members that at present cattle are allowed to come into these parts from East Kimberley; and this motion has only one object in view, to allow cattle from the Northern Territory of South Australia to be admitted into East Kimberley. It is generally recognised that there are ticks in East Kimberley, and it is well known there are ticks in the Northern Territory of South Australia; and to allow cattle in the Northern Territory to cross over a line which is hardly known, an imaginary line, and come into East Kimberley is only asking what practically to-day takes place. Last session, when this question was under debate, I believe those who were strongest in denouncing the admission of northern cattle into the southern markets, were the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) and a few others, who then stated that within a very few months after the introduction of cattle from East Kimberley into these parts of the colony, there would be no dairy cattle left in the vicinity of Perth and Fremantle. That idea to-day is exploded; and in asking hon. members to permit cattle from the Northern Territory of South Australia to come over the border into East Kimberley, one of the finest cattle districts in the whole of Australasia, I am only asking what the bulk of hon. members at least will agree to.

**MR. HARPER (Beverley):** In seconding the motion, I may remind hon. members that I moved one somewhat to the same tenor last year, and although under pressure I withdrew the motion last year, I cannot see that there is the slightest logical objection to passing this motion, and admitting cattle from the Northern Territory into East Kimberley. It is in the interests of consumers, because by admitting these cattle there will be a larger area and a greater quantity of stock to draw from for supplying the markets in these southern districts. The bulk of the cattle brought here now have to be driven from north to south overland to Adelaide; and we are likely to get better cattle at a cheaper rate, if we draw them direct from the Northern Territory.

**MR. A. FORREST (West Kimberley):** I did not support or oppose a similar motion last session, but I think those who are interested in the question can say at once that the time has arrived when this restriction should be abolished. It should be distinctly understood, however, that the present quarantine regulations relating to other parts of the colony, shall not be interfered with, that no cattle shall come from East Kimberley through West Kimberley, and no cattle vessel trading from Wyndham to Fremantle shall call at any port either going or coming. If the present quarantine regulations at Fremantle are strictly adhered to, I see no reason why the motion should not be passed, and on these grounds, and these grounds alone, I support the motion.

**MR. MONGER:** The motion does not affect the quarantine regulations already in existence.

**MR. A. FORREST:** But we want it particularly laid down that cattle from East Kimberley cannot under any pretence be allowed to be driven through West Kimberley, and that cattle ships trading between Wyndham and Fremantle shall not call at any intermediate ports. Under these conditions the motion will prove of great benefit to this portion of the colony, because it will mean a larger supply of cattle from the Northern Territory *via* Wyndham, instead of importing from South Australia and New South Wales. I do not include Victoria amongst the colonies from which cattle are imported, because that colony does not come into competition. Under the motion, the profits, instead of going to South Australia or New South Wales, would be distributed at Fremantle and elsewhere in the colony. All the slaughtering done is done at Fremantle, where the freights are also payable, while the vessels use local coal, and the money spent at Wyndham in carrying on the business is considerable.

**MR. WALLACE (Yalgoo):** As one who has always opposed any removal of the quarantine restrictions, I desire to make an explanation, in view of the position I am going to take up this evening. At first sight I was inclined to oppose the motion, but on discussing the matter with various other members, and giving it the consideration it is entitled

to, I have come to the conclusion it will be in the interest of the consuming population to remove the barrier between this portion of the colony and the meat supply in the North. I agree with the member for West Kimberley (Mr. Forrest) that this motion should not form a precedent for the removal of the quarantine restrictions in the other portions of the colony. I recognise that the admission of cattle from the Northern Territory to East Kimberley, is for the purpose of supplying cheaper meat in the markets of the Southern districts. I learn from some of the meat dealers that the removal of the restrictions on East Kimberley cattle has been the means of largely reducing the cost of meat to the consumer during the last 12 months, and as I was always opposed to the removal of the quarantine restrictions, I desire to make these remarks to show my reasons for offering no opposition to the motion before the House.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. G. Throssell): This question has been under consideration by the Stock Department, and I have received a recommendation from the Inspector which is on all-fours with the motion. I may say that last year, following on the report of the expert from Queensland, I had considerable doubts in my mind as to the wisdom of removing the restrictions against cattle from East Kimberley; but since that policy has been inaugurated, every ship has been carefully watched, and last month I had a report sent to me as to the condition of the cattle imported and everything connected with them. As hon. members know, these cattle steamships, on arriving at Fremantle, after discharging all their cargo are steamed, and the trucks which carry the cattle to the goldfields are also disinfected, and I am in a position to say that up to date no ill-effects have followed the action of the Government in removing the restrictions on East Kimberley cattle. East Kimberley was quarantined owing to the fact that the cattle there and across the border were ticked, the border being only an imaginary line across which cattle very naturally wander from adjacent runs. There is now not the slightest reason why the restrictions on

Northern cattle should not be taken off; but I am altogether at one with the member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest) when he says we must not interfere with the quarantine regulations regarding West Kimberley; and such an interference is not contemplated at all. The Government are ready to accept the motion, if it meets with the wishes of hon. members. For the information of the House and to show the importance of the business, I may say that last November the value of this trade amounted to £107,000. The policy of the Government was well-intentioned, and there has been since only one rumour of an outbreak a few weeks ago, and that was found to be a false alarm. Up to date, no evil has followed the policy of the Government, and the figures I have just given show the value of the trade to the producers. I am told the value of cattle in Kimberley is, to the pastoralists, £6 per head, and that by the time they reach Fremantle the value is £12 per head; and I am further informed that the steamers engaged in the trade use Collier coal exclusively, and the value of that coal for one vessel alone during the few months the coal has been in use is £5,000. Another feature it is right to mention is that when we first imported cattle, they were fed with pollard from the Eastern colonies, a sufficient supply being brought; now, however, owners go into the market and contract for their supplies for the quarantine station and elsewhere. All things considered, the results have justified the policy of the Government, who are prepared to accept the motion.

MR. HOLMES (East Fremantle): I have much pleasure in supporting the motion. I was one of the strongest opponents of cattle from East Kimberley being introduced to Fremantle, and fought against that more than any member in the House, realising as I did that once ticked always ticked. It is a well-known fact that these cattle are being introduced from the Northern Territory without paying duty, but if this motion be carried, they will arrive in broad day and give the Government an opportunity of adding to the revenue. If the cattle do not come from the Northern Territory market via Wyndham, they will have to travel through South Australia and be shipped from Adelaide to Fremantle, and

that would only have the effect of increasing the cost to the consumer, and reducing the quality.

Question put and passed.

# **NOTION—RAILWAY ADMINISTRATION.**

**MR. HOLMES** (East Fremantle) moved :

That, in the opinion of this House, the present administration of the Railway Department is unsatisfactory.

He said: I realise the responsibility which rests upon me in making this motion, and particularly do I realise that responsibility, remembering the remarks of the Premier when delivering his Financial Statement, in which he complimented the Commissioner of Railways, and expressed the opinion that the thanks of the community were due to that gentleman and to the officers controlling the railway department, for the competent, capable, and business-like manner in which the railways of this country were being conducted. Consequently my task is not by any means an easy one. I have also been told, and this is rather a difficult obstacle in my path, that there is a probability of the Government making this a want of confidence motion, owing, I think, to the manner in which the motion was worded. However, I hope I shall be able to justify the motion and the wording of it, although I admit that wording is perhaps somewhat severe. Again, my task is not by any means a pleasant one, because it has been my honour and my pleasure to have known the Commissioner of Railways long before he perhaps ever thought of being Commissioner of Railways, and long before I ever dreamt of being the member for East Fremantle.

**MR. VOSPER**: At that time, I suppose you were both comparatively pure innocents?

**MR. HOLMES**: Probably the Premier will carry out his threat, and transfer me to the scene of oblivion from whence I came. However, whilst I am here I have a duty to perform to the country; and though it be perhaps unpleasant, I will not flinch from my duty, but will endeavour to justify my motion. I have known the Commissioner of Railways in his private capacity, and in every other capacity, for many years, and I know that one would not wish to meet a more

honourable or more upright man; yet in connection with the railways, I must say there is something wrong, a screw loose somewhere; and it must be political influence which perhaps is pulling the hon. gentleman in a direction opposite to that in which he would like to go. If I justify my motion, I hope I shall have the support of hon. members, not only on this (Opposition) side of the House, but also on the Government side.

**MR. GREGORY**: You do not expect that?

**MR. HOLMES**: If hon. members opposite have, without hearing the facts, made up their minds that they will not support me, that is my misfortune, not my fault; but if I prove my case, and show that the administration of the department is not satisfactory, I do not think it is too much to ask any hon. member to support me, at all events to some extent. I shall make statements to-night of which I cannot accept a denial. I must have, in this instance, disproof. It is not sufficient for me to make statements here, and for the Commissioner of Railways to stand up and contradict them. If that be done, one section of the community will believe me, and another section will believe the hon. member opposite; and my object will not be any further advanced. I will accept excuses; I will accept any satisfactory explanations; but I will not be satisfied with denials. If disproof be forthcoming, then no one will have greater pleasure than I in withdrawing my motion, or in asking the House to allow me to do so. I shall adduce approximate dates and approximate amounts. I cannot be particular to a day nor to a shilling in my dates and figures, because such considerations do not affect the principle at stake. The statements I shall make will be made in good faith; I make them honestly, believing them to be true; and I will not accept denial, but must have those statements disproved. I have not acted hastily in this matter. I have been for some time collecting information in connection with the management of our railways, and I realise that to-night I am in a somewhat responsible position. I shall now proceed to justify the motion. Hon. members will doubtless recollect that some weeks ago I asked the Commissioner of Railways certain

questions in connection with the purchase of some trucks. In reply, I was told that the railway department had purchased 40 trucks from the Seabrook Battery Company at £90 each, or a total of £3,600. Further information on that subject is that the responsible officer, the locomotive engineer, Mr. R. B. Campbell, valued those trucks before purchase—although I believe he altogether objected to the purchase, as they were unsuitable—at £40 each. It will be thus seen that while the responsible officer of the department valued the trucks at £40 each, or £1,600 in all, the department paid £90 each, or a total of £3,600, or £2,000 over and above the value set upon the trucks by their responsible officer. The question that arises is, why was this purchase made? The answer is as follows. For some unaccountable reason, the Seabrook Battery Company was allowed to incur a freight liability of £4,000 to £5,000, but why that company was allowed to incur this freight liability I know not: probably the Commissioner of Railways will tell us. I know what the rule of the Railway Department is with their clients in this matter: I know the rule in my own case. The Commissioner of Railways holds my fixed deposit for a sum covering the probable amount of my freight for the current month; customers arrange with the department for the freight account for the month, by fixing our deposit or our bond, just as we arrange with a bank manager for an overdraft; and if any customer attempts to exceed the amount of the deposit, the peg is put in and that customer is prevented from so doing. Why the Seabrook Battery Company was allowed credit to the extent of £4,000 to £5,000 will probably be explained later on. However, it is an exception to which I object, and to which I think the House should object. I suppose, following this departure to its logical issue, the department had to allow this liability to be in some way liquidated, and they took the trucks; and in order that the liability might be liquidated, they increased the value set upon those trucks by their own officer to the extent of some £50 per truck. Now to follow that argument out, I should say that had the Seabrook Battery Company owed £8,000 for freight instead of

£4,000, the department would no doubt have paid £180 per truck instead of £90. However, it seems to me the liability had to be liquidated somehow, and as the trucks were the only valuable things they could take, the department took the trucks, and credited themselves with £3,600 revenue, and debited the purchase, I suppose, to loan account. That means they increased the capital of the railways by £3,600, and took credit for £3,600 as part of the railway earnings.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That is part of "decimal 69."

MR. HOLMES: Apart from this, I may say the trucks are not by any means suitable. I have been asked in this House what I am by occupation—whether I am a mining expert, a financier, or a railway expert; but I am borne out in this instance by a good many people who understand the business, in saying these trucks are not by any means suitable. The principal objection to them is that the undergear, that is the hauling gear, is of inferior quality; it is not up to the standard, and if it were attempted to run the trucks on high-grade lines, the result would be that the undergear would collapse, and the parting of a train would be a serious matter to the department. In reply to one of the questions asked by me the Commissioner of Railways said the department did not intend to alter the undergear, and that the cost would be £25 per truck, or £1,000 in all. Assuming, for argument's sake, that £40 is not the correct value, and that the Government did not pay £50 more than the trucks were worth, I will put the subject before hon. members in another way. A new truck of that sort is worth £75; the Government have already paid £90 each for these trucks; they have spent £10 each in altering the doors of the trucks, according to the Commissioner's own reply; and to alter the undergear would cost another £25; that is £125 by the time these second-hand trucks are put into thorough working order, against £75 the original cost of a new truck. It will thus be seen there is still £2,000 paid in excess of the actual value of the trucks. But this is only a small matter, and I do not think I should detain the House longer over it. I will proceed to justify my motion still further in another way.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That is a good start, anyhow.

MR. HOLMES: I should like to say, however, that this is hardly what we should call competent, capable, and wise administration, as laid down in the Premier's Financial Statement. If this is the best-managed department, the department held up by the Premier as an example to the others, hon. members can form their own conclusions as to the manner in which some of the other departments are managed. The next sin of the department that I wish to deal with is a convenient system they seem to have of adjusting accounts, and that principally in connection with certain contractors who have a considerable amount of traffic passing over the Government lines. Hon. members will bear in mind that Messrs. Wilkie Brothers constructed the railway from Southern Cross to Coolgardie. They completed the contract on the 31st December, 1896, and the Government assumed control in January following. It will come, perhaps, as a surprise to hon. members to learn that an amount of about £1,250 remained in the books of the Railway Department to the debit of Wilkie Brothers till, I think, about June, 1898, when the amount was—well, written off. That is the convenient system of adjusting accounts to which I some little time ago referred. How did this freight accumulate? It would seem that Wilkie Brothers entered into arrangements with the Government to pay 10s. per truck for every truck they used belonging to the Railway Department. Such was the arrangement entered into, I understand, and that was the amount which Wilkie Brothers did pay for some considerable time. But as the contract approached completion, Messrs Wilkie Brothers decided that they would only pay 4s. a truck. They paid 4s. a truck instead of 10s.; and the Railway Department, in their take-what-you-can-get style, accepted 4s. a truck and debited the 6s. to Wilkie Brothers, until the account amounted to some £1,250, which sum remained as a debit against Wilkie Brothers in the books of the department—I make these statements in good faith—for 18 months, and then it was written off. What I want to know, and I hope the matter will be satisfactorily explained, is, was this a just claim

against Wilkie Brothers? If so, why was not the claim enforced? If it was an unjust claim, why did the amount remain to the debit of Wilkie Brothers in the railway books for 18 months? Was it that the department would not enforce the claim for fear of exposing their incompetence, or was it something worse? I will accept either explanation, because either will justify my motion. If the Commissioner of Railways says that he knows nothing of this, then that statement in itself will justify my motion, because if he does not know of it he ought to know. The next item to which I wish to refer is that of the Railway Department's transactions with one Hedges, a contractor for the Bridgetown railway line. This man Hedges completed his contract, it would seem, some 12 months ago, and yet I am given to understand that there is a considerable amount, some hundreds of pounds, standing to Hedges' debit in the railway books; and it has not been paid. The question crops up in my mind again: Is this claim against Hedges a just one? If so, why do not the department enforce it? If, on the other hand, it be an unjust claim, why is it allowed to remain to the debit of Hedges?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That is another "decimal," you know.

MR. HOLMES: And why, as in other instances, have the department not reverted to the usual expedient of writing off? This debit, I understand, has not been written off.

MR. A. FORREST: In what paper did you find that information?

MR. HOLMES: I will not tell the hon. member what papers I have found it in. Unfortunately, he and his Government will not supply to this House the information the House is entitled to; and if I go out of the usual course to obtain my information, and stand up here prepared to substantiate it, and prepared to abide by the decision of the House, it is not for me to reply to the member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest) as to where or how I got my information.

MR. A. FORREST: I thought it was, perhaps, in some of the public papers.

MR. GREGORY: Oh, did you!

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It is not the kind of thing that would appear in the public papers.

MR. HOLMES: This account, I understand, was for truck hire, freight, and sundry other things that had been made in accordance with the contract; and I hope the Commissioner will explain the why and the wherefore of these transactions. The next item I shall deal with is that of Messrs. Millar Brothers and their transactions with the Railway Department. Messrs. Millar Brothers were allowed to incur a freight liability in a manner somewhat similar to the other companies. Already £1,750 has been written off Messrs. Millar Brothers' account by the Railway Department, and I believe there are some other vast sums yet in dispute. About £1,750 has already been written off; and how did this occur? It would seem that Millar Brothers, on the take-it-or-leave-it principle, offered not according to the rate laid down in the railway rate-book, but according to a rate they decided themselves they should pay. According to the railway rate-book of 1898, sleepers are carried at a fixed rate and all smaller timbers are carried at an advance of 25 per cent. on that rate. Messrs. Millar Brothers said, "We will not pay according to your rate-book, but will pay the same rate for smaller timber as we pay for sleepers, and we will ignore your charge of 25 per cent. advance on that rate." The Railway Department accepted cheques on account for this rate, and allowed the difference to accumulate in their books until it reached something like £1,750. Another means that assisted Millar Brothers in running up this account was that, according to the same rate-book, all timber companies inside a radius of five miles from the Government main line must pay 1s. 3d. for a small truck and 2s. 6d. for a large truck; and, if outside that area, they pay 2s. 6d. and 5s. respectively. I also understand that all the mills of Messrs. Millar Brothers are outside the five-mile radius, and I believe one timber mill is 14 miles distant from the Government main line; yet Millar Brothers say: "You may charge us 2s. 6d. for a small truck and 5s. for a large truck, and you may charge other people and they may pay; but we have decided that we will pay the minimum rate of 1s. 3d. and 2s. 6d." By these means, and by overcharges in freight, these debits accumulated to something

near £2,000 in the books of the Railway Department against Millar Brothers, and I understand these debits were subsequently written off. I do not wish to labour this small item, but I should like again to know if this was a just or an unjust claim; and was it written off through incompetency, or does the Commissioner know anything about it? I know, however, that these are the rates laid down in the rate-book, and these are the rates all other timber companies pay; and I hope the House will obtain from the Commissioner some explanation, if my statements are correct, as to how it is that an exception is made in the case of Millar Brothers. As before stated, I will accept any excuse, but I will not have my statements denied: I must have them disproved. The next case I have to deal with is that of Messrs. Baxter and Prince; and if the Premier were here, and I regret he is absent because he is generally full of Biblical quotations, and I would remind him of the marriage feast where the best was kept to the last, and I think in this case I have kept the best till the last. Messrs. Baxter and Prince were the contractors for constructing the Cue-Mullewa railway line. The Railway Department entered into a contract with them to carry sleepers, principally from Prince's siding at Donnybrook, and to deliver them at the head of the Government railway line, Mullewa. The department, I understand, gave to the firm a receipt for 20,000 sleepers carried, and debited them with freight charges for that number. They delivered the sleepers to Baxter and Prince at Mullewa, but they could prove delivery of only something like 11,500 sleepers. That showed there were 8,500 sleepers lost in transit.

MR. A. FORREST: What about the Midland Railway, which would carry them part of the way?

MR. HOLMES: I will deal with this matter apart from the Midland Railway. Were these sleepers lost or stolen, or what became of them? Surely it is not too much to ask that a capable, wise, and businesslike department should explain what became of 8,500 sleepers carried over the railway? [Several interjections by Members.] When hon. members opposite forget themselves, and act as gentlemen for a few minutes, I will pro-

ceed. It would seem the Government in their defiant manner, as they do, insisted that they must have delivered the 20,000 sleepers; Baxter and Prince insisted that they had received only 11,500; and the department in their wisdom said, "We will send out a man to prove you have got the sleepers on your line." The contractors accepted the suggestion, and the department sent a man to inspect the line; but he discovered when he got there that Baxter and Prince had been receiving a number of sleepers shipped by way of Geraldton, and to distinguish between those sleepers which had been carried by sea, and those carried by the Government railway from Donnybrook, was more than the man could do. The Railway Department in these circumstances could not prove they had delivered more than about 11,500 sleepers; and on the declaration of Messrs. Baxter and Prince, sworn before a justice of the peace, one Mr. Reid, that the value of those sleepers was between £900 and £1,100, and that this amount was due by the department, I understand the department paid something between £900 and £1,100 to Baxter and Prince. That case in itself is sufficient to justify my motion, but I will proceed further. Messrs. Baxter and Prince, finding they had such a well-managed department to deal with, set up a further claim for some £2,000 and several hundreds more, as overcharges for freight and such like, which the Government admitted, and subsequently allowed, and the department wrote off freight to that amount in the usual systematic manner of adjusting accounts, and doubtless Messrs. Baxter and Prince went on their way rejoicing. This case certainly also requires a little more than denial, and I think the least I may ask is disproof of the statement. I may also again ask, can it be said that this is an example of capable, wise, and business-like administration of the Railway Department? I say these charges were in accordance with the railway rates, and if hon. members will follow the figures I have quoted, they will find that the several sums represent a total of something like £10,000. This is no small matter, to be trifled with in such a manner; and I, at all events, will demand some further explanation from the Government. I would like to say that if all this is

fiction, it places me in a very awkward position; but if it is fact, which I honestly believe it is, what a position for hon. members opposite! By this time hon. members will realise the difficulty I have had in obtaining information; and what I would like to know is if the Commissioner of Railways will open his heart and— [MR. DOHERTY: His ledger] exactly, his ledger, and put these exact figures before the House, they may perhaps have an astonishing effect on members. I shall not deal further with the system of writing off. I shall refer next to amounts paid by the Treasury on behalf of the Railway Department, for some reason that requires explanation. In March, 1898—hon. members will notice these figures are not up to date, and of course there are later transactions which may not be adjusted yet—Mr. A. G. Rosser was paid for a windmill £27 10s.; and Messrs. Henderson and M'George were paid for some machinery £27 3s. 8d. On the 2nd June, in the same year, Messrs. Climie, Eastwood, and Co., for five bags of bacon, were paid £60 13s. 1d.; Messrs. Brennan Bros. for clothing were paid £27 12s. 5d.; on the 4th June the Fresh Food and Ice Co., for a truck of poultry, were paid £148 6s.; on the 7th July, Messrs. Welsham and Foley, for 101 bags of oats, were paid £50; and Messrs. Henderson and M'George, for machinery, were paid £204 5s. In August, Messrs. Gull Bros., for a chaff-cutter, were paid £149 11s. What I want to know is what became of these things that were missing and had to be paid for?

MR. DOHERTY: The Opposition got the windmill.

MR. HOLMES: I do not wish to detain the House longer than is necessary, but I may safely say that, like Tennyson's brook, I could go on for ever. But surely this in itself is sufficient: the fact of the Treasury paying out amounts like these on behalf of the Railway Department is enough to justify my motion, and certainly demands some explanation. I will next have something to say about the manner in which the books of the Railway Department are kept. This is ancient history, perhaps, but I will endeavour to bring it up to modern fact. Some four years ago a cheque was paid to the department on account of freight

for something, amounting to £300; and it was paid, not at the Perth or Fremantle railway station, but at one of the out-stations, and was sent to Perth for indorsement. The Chief Accountant gave a receipt for the amount of the cheque, and left the office for the purpose of getting the cheque indorsed. Nothing was heard of that cheque until a few months ago, when—no thanks to the energy or ability of the Railway Department, for they did not make the discovery—a branch bank notified the department that this cheque had been lying to the credit of the Railway Treasurer for two or three years, and the bank wanted further instructions. That in itself is serious enough; but the question is, what could an officer of the Railway Department have done under those circumstances, and what may officers have done under similar circumstances if the officer operating on the account had chosen to draw against the amount? No one would seem to be any the wiser. But, fortunately for the department, the officer in this case did not operate on the account; and ultimately the fact that this amount was lying in a bank to the credit of the Railway Department was brought to the notice of that department, which thereby became some £300 or £400 better off than they expected to be.

MR. VOSPER: Who audits the department's books?

MR. HOLMES: We will come to that, directly. Another question is, how was the cash account made to balance, if that amount was shown to have been received and was not accounted for? The amount seems to have been lost, and no one knew that it was lost. Those who understand bookkeeping know that the balancing of the cash account could not have been properly done unless the receipt of that cheque and what was done with it, had been duly shown. I understand that the amount was drawn from what is known as the Commissioner's advance account. What that account is I do not profess to know, but I shall show, from information received, that it is used to evade the Auditor General and the Audit Department. It would seem that all shortages are paid out of this account, and all surpluses are paid into it. It would seem also the account had never been made to balance since the present Commissioner

came into office, and I understand it would not balance when he did come into office, and it has not been balanced since. I ask again, is this a satisfactory and business like way of conducting the Railway Department of this great colony? A question that will arise in the minds of hon. members is, how is it the Auditor General has not come in contact with these facts and figures? It came certainly as a surprise to me, and no doubt it will be a surprise to hon. members, for it would seem the Auditor General does not audit the railway accounts, and that the Railway Department have their own auditors. The Auditor General explained, some time ago, that he could not audit the accounts of the Railway Department unless his staff were increased. The Government refused to increase the staff to such extent as would enable him to do the work, but they consented to the Railway Department having auditors for the accounts of that department at an equal expense, and the department to do their own auditing in that way. The position is that the Auditor General is a servant of Parliament, and he has undoubtedly brought facts to the notice of hon. members of this House in his capacity as a servant of Parliament; but the auditors of the Railway Department are the servants of the General Traffic Manager, and if they became inquisitive, I suppose they are promoted to a vacancy. It came as a surprise to me, as I have said, to find the Auditor General and his staff did not audit the railway accounts, that the department have their own auditors, and that those auditors are consequently the servants of the General Traffic Manager. I ask again, is this a business-like way in which to conduct a great earning and spending department? What I would like to know is, what were the auditors of the Railway Department doing in connection with the man Henn, who was formerly assistant paymaster in the Railway Department? An attempt was made a week or so ago to prosecute that man, but the attempt failed. It was admitted the man had taken some £450, and that his defalcations extended over something like two years. Why did railway auditors and the railway accountant allow this to go on? This man, on a salary of £225, or £4 10s. a week, had the handling of I believe about £10,000

a week. The Commissioner looks up in astonishment, but I find that the provisional and temporary salaries for this year amount to close on £500,000, and if that is not nearly £10,000 a week, I am wrong in my calculation. The department had this officer secured under a bond for about £8,000, and I suppose it was thought that if he "levanted" with £6,000 or £8,000 some fine night, it would be possible to call up the bond. It was found, however, that the bond was payable only in the event of a conviction, and as the department failed to secure a conviction, the £450 was lost in the same way as money would have been lost had it amounted to £4,500. I hope I have justified my motion; but if hon. members are not already convinced, I can justify it further. I contend that the loss of 8,500 sleepers is, in itself, sufficient to justify the motion.

MR. CONNOR: That is a statement.

MR. HOLMES: I should like to draw the attention of the House to a statement in a written report by the Auditor General when he did audit the railway accounts. The report is as follows:

1. That the management of the railways has been guilty of misappropriation of money; and 2. that the management attempted to hoodwink the Audit Department.

That is not merely a "statement," but is a written report by the Auditor General, whose words have not been disproved.

MR. A. FORREST: How many years ago is that?

MR. HOLMES: It is in the last annual report of the Auditor General, but I am quite willing to give the hon. member the date and any other information he wants. When we have the Auditor General committing reports of this kind to writing—and we know he is an officer who does not make statements he cannot substantiate—it puts a more serious aspect on the railway management than I have put, though my strictures have been somewhat severe. All this goes to prove there is something radically wrong somewhere; and it must be admitted that two great departments, like the railways and public works, are too much for any one man to control. That I think is at the root of the whole of the evil, because I do not care how capable or how earnest a Minister may be, to attempt to control those two great departments, as the present

Commissioner has attempted to do, is too much, and certainly places him in a very awkward position. There is one other matter I would like to bring under the notice of the House, and that is the construction of new railways, in connection with which there is room for considerable complaint. The construction is under the control of the Engineer-in-Chief, and traffic is under the General Manager, Mr. John Davies; and it is well known these two do not "take tea together," with the result that the country suffers. On the railway recently constructed between Menzies and Kalgoorlie, for instance, there are elaborate stations, station houses, and yards; and this points to the fact that the construction branch are not in touch with the traffic branch, because the former put up places for which the latter have no use. If that kind of thing is allowed to go on in connection with the railways which the Government propose to construct at an early date—if we have this friction, and the construction branch putting up station houses and yards without consulting the branch by which they have to be used, there is no doubt that in the future there will be needless waste of public money, as there has undoubtedly been in the past. To call attention to this matter is one of the principal objects I have in view in bringing this motion before the House. I have made many charges against the Railway Department, and if the unpleasantness between the General Manager and the Engineer-in-Chief, who ought to work together, is allowed to go on, it cannot have a beneficial effect on the country.

MR. CONNOR: Do you know that those officers work against each other? Mere statements do not carry very much weight.

MR. HOLMES: My answer is that, if those officers do consult one another, how is it that there are all these elaborate and expensive buildings, of which the traffic branch do not make any use? One has only to look at Perth station to see the way money is wasted. It has not been so bad lately as it was some little time ago, when one week a signal cabin on one side of the Beaufort Street bridge would be pulled down, and replaced the next week by a more expensive cabin on the other side. I am given to understand the Perth yard has been interlocked

no less than three times, and interlocking is an expensive business. The first interlocking at Perth station yard cost £10,000 to £12,000, but when it was desired to enlarge the yard, the interlocking could not be enlarged, and it was taken out and put into the Kalgoorlie yard. But the Kalgoorlie yard did not suit the interlocking gear, and now we have half the yard at the latter place interlocked with the £12,000 worth of gear originally belonging to the Perth yard. Are all these alterations and improvements, if they are improvements, paid for out of loan or out of revenue? I notice that the capital account of the railways has increased, and it would seem that all these improvements are debited to that account. My contention, whether it be right or wrong—I know it is right in business, and it certainly should be right in a large earning and spending department such as this—is that lines should be equipped with the necessary rolling-stock paid for out of loan, but that the upkeep and replenishing of stock and so on should be paid for out of revenue.

MR. A. FORREST: It is never done, though I think it ought to be.

MR. HOLMES: We know that in the other colonies the railways have always been the trouble, and our railways will land us in financial difficulties sooner or later.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Hear, hear. It is getting that way now.

MR. HOLMES: Our capital account is increasing, and our railway revenue must decrease *pro rata*. The railways to-day are earning £900 per mile, according to the Financial Statement, which I believe is correct, but immediately we begin to earn less, we will find a deficit instead of a credit balance to deal with. Hon. members may wonder what becomes of this £900 per mile which we earn. Already it costs £630 a mile to conduct the railways, and the inference is that the further we get back into the interior, especially with the railway lines it is proposed to construct in the waterless regions, the cost of the working of the railways will even exceed that amount. Unless we take the railways and the railway management in hand at once—and it cannot be done too soon—we must find ourselves in financial difficulties. We cannot expect our railways to realise for many years

more, amounts such as I have mentioned. We have staring us in the face the fact that the capital account must increase, and the Commissioner of Railways will agree there is not anything like the rolling-stock there ought to be. The department are at their wits' end, attempting to provide trucks for the traffic, and it is anticipated that within very few months there will be an absolute block on our railway lines, owing to want of rolling-stock. When the department do purchase trucks, the cost will be debited to the capital account, and hundreds of thousands of pounds will have to be spent to bring the rolling-stock up to anything like a working standard. At present, the capital account is increasing, with the prospect of a decreasing revenue; and I am given to understand on the very best authority that the rolling-stock is not in anything like the repair it ought to be. That is the outcome of the present system; and if the rolling-stock were kept in thorough repair and up to date, it would have to be paid for out of revenue, and that would have the effect of decreasing the revenue; and so long as rolling-stock can be knocked to pieces and new stock bought and charged to capital account, the tendency is to replace the present rolling-stock with new. It is by this means we have the fictitious—I call it nothing else—the fictitious statement showing a profit on the railways. The railways have cost little to construct in this country. Whoever heard of railways elsewhere constructed at the price at which the Coolgardie and Southern Cross line was constructed? The boast is made that we pay so much per cent. on our capital; but compare our capital with the capital invested anywhere else, and it will be seen that ours is nothing like the amount which would have to be embarked in any other country, in the construction of a similar number of lines. Again, in connection with rolling-stock ordered and in the possession of the Railway Department, I am told it is most unsuitable. The department have some cool-storage trucks, the net weight of which is nineteen tons, with a length of thirty feet. These trucks are capable of holding from four to five tons of produce, so that one truck, with only four or five tons of produce on board weighs twenty-four tons; and surely that is not a desirable state of

things. The heavy engines on our lines are capable of hauling only about two hundred tons on some of our gradients, and the most that an engine can draw is eight of these trucks. In hauling these eight trucks, the engine hauls 40 tons of goods and 160 tons of rolling-stock, dead weight. Surely there must be something wrong somewhere. And here we have trucks which have cost thousands of pounds, specially insulated, specially fitted up; but they weigh 19 tons, and are capable of carrying only five tons; and the heaviest engine we have is only capable of hauling eight of those trucks.

MR. CONNOR: That is the fault of the gear.

MR. HOLMES: No doubt other members can give similar instances in connection with other trucks. My friend the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Leake) showed me the other night some figures sent to him from Kalgoorlie, dealing with other trucks, and I hope he will be able to bear me out in this statement; and on this subject I will just make this one reference to one line of rolling stock, which I think demands the attention of this House. Surely there is no necessity for me to proceed further to justify my motion. If there be a possibility of justifying it at all, I must have justified it by this time. However, to freshen the memories of hon. members, I will briefly summarise the statements I have made in this House. I have shown that the Railway Department, in their transactions with the Seabrook Battery Company, have paid £2,000 more for trucks than the value set upon them by the department's responsible officer, and have done that for no other purpose than to liquidate a liability due by that company, which liability should never have been incurred in ordinary circumstances or under a capable and business-like administration. I have told the House of a system of writing off in connection with Wilkie Brothers and Millar Brothers, and the probable result of the adjustment of accounts in the case of Hedges. I have told the House of a truck of poultry lost, of 101 bags of oats lost, of windmills which could not be found at the time, and which have been found since; and, as the hon. member on my right (Mr. Gregory) says, "Do not forget the chaff-cutter." I have told

the House of a cheque which was lost for some two years, and I have told of a Commissioner's advance account that has not been made to balance for some eight or nine years.

MR. MONGER: Where did you get your information?

MR. HOLMES: I have shown that the construction branch and the working railways branch are not working for the general welfare of the country.

MR. CONNOR: Just like the Opposition.

MR. HOLMES: I think I have shown that clearly, and I hope hon. members will agree with me. I have shown that money has been spent in useless rolling-stock, and I think all must admit that to put our railways into any sort of working order we must have thousands of pounds spent on the rolling-stock; and I have explained the system adopted whereby this rolling-stock will be charged to capital account when it certainly should be charged against revenue. I have shown, according to the Auditor General, that the railway department has been guilty of misappropriation of moneys, and that an attempt has been made to hoodwink the Audit department. I believe these statements can be substantiated. I make them in all good faith: I make them believing them to be true.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: To the best of your knowledge and belief.

MR. HOLMES: To the best of my knowledge and belief. I will not accept denial. The Commissioner has the books open to him, and I have them closed against me. I make these statements believing them to be true; and surely it is not too much to ask the Commissioner not to deny, but to disprove them. I may accept any excuse, because almost any excuse will justify my motion. If those claims against Wilkie Brothers, against Millar Brothers and other people were just, why were they not enforced? If they were unjust, why were they ever made and allowed to stand to the debit of those people for so many months in the books of the Railway Department? If it be incompetence in the department, if they cannot control the traffic, still that again justifies my motion. If the Commissioner informs the House that he knows nothing of these matters, my motion is still justified, because that in

itself is an admission the Railway Department is not conducted as it should be.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Oh, I know all about it.

MR. HOLMES: If the whole of my statements be disproved, I will still cling to the 8,500 sleepers. If the department is capable of losing 8,500 sleepers between Donnybrook and Mullewa or between Geraldton and Mullewa, I contend that a department capable of doing that is not conducted in the efficient, competent, and business-like manner that the Premier would persuade this House to believe.

MR. DOHERTY: The sleepers must have gone "on the spree."

MR. HOLMES: If all else fails, I will pin my motion to the loss of the sleepers; and I have much pleasure, and much regret also, in moving the motion as it stands on the Notice Paper.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. F. H. Piesse): I move that the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and passed, and the debate adjourned till the next sitting.

#### COTTESLOE LIGHTING AND POWER (PRIVATE) BILL.

##### SELECT COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

MR. HARPER brought up the report of the Select Committee appointed to inquire into the Bill.

MR. JAMES moved that the Bill be reprinted, embodying the amendments in the report.

Question put and passed.

#### IMMIGRATION RESTRICTION AMENDMENT BILL.

##### SECOND READING.

HON. S. BURT (Ashburton), in moving the second reading, said: This Bill has been transmitted from the Legislative Council, and contains proposals to amend the Immigration Restriction Act of 1897, in respect to Sections 16 and 19. The Immigration Restriction Act referred to in this Bill is the Act of 1897, 61 Vict., No. 13. That Act, as hon. members will perhaps recollect, was passed by this Parliament; and it dealt generally with the restriction of immigration to this colony, providing a test which immigrants can be compelled to pass before they are allowed to land, that is to say an edu-

cational test which is set forth in that Act. But the Act specially exempted the imported labour introduced under regulations contained in the Imported Labour Registry Act passed in the same year. Hon. members will see by the last section of the Immigration Restriction Act, that nothing in that Act is to affect the provisions of the Imported Labour Registry Act, or of any future Act regulating the registration of imported labour. "Imported labour," as defined in the Imported Labour Act, means certain people only, such as Malays, the people from the Archipelago to the northward, who are generally introduced into the northern districts of this colony as labourers. The Immigration Act which we are seeking to amend did not affect the Imported Labour Registry Act; and the former Act provides that it shall not affect, except so far as the Governor may prescribe, any person brought into Western Australia for employment in the pearlshell fishery. The present amendment which has come down from the Council, simply seeks to exempt, besides the people engaged in the pearlshell fishery, people who may be employed in any coasting, lightering or other vessel, North of the 27th parallel of latitude. That is all it seeks to do, to exempt, in addition to people brought for employment in the pearlshell fishery, people brought for service in the coasting vessels and lighters, or in other vessels used North of the 27th parallel of latitude. Therefore, it simply adds to the exemptions of the Immigration Restriction Act. That Act has, I say, exempted certain persons, and this amendment which I am now moving seeks to extend that exemption to people who may be employed in coasting or lightering vessels North of the 27th parallel of latitude. That is one amendment. The other, in regard to Section 16, is simply to give the Governor power to make regulations with regard to people brought into the colony North of that parallel for the purpose of serving in coasting vessels and lightering vessels. I think the House will see there is no great amendment contemplated in the Bill. It is not sought to disturb at all the provisions of the Immigrant Restriction Act, except in that one particular. We already exempt labour for the pearling boats, for it was found in the North impossible to obtain labour to work the

boats between Cossack and Port Hedland and elsewhere, North of the 27th parallel of latitude. You will readily see there is reason for this amendment, for in 1897 the House accepted the contention that in those northern parts it was impossible to man the pearling fleet with white labour. It was work for which coloured labour was far more suitable than white labour, and in fact white labour was not available. The Act of 1897 exempted people employed in the pearshell fishery, but the fact was overlooked that coloured labour was also wanted in lighters and vessels along the coast in these parts. We have had experience of the Act since 1897, and it has not been found that men imported for the pearshell fishery in those parts have attempted to come into these portions of the colony.

MR. JAMES: We do not know that.

HON. S. BURT: I do not think it is fair to say that we do not know, for we do.

MR. JAMES: I say we do not.

HON. S. BURT: I defy the hon. member or anyone else to say that anyone imported for the pearshell fishery has come down to this part of the colony, South of the 27th parallel. There has never been a suggestion put forward in the Press or elsewhere that any person brought to the colony for the pearshell fishery has come down to this portion of the colony.

MR. VOSPER: It would not be mentioned in the columns of a newspaper.

HON. S. BURT: If they came, I think it would be mentioned, and that the hon. member's paper would soon get hold of it.

MR. VOSPER: Too many precautions are taken for that to be done.

HON. S. BURT: There are plenty of people in the North-West who would be only too glad to tell of these things, and to get a little *kudos* perhaps by doing other people an injury sometimes. I repeat there has never been any suggestion--and I am sure the hon. member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) has has never heard of it--that the operation of this Act, by exempting people in the pearshell fishery, has opened the door to this labour getting into the southern parts. It is only an act of justice to people living in the northern districts that this amendment should be allowed to pass. It has been passed in another

House, and I am in charge of it in the Assembly, and all we seek to do with regard to the Immigration Restriction Act is to include with the pearshell fishery labour, the labour in lighters and coasting vessels north of the 27th parallel of latitude. For the last twelve months or more this question has been taken up by the Press in the northern parts of the colony. I believe the petition has not arrived yet, but one has been very generally signed by the people in those districts, praying for the passing of this amendment. Doubtless the people in the North are as one man with regard to this amendment. The people in the northern parts of the colony ask very little from Parliament, and I think I would be justified in saying the northern parts have been neglected. While we have all been fighting down here for the loaves and fishes, railways, public works, and one thing and another, the northern portions of the colony have never grumbled.

MR. ILLINGSWORTH: Is there anyone up there to grumble?

HON. S. BURT: The hon. member had better go up there and see. They would be delighted to see the hon. member, I have no doubt. I am sure he would see a very prosperous and valuable goldfield; one or two, I think.

MR. JAMES: They do not want the niggers.

HON. S. BURT: They want the lightermen. They cannot get their goods brought from port to port. I know personally that it is impossible to man the few lighters these people have, because the climate is so trying that white people will not work on them.

A MEMBER: What is the reason?

HON. S. BURT: I do not know what the reason is, whether it is that they cannot stand the heat, or not; but the fact remains that they will not take the employment on these boats, and unless coloured labour can be obtained on these lighters, people living on the fields find they cannot get their goods to Port Hedland, Balla Balla, and elsewhere from Cossack, and from those ports to Cossack, as they would wish to do, and the industry is hampered to a very great extent. Very little is asked. If it could be reasonably suggested that this labour would come to the South, I should be the first to say it could not be allowed; but I am

certain the labour will not percolate down here, and I think the Imported Labour Act at present on the statute book safeguards the position absolutely. We have had it in force now for some time, and it has not been found that any of those people attempt to get here. The measure is not introduced in order to get the labour for any other portion of the colony than that covered by the Bill. It is absolutely intended for that portion of the colony north of the 27th parallel of latitude. Seeing that so little is asked, and the reasonableness of the request, I trust I shall find support for the second reading of the Bill. I say again the only thing required is that, together with the pearlshell labour, we shall include the labour for the lighters and coasting vessels; and, secondly, that the Government shall be allowed to make regulations affecting it. I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

MR. VOSPER (North-East Coolgardie): This Bill, and another Bill which the House will probably be asked to consider later this evening, is simply a repetition in a modified form of an effort made by the member for the Ashburton (Hon. S. Burt) and northern members generally, at the end of last session. I am glad to find they are somewhat more modest this year than last. At that time there was a desire to so alter the law as to allow immigration in the whole of the colony; but they found that public opinion down here was distinctly opposed to any such change, and therefore they have confined themselves now to more moderate views. The Bill at present before the House appears to me relatively harmless compared with the measure of last year, and other Bills; but, still, it is the old story of the thin end of the wedge, and the thick end is to be found in the other Bill to which I have referred. Clause 2 of the other Bill will show what I mean—that it is simply a “try on,” and if the House are content to pass this quietly, the other Bill will be persevered with, and it is hoped that it will be got through. It means simply that the population of the North are not sufficiently variegated as yet, and they want to get a few more colours before they are satisfied. The member for the Ashburton, in advocating the advantages of this Bill, told us that white men will

not work on coasting vessels and lighter- ing vessels, or anything of that kind, because the climate is too trying. That old story about the climate is pretty well exploded. It is all very well for the hon. member to interject and say, let me go up there. I have been in a far hotter place than the North of this colony: I have been on the equator itself, and my experience and the experience of other men who have travelled, including engineers with knowledge of such work as the Panama Canal and undertakings of that kind, is that, comparing black men with white, white men will do far better work and stand the climate far better than coloured men. In the malarial swamps of Central America, where the climate is supposed to be almost fatal to white men, it is found that the whites can stand it far better than the blacks; and, as the hon. member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) says, in these very places where it is said white men cannot work lighters, the men are on the sea coast, where they have the advantage of sea breezes and ozone from the ocean. They can work 200 or 300 miles in the interior, on the Pilbarra goldfields, where there is no relief from the heat of the sun, and where there are sand hills which reflect back the heat. Men do work there, and have stayed for years and years, continuing to carry on their avocations just the same as if this horrible climate did not exist.

MR. A. FORREST: They do not do much work.

MR. VOSPER: There is no harder class of worker than the tropical miner in Western Australia. The working miner in all parts of Australia has to work very hard, whether he is a dry blower, or is labouring below ground. A man works in a very arduous position, having to endure privations, and having a lot to put up with. If those men can work there, men can work on the coast. We need not go to any country so remote as Panama to see what men can do. Go to the Gulf of Carpentaria, where there are a number of small towns, including Normanton and Burketown. Their exports and imports are quite equal to those of any of the ports of the northern part of this colony: they export and import the same class of goods, and the work is very similar. There is this difference, that in

that portion of Queensland there are large rivers which broaden out into swamps and make the country very unhealthy, more malarial than it otherwise would be. There is a tremendous rise and fall, which leads to there being a large area of malarial country, and yet white men have been working there for many years. They do not find any injury from the climate, but they work there year after year, and no demand exists up there for black men to take their places. In fact the inhabitants would bitterly resent any endeavour to afford facilities for coloured labour. The only demand for coloured labour is from the sugar district, and not from the far North, and the people of the far North are, as I have already said, opposed to coloured men.

MR. A. FORREST: They are nearly all Chinamen.

MR. VOSPER: The hon. member evidently does not know what he is talking about. I say that Chinamen are not employed in this work. I know the whole of that country thoroughly well, and it is impossible to have Chinamen or men of that sort employed as wharf labourers. I say that if white men can stand that climate, which is a moist climate, a malarial climate, and a climate which is hot 10 months in the year, they can stand the climate in the North-West of this colony, where at least it is comparatively dry and bracing, and where, according to the reports of members who come from the North, the climate for three or four months of the year is really good. The fact is that the people of the North are not willing to pay the wages that the wharf labourers demand, and which are paid in the South. The wages question is the only question which stands in the way, and as long as the people in the North are prepared to pay a decent wage they can get white labour. This Bill is entirely opposed to the policy of the Government, and to the wishes of the people who live in the Southern portions of this country. A majority of the members of this House were returned to oppose any further introduction of coloured labour into this colony, and the electors of the North know full well that they are standing in opposition to the people here. I hope the Bill will not be passed, although I shall not offer the same strenuous opposition to this mea-

sure as I shall to the one which is to be considered subsequently. This is a dangerous innovation, and it is only a question of commercial greed. No doubt coloured labour is cheap, cheap and nasty if you like, but cheap; and because the people in the North know that this labour is cheap, they see in these coloured labourers more stamina and better means of working in hot climates than they see in the white man. I say that white men under all climates are superior to coolies, and no one can prove to the contrary. I ask hon. members not to sacrifice the principle of a white Australia to the greed of certain northern merchants.

MR. WALLACE (Yalgoo): It is almost unnecessary for me to make any remarks on this question, for hon. members and the people in the country generally know my feelings on the question of the importation of coloured labour into this colony. I was returned pledged to oppose the introduction of coloured labour, and I have on every opportunity which has been given me, acted up to my pledge. My respected friend the member for the Ashburton has explained what the desire of the people in the North is; but if the hon. member, in moving the second reading, had said those people desire to introduce cheap labour, hon. members would have at once grasped the reason the hon. member had in bringing this Bill forward. But when the hon. member tells people who have had experience in tropical climates that white men cannot be got to do lightering and work of that description, I say it is idle to think we are going to swallow such statements. I have had experience in tropical countries. In North and North-West Queensland we find white men filling all sorts of positions, and I never heard there of any case in which the climate was too severe for white men. It is only in this colony, in the North-West amongst people who are used to being spoon-fed by the Government, that we hear the bogey raised that the climate is too severe for the white men.

MR. A. FORREST: It is the gold mines that are spoon-fed.

MR. WALLACE: I do not desire to say anything more, beyond entering my protest against the second reading of the Bill, and I sincerely trust every hon.

member in considering the Bill will recognise that we have a large number of unemployed white people in the colony who are able to do this work, and if we pass this Bill hundreds of these men will be deprived of earning a livelihood in consequence of the employment of coloured labourers. I know that 13 years ago when I first came to this colony, white men were working at lightering in the North.

MR. VOSPER: Who are doing the work now?

MR. WALLACE: I believe the white men at the present time are working the lighters, and it is sought by the representatives of people in the North-West, in both Houses of Parliament, to carry out a system of sweating, which it is known very well cannot be carried out if white labour is employed. And, in order to achieve this end, the northern members come before the House session after session with some little amendment or addition to the Immigration Restriction Act, which gives white men the only protection they have against the coloured population. Every session the northern members come with some fresh amendment to try and trick hon. members into passing it, and thus create the greatest curse we ever had in Australia. I hope every hon. member will recollect that it is every man's pride who claims Australia as his home to say, "Australia for the Australians," that is for the white Australians; but if we pass such Bills as this, it will not be Australia for the Australians, but for the coolies and the black and tan in the northern portions of Australia. I shall oppose the second reading of this Bill.

MR. A. FORREST (West Kimberley): I wish to say a few words on this Bill, and in the first place I intend to support the second reading. The member for the Ashburton (Hon. S. Burt) has clearly laid before the House the reason why this Bill is asked for, and the people in the North have a right to demand it from the members of this House. Surely the members of this House will not listen to the twaddle, I can call it nothing else, of the members for North-East Coolgardie and Yalgoo. One would think the merchants and others trading on the North coast had no other object in view but to rob and oppress the working men down

here, denying a fair day's work for a fair wage. I do not think anyone in the House knows more about the northern districts than I do, whether he be the member for Yalgoo with his experience in Northern Queensland, or the member for North-East Coolgardie who has travelled in that portion of this country. I cannot see why members should wish to debar the people living beyond the 27th parallel of latitude of their rights. It has been clearly proved by the member for the Ashburton that coloured labourers are not allowed to come South and the people in the North have no wish for coloured labourers to come down here. Hon. members who represent the districts in this part of the colony will, I am sure, not be so arbitrary as not to give the people in the North what they desire. The question of wages is I say altogether outside the subject, and I can prove to the member for North-East Coolgardie, if he likes to give me half an hour to-morrow morning, by wages sheets that along the North coast men are paid higher wages than they are down here, which will show clearly that the wages question does not stand in the way. The white men will not work in this hot climate: they cannot do it. You have only to look at the working men or the settlers who come down from these northern districts when they first arrive: I say you could not put them alongside anyone who is living down here.

MR. VOSPER: Look at the member for Pilbarra, for instance.

MR. A. FORREST: The hon. member for Pilbarra is never there. If the member for North-East Coolgardie had seen the member for Pilbarra when he first came down from that district, then the hon. member would say that the member for Pilbarra was very different from what he is now. But the member for Pilbarra is not leading the life that men lightering on the coast or working on the coast have to lead. He is a gentleman who takes good care of himself, and I should say was living on the fat of the land. I appeal to hon. members to allow the Bill to pass, and when the measure has been approved, there is another small Bill of more importance than this which hon. members will be asked to give their support to. We live in this big country, and we should help all the people, whether

they live in the North or in the South. In 1897 the northern members helped to pass a Bill to restrict coloured labourers coming down to the southern part of the colony.

MR. VOSPER: And you were very sorry to do it.

MR. A. FORREST: We were not very sorry to do it. We do not want coloured labourers to come down here. The time has arrived when we should allow coloured labourers to go into the northern latitudes. This House allowed the Bill to pass in 1897, because members knew that if they did not allow the Bill to become law they would have driven out of the country men who are working in a large industry, the pearling industry, and this Bill allowed coloured labourers to be employed in the industry: not one member objected to it. Why did hon. members allow coloured labourers to dive for pearls and to carry on a large export from this country? These coloured labourers consume our goods and keep a large industry going in Fremantle, building ships for them. Those members who are opposed to these two Bills, but who voted for the Malays to work on pearling vessels, can surely stretch a point and vote for this small bantam of a measure, as I call it.

MR. JAMES (East Perth): I have great pleasure indeed in opposing the second reading of this Bill, and opposing the second reading of any Bill which tends to encroach on the charter given to us by the Immigration Restriction Act of 1897. Everyone of us knows that the Act of 1897 was simply introduced because the people of this colony were determined to have it; not because our good friends in the North, by an act of generosity, gave it to us. Was it an act of generosity on our part in making an exemption in favour of the northern parts of the colony? But that exemption now appears in this Bill and the Imported Labour Registry Bill. I may express my opinion that I am not by any means satisfied with that Bill. I fail to see why special provision should be given to the northern districts of the colony, which is denied to the more southern parts. I am one of those who have a great deal of doubt indeed as to whether we are acting in the best interests of the country by allowing the pearling industry to be run by Malays. It is

very doubtful indeed, and I would run the risk of excluding them and of allowing the industry to be run if possible by Europeans; but if that cannot be done, the industry can be controlled by others, as we know. When we see what has happened on Thursday Island, we should hesitate before we indulge in congratulations—I put it that way—on the fact that our pearling industry in this country is controlled by Malays and Japanese to-day.

HON. S. BURT: Not controlled.

MR. A. FORREST: And not owned by them.

MR. JAMES: These persons are living in the country. No doubt the industry is controlled by persons in London, who send agents here. The real owners are not in this country, and the only profit we get from an industry of this kind is not expenditure by the owners, but the benefit from the men who work in this industry, and who are earning wages in connection with the industry. There is very little benefit, if any, to the country in connection with the pearling industry at the present time, beyond indirect duties, such as that on opium, most of which is smuggled.

HON. S. BURT: There is the building of lighters at Fremantle.

MR. JAMES: I suppose there must have been quite three of these lighters built at Fremantle.

MR. GEORGE: Three lighters in seven years!

MR. JAMES: An industry which has absorbed three lighters in seven years is one on which the member for the Ashburton looks as flourishing in the northern district. I am not one who thinks special provision or exemption should be made in favour of the northern parts of the colony, because such provision would be extremely dangerous; and we know attempts have been made session after session for the purpose of infringing on the Immigration Restriction Act of 1897. Comparatively small exemptions are proposed, and we are asked, why they should not be given to the poor people in the North-West. But the difficulty there seems to be exactly the same difficulty as exists down here, namely, the difficulty of paying wages which men require for working under certain conditions; and it is not because black

labour is wanted, but because such labour is cheap, that the right of utilising it is desired under the proposed Bill. There is another matter of even greater importance. I find it is proposed under the Bill to exempt from the operation of the Act all persons employed as crews on coasting vessels, lighters "or other vessels," and perhaps the member for the Ashburton will explain why it is necessary to have the words "or other vessels." What other vessels are there beyond those specially mentioned, in connection with which it would be necessary to apply the Bill? At present, Asiatics are employed on most of the steamers which trade between Fremantle and Singapore.

MR. S. BURT: This Bill only deals with the country north of the 27th parallel.

MR. JAMES: Where is the need for the words "or other vessels?"

MR. A. FORREST: There might be a steam-launch.

MR. JAMES: But a steam-launch comes within the meaning of the vessels mentioned. So long as an Asiatic member of a crew stays aboard, he does not infringe any of the existing Acts, but the object of the Bill is to allow Asiatics to come from the vessels and become part of the residential population on shore at the particular port at which they call. That is exactly what we want to prevent. It does not follow because exemption was made, and I think wrongly, that further infringement should be allowed. The only object of the Bill is to allow Asiatics who can now be employed as crews on lighters and coasting vessels, to come ashore and form part of the population. As the law at present stands, if these Asiatics do not come on shore, they may continue to work at lightering or anything else, the penalty being inflicted on Asiatics who land in Western Australia. Three or four of the steamers which trade between Fremantle and Singapore, are almost entirely manned by Asiatics, and so long as these vessels are so manned, and the crews remain on board, there is nothing in the present legislation to prevent their being so employed. The object of the Bill, as I have said before, is to allow Asiatics to go on shore; and if the Bill be passed, I have no hesitation in expressing the opinion that under cover of its provisions, dozens and may be

hundreds of Asiatics will land in the northern parts of the colony.

MR. A. FORREST: They will not do any harm if they do.

MR. JAMES: Then say at once that is the object of the Bill. So long as the law prohibits Asiatics landing from vessels, there is a chance of stopping them; but once they are allowed to come on shore, what opportunity will there be to prevent their staying? If the Bill be passed, numbers of Asiatics, under the plea of coming to the colony as part of a crew, will be landed, as they can be at any port north of this parallel, and will become part of the residential population. It may be said that there will be regulations; but how can you identify an Asiatic, once he gets on shore? At present if a vessel lands a crew of 20, it can easily be seen, when the vessel is about to sail again, whether any of the crew are missing, and the captain and owner are responsible for absent men. That means of detection would be impossible under the Bill; and I hope nothing will be done to familiarise the people of the colony with the idea of employing Asiatic labour either in the North or the South. If we are going to extend the rights now granted to the northern people in certain instances, and gradually extend these rights year by year and bit by bit, the people of the ports immediately adjoining Sharks Bay will also be calling out for cheap labour, and in that way the people of the colony will be familiarised with an undesirable class of immigrant. The Act of 1897 and the Imported Labour Registry Act form a compromise between the conflicting desires of the northern and southern parts of the colony; and I shall use every effort possible to prevent the passing of a Bill, the object of which is the infringement of the principle embodied in the Acts, whether that infringement be in favour of the North or the South.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. W. Pennefather): I support the second reading of the Bill, though I have listened to the arguments of the hon. members who oppose it. I recollect a piece of legislation in Queensland which affected very materially the interests of the sugar growers there eight or ten years ago. At that time the Premier, Sir Samuel Griffith, taking advantage of the

tide of popularity by which he was carried along, passed an Act prohibiting black or African labour in the cultivation of sugar. What was the result? After about three or four years, when the unfortunate owners of sugar plantations had been either driven to the Insolvency Court, or had parted with their estates, the Government had to "back down" and repeal Sir Samuel Griffith's Act.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That had nothing to do with the labour party, I suppose?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: No; the Act was repealed simply because the class of labour necessary for the cultivation of sugar could not be found amongst white men. I was in Brisbane at the time, when one could see men holding forth at the street corners against the employment of black men in the northern parts of Queensland; but none of these white men would have gone there to work, no matter what price had been offered. It may be said that white labour can be got to do this work in the North of this colony, and I dare say it can, at a price. Are hon. members, by enforcing an impossible rate of wages, going to prevent the men who opened up the industry there from carrying on their business at a profit? This fear of coloured labour in such latitudes is simply a fetish that is set up by some hon. members, who preach Christian charity towards their brethren, whether they be white, black or copper-coloured, though when it comes to a matter of commercial, personal, or parochial politics, they will have nothing to do with the black or any other coloured man. To keep the whole of this huge country to ourselves is excellent in theory, but is utterly impossible in practice, as nature shows in the strongest manner; because there are latitudes in this colony where the heat demands a certain class of labour which white men cannot supply, except at great cost to their employers. I cannot see why hon. members should be dragged by a few members, who seem on every occasion when this subject is mentioned to hurl off their chests language as virulent as they, with parliamentary decency, can utter.

MR. GEORGE (Murray): I shall not support this Bill. I know it may be said I do not know much about the

North; but if the races under discussion are those with which it is proposed to populate the North, I do not want to know much about that part of the country. I have the words used by the Premier when he spoke on November 15th, 1897, and these words I think represent the practical feeling on this question. On that occasion the Premier said:

The influx of coloured people into all the colonies of Australia has been a matter which has caused grave anxiety to the people of the various Australian colonies.

It is not a question, so far as I know, of "dragooning" Parliament, which is a sort of thing left to the class of member represented by the Attorney General. "Dragooning" Parliament is not permitted, and the Attorney General was only kept from attempting it by the knowledge that the Speaker does not allow "dragooning." The Premier, in the course of the speech from which I have quoted, read a letter from Mr. Chamberlain in which these words occur:

We quite sympathise with the determination of the white inhabitants of these colonies, which are in comparatively close proximity to millions and hundreds of millions of Asiatics, that there shall not be an influx of people alien in civilisation, alien in religion, alien in customs, whose influx, moreover, would most seriously interfere with the legitimate rights of the existing labour population.

No words of mine could express my own feeling more strongly. We are a white people, and wish to keep this country for white people. We view with a considerable amount of suspicion and jealousy, any infringement or alteration of the existing law, which was fully debated before it was passed. We feel that the Bill has been brought forward in all honesty of purpose, and in accordance with the views held by its supporters; and they must pardon us if we cannot quite agree with them. For my own part I do not agree with them, and I shall certainly vote both against this Bill and the Imported Labour Bill.

Question put, and a division taken with the following result:—

|                  |     |     |     |    |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|----|
| Ayes             | ... | ... | ... | 11 |
| Noes             | ... | ... | ... | 12 |
|                  |     |     |     | —  |
| Majority against | ... |     |     | 1  |

**AYES.**  
Hon. S. Burt  
Mr. A. Forrest  
Mr. Hubble  
Mr. Lefroy  
Mr. Locke  
Mr. Monger  
Mr. Pennefather  
Mr. Piesse  
Mr. Throssell  
Hon. H. W. Venn  
Mr. Wood (Teller).

**NOES.**  
Mr. Ewing  
Mr. George  
Mr. Illingworth  
Mr. James  
Mr. Leake  
Mr. Quinlan  
Mr. Robson  
Mr. Solomon  
Mr. Vosper  
Mr. Wallace  
Mr. Wilson  
Mr. Gregory (Teller).

Question thus negatived, the amendment passed, and the Bill suspended.

**IMPORTED LABOUR REGISTRY  
AMENDMENT BILL.**

**SECOND READING.**

Order read, for second reading of the Bill.

HON. S. BURT (in charge of Bill) moved that the order be postponed till Tuesday next.

MR. A. FORREST: Hon. members opposed to the Bill must not take advantage of a thin House.

HON. S. BURT: This and the Bill of which the second reading had just been negatived, were intimately connected, and he wished to examine this Bill to see whether it could advantageously be proceeded with, seeing that the other Bill had been thrown out. If that could not be done, this Bill should be withdrawn. If not, he would proceed with the second reading.

Question put, and a division called.

MR. A. FORREST: Would hon. members have an opportunity of speaking to the question?

THE SPEAKER: Certainly not, after a division had been called for.

Division taken as follows:—

|      |     |     |     |    |
|------|-----|-----|-----|----|
| Ayes | ... | ... | ... | 13 |
| Noes | ... | ... | ... | 14 |

Majority against ... 1

**AYES.**  
Hon. S. Burt  
Mr. A. Forrest  
Mr. Harper  
Mr. Hubble  
Mr. Lefroy  
Mr. Locke  
Mr. Mitchell  
Mr. Monger  
Mr. Pennefather  
Mr. Piesse  
Mr. Throssell  
Hon. H. W. Venn  
Mr. Wood (Teller).

**NOES.**  
Mr. Ewing  
Mr. George  
Mr. Holmes  
Mr. Illingworth  
Mr. James  
Mr. Kingmill  
Mr. Leake  
Mr. Quinlan  
Mr. Robson  
Mr. Solomon  
Mr. Vosper  
Mr. Wallace  
Mr. Wilson  
Mr. Gregory (Teller).

Question thus negatived.

HON. S. BURT: I shall now be in order in moving the second reading?

THE SPEAKER: Yes.

HON. S. BURT (Ashburton): I am sorry to see the majority of the House are still proceeding on a principle which I have no hesitation in saying is absolutely wrong, a principle which I am sure hon. members must know to be unjust to the northern portion of the colony. The member for East Perth (Mr. James) says he will do everything in his power to prevent the advent of any Asiatic or coloured labourers to this country or to any portion of it. Well, I do not think that is a sentiment to be proud of.

MR. VOSPER: I am proud of it, anyhow.

HON. S. BURT: Personally, I should be utterly ashamed to hold such views. If the hon. member went to China or to the Malay Archipelago—and perhaps the last-mentioned place is as far as he has ever got in that direction—if he went to any of those Asiatic places, he would think it rather an injustice if he were told he could not be permitted to land. Nobody will dispute that. We should think such prohibition most unjust, and would take steps to redress the injustice.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: He could not land without a passport.

HON. S. BURT: And if the grievance were not redressed, we should have another Transvaal war in the country so offending. Certainly it may be contended that a certain class of people should be prevented from coming in large numbers to a certain spot, and there may be a necessity for restricting and regulating the influx of coloured labour to a considerable extent; but to say that in a large country like this, hon. members will not tolerate a coloured man at all, is in my judgment a puerile sentiment, and a sentiment of which one ought to be ashamed; and I hope hon. members who affirm that principle will live long enough to be ashamed of such sentiments. There are only two small amendments sought to be made in the Imported Labour Registry Act. One is somewhat similar to that which has already been negatived by the House; and the other is a distinct amendment to allow ships to bring to this colony under the Imported Labour Act, in lieu of one coloured immigrant for every 500 tons register, two such men for every 500 tons. Well, are hon. members really prepared to tell settlers in the northern parts of this colony that they shall not

have even that privilege? Surely that is a very small matter to ask from members representing the southern portion of this colony, that the northern people should be allowed to introduce two men for every 500 tons register, instead of one man as at present. Is that a very large demand? Yet I suppose the member for East Perth (Mr. James) says he will see me, and those who are working with me, "somewhere" before he will accede to it.

MR. JAMES: Does not the Bill apply to the whole colony?

HON. S. BURT: No; certainly not. It applies only to the northern portion of the colony. No Asiatic labourer can be imported into the southern parts of the colony at all, and no one has suggested that such should be the law ever since the present Act prohibited coloured labour from coming to the South; and all we ask is that the northern parts, under the security of the Imported Labour Act by which employers have to sign an agreement, by which imported Asiatics are under police supervision from the time they land till they leave the country, by which a guarantee is lodged with the magistrate by the employer, undertaking to pay the labourer's passage back—under all these restrictions, we ask that two men in lieu of one should be allowed to come in for every 500 tons register of the ship. I appeal to the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper), and I ask him if he ever heard of a smaller demand in his life. What possible injury could that do?

MR. VOSPER: I should like to see the Act amended so as to prohibit the importation of more than one Asiatic for every 1,000 or 2,000 tons register.

HON. S. BURT: What possible injury to the southern portions of the colony can the hon. member anticipate? What possible injury can occur, I would ask the member for East Perth, by allowing two men instead of one to enter the North for every 500 tons burden of the ship?

MR. JAMES: They would come South as well.

HON. S. BURT: They cannot come South: I do not think it is just to say they may come South; because we have had experience of the operation of the Act, and know they cannot do so.

MR. JAMES: They can do so. The Act gives them the power.

HON. S. BURT: Oh, no: the Act does not give them power to come South.

MR. JAMES: Read Section 60.

HON. S. BURT: The hon. member will see that, by the Imported Labour Act, Asiatic labour is strictly confined to the north of the 27th parallel of latitude.

MR. VOSPER: That proviso is in the Immigration Restriction Act, not in the Imported Labour Act.

HON. S. BURT: You cannot import labour under the existing Act except to the northern portion of the colony, where it is restricted by this agreement and by police supervision all the time the labour is ashore. No one has suggested that coloured labour has come to the southern parts of the colony at all since 1897, under the Imported Labour Act, and there is no reason why the demand in this Bill should be refused to the North. It is all very well to say it is a question of wages, but I submit that it is not, and that the northern people pay far larger wages than are paid down here for similar work. The fact is, white men will not work at this class of labour. Hon. members know there are goldfields in that district, but although a man may work in a mine, and the work is far more oppressive than elsewhere, he will not work elsewhere. He will work on his own account for gold, and endure horrors, perhaps, in doing so. We have found skeletons of men who have died for want of water, but such men will not work on a station in the North. Those who know the North will tell you it is not a question of wages at all, but it is the utter impossibility of getting the labour. Do you think the North-West people would come to this Parliament for the sake of getting coloured labour because they prefer it, if there were white people at hand? It is ridiculous. Very few of these people are wanted. How many lighters are there? I suppose you could count them on the fingers of each hand; but they are a necessity, and yet they cannot be worked. I beg to move that the Bill be now read a second time.

MR. VOSPER (North-East Coolgardie): I move as an amendment, that the Bill be read this day six months; and I intend to oppose the motion on the grounds I urged against the other Bill of

a similar character, and also because I regard this Bill as being far more dangerous in every respect than the one which has been rejected by the House. That Bill proposed to allow certain men to be employed as mere labourers and lighter men on the coastal portions of the North-West. This Bill goes a great deal further, and by Clause 2 provides that Chinamen, coolies, and others may be employed on shore as domestic servants, or in any other capacity in which those persons are usually employed, and instead of there being only one such coloured person imported for every 500 tons of ship's burden, there may be one for every 200. That is to say, the effect of the Bill is to more than double the importation of coloured labour to the North-West. We have not been informed yet whether this applies south of the 27th parallel, or not. I am under the impression that the Imported Labour Registry Act does not contain a proviso in regard to the 27th parallel, and that such proviso is contained in the Immigration Restriction Act alone.

HON. S. BURT: Section 4 contains that provision.

MR. JAMES: I have the Act, and it does not say a word about that.

MR. VOSPER: If lawyers fall out like this, it shows there is a very considerable amount of danger to the whole of the colony. Even if we confine it to the North-West, an attempt is to be made to bring in a number of Chinese or coolies, who may find their way to any place in the South. It means that the number in this portion of the colony also may be doubled. The hon. member for the Ashburton (Hon. S. Burt) says it is not a question of preference, and not a question of wages, but he will excuse me if I prefer to take the opinion of northern people expressed first hand. I have a copy of *Northern Public Opinion*, dated July 22, 1899. It was from a copy of this paper I received the first intimation of the Hon. F. M. Stone's intention to introduce a Bill of this kind in another place. That paper fully sets forth the objects of the northern people in desiring to bring about a change. Of course the hon. member charged with a Bill of this nature has to show a great amount of tact in bringing it into the House. Apparently the editor of *Northern Public*

*Opinion* did not think the paper would circulate as far as this. He says:

We are pleased to note that Mr. F. Stone, M.L.C., has introduced in the Upper House a Bill to amend the Imported Labour Registry Act. Last session the northern members made a strong effort to have the obnoxious clauses in the Imported Labour Registry and Immigration Restriction Acts amended, but through the hostility shown by the goldfields members their efforts were rendered futile.

I am glad to say the goldfields members are still in their places, and are still carrying on the same uncompromising hostility to measures of this kind.

In August last we pointed out that under existing conditions the obtaining of cooks and servants was becoming a difficult matter, and since then the disadvantage which householders have to encounter in this respect has been increased. Knowing that the importation of coloured labour for menial offices has been practically prohibited, it is little wonder that full advantage has been taken of our dilemma by the coloured people now in our midst, and that wages have gone up in consequence.

The whole *crux* of the thing is shown there again. The northern people are simply asking to have fresh importation of coloured people, so that those coloured people brought over here may compete with the coloured people already in the colony, and thereby lower wages.

HON. S. BURT: That is the labour of blacks, and not whites. There are no whites there.

MR. VOSPER: The hon. member accused me of illiberal principles with regard to the coloured population. If we once allow the coloured man here we have no right to take advantage of his colour.

A MEMBER: Does that apply even to the extent of a miner's right?

MR. VOSPER: Yes. I say we have no right, absolutely no right whatever, to take advantage of a man's colour in order to inflict upon him a lower rate of wages than we would give to a white working man for the same kind of work. If we are going to have these people in the colony, then we have no choice but to give them equal rights of citizenship with ourselves; but I say we have no right to admit them into the colony at all. It must be either one of two things. Either they must have full privileges of the Constitution, or be kept out altogether, and I am in favour of the latter course. I have always opposed unrestricted, or

even restricted, importation of Asiatics. The editor of *Northern Public Opinion* says :

The time is not far distant when, unless a modification of the Acts is made, it will be found impossible to engage domestic servants at anything like a reasonable wage.

It is all a question of wages. That is where the anomaly comes in. As I pointed out last year, if you go to the Pilbarra goldfield you cannot find a cook, or a hewer of wood, or a drawer of water, who is a coloured man, simply because the Act will not allow it, and consequently that kind of work has to be done by white people. You go to the coast, however, where the climate is far more healthy and the conditions are far better for the employment of labour, and you find that white people are not employed to do the same work as white men can do 200 or 300 miles in the interior. Where is the logic, justice, or sense of that? Such is the kind of dilemma into which Bills of this description would lead the House. The paper goes on to say :

We should like to see Clause 6 of the Imported Labour Registry Act repealed altogether. This clause provides that ships shall not import into the colony more than one labourer for every 500 tons of the ship's capacity.

They go further than the member for the Ashburton, and wish to bring as much coloured labour as they want into the colony. I do not think that is a matter which will be received with any degree of approval by the House. It shows, as I have said before, that this is the thin end of the wedge, and that the people in the North are prepared to drive home the thick end of the wedge as soon as the thin end is in. Let us see how this works out. A man wrote to me thus :

I take the liberty of stating for the public benefit a few of the grievances under which the working man is suffering in this district, viz., re Chinamen and Malays. You had, I believe, last shearing, a statement from Jacob's Gully, a shearing shed of Messrs. Forrest and Burt's, about Chinamen being employed shearing when plenty of white shearers were available. Well, this year white men are shearing, but Chinamen are employed wool-winding and picking-up. Again, in scouring only Malays are employed, whilst dozens of white men are walking the district seeking employment and finding none. Two days ago the manager of the Brick House started two Chinamen to shear the rams at Coburn, and told them that

they must finish them before the shearers came down from Jacob's Gully, Coburn being the second shed on Forrest and Burt's station. White men having been refused shearing that very morning heard the Chinamen put on. Now is such partiality to Chinamen to the prejudice of the white man in conformity with the utterances of the owners of this the principal station in the district? In Parliament last session who professed to encourage white labour against aliens?

MR. HUBBLE: You had a letter very similar to that two years ago, had you not?

MR. VOSPER: Yes, very similar.

MR. HUBBLE: The same letter?

MR. VOSPER: I may inform the hon. member that I do not descend to tricks of that kind. This is a distinct letter altogether. It is one which came last month. We were told that the boundary line between the Northern Territory and East Kimberley was no means of keeping cattle out, and I say that applies in regard to this question. It is very probable that if black people and white people negotiate a similar boundary between this part of the colony and the other, it will not have the effect of keeping coloured people from this part of the colony. The fact remains that aliens come. Whether they come overland, or however they come, there is an increase; and an increase in the employment of aliens is going on in Perth. There is another letter of a similar nature to this, but it is of a local character. The writer says that "last Wednesday week"—that is a month ago now—the manager of one of the principal hotels

discharged five of us, including the *chef*, at a minute's notice, and when asked what fault he had to find with us, he said he had none, but that they were going to employ Chinamen in our places.

Further on the writer says:

It does not give much encouragement to whites to come here and settle, and then find when they have been in a situation for some time that they have to make way for Chinamen, or other coloured people, that will work for next to nothing.

That shows there is some justification for the outcry raised. There are Chinese in Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie, and the number has increased by some means or other. The number of Chinese in this portion of the colony has also increased, and how the increase has taken place we do not know. Like cattle tick, and other pests, the Chinese manage to get about the country

in a way which is altogether unexplained. The fact is, that they do come about, and seeing that such is the case over a considerable area, it is a serious menace to the white population. I would like to say also that I do not base my objections to the coloured people on the mere score of wages. I do not apply that as the sole reason for opposing the importation of Chinese. It is something more than that. It is a question of race, after all. We have to consider our racial integrity, and I maintain that we cannot continue the British race in its purity, ability and strength, and all those things which make up the British character, if we are going to allow unrestricted, or even restricted importation of coloured labour. I contend that in keeping the coloured man outside Australia we are as truly defending an outpost of the Empire as are the soldiers who are now fighting. If we allow coloured labour to be imported, it will only be a question of time before Australia will be occupied by an Asiatic, or a hybrid race, and Australia under those circumstances will only be held by force of arms. In retaining Australia as a land for white people we are doing a great deal towards maintaining the integrity of the Empire, and I say that principle recommends itself to Mr. Chamberlain, who is the greatest Imperial statesman of the day.

A MEMBER: What about Mr. Gladstone?

MR. VOSPER: Mr. Gladstone was not an Imperialist. Mr. Chamberlain —

MR. GEORGE: He has altered his opinion.

MR. VOSPER: Possibly he has. The principal Imperial authority in the Empire, Mr. Chamberlain, emphatically indorses the action taken by the Australian colonies in regard to the inroads of Asiatics. I hope and trust this House will not reverse the verdict it gave a few moments ago, but will throw out the Bill in as prompt a manner as it did the previous measure.

MR. EWING (Swan): I rise to oppose the second reading of this Bill, for the same reason that I opposed the original Bill and an amendment of it. The Imported Labour Registry Bill, with its very simple title, is practically the same Bill of which some of us have had experience in the colony of Queensland. It is a Bill

by which an inferior race, without the advantages of understanding the contract they enter into, are bound for a certain term of years to serve masters they do not know, under conditions which are absolutely unknown to them. The member for the Ashburton (Hon. S. Burt) will agree with me when I say that no legal contract is approved by the law when one of the parties is incapable of understanding its meaning, by reason of his want of education, or any mental incapacity; that he is unable to understand the consequence or the effect of the contract into which he enters, whether that contract is entered into in this country or in any other; and such a contract is not looked upon with favour in the eye of the law. The evil consequences of this have been seen in the colony of Queensland. The Kanakas have been imported into that colony in vast numbers, and the consequence has been the almost total exclusion of white labour in the sugar plantations of northern Queensland. The excuse is just the same excuse we heard urged by the member for the Ashburton, that climatic conditions are not consistent with the due performance of the work by white labour. Almost everyone knows the conditions are such as to enable the white labour to successfully perform these duties. We find in Queensland, and in northern New South Wales, on the hottest of hot days, Irishmen and Englishmen working side by side in the cane fields with the Kanakas.

MR. MONGER: In what percentage?

MR. EWING: In a large percentage. On the Tweed River (N.S.W.), on the Cudgin plantation, 300 black men are employed, and 20 miles further up the river 400 or 500 white men, chiefly Irishmen, are employed. The hon. member tells us the justification for the importation of coloured labour is that the climatic conditions are such as to render it impossible and unreasonable and unfair for white men to perform their duties. I ask hon. members whether, if white men and black men can work side by side, is there anything in the argument? The question seems to me not the repeal of the Bill we at present have, because we have got this bad law on the statute book and many are opposed to it, the question arises are we going to extend

the operations of that statute? It seems to me the amendment—and I desire to be very short—is a very dangerous one in this particular. The member for the Ashburton pointed out that there was no provision in the original Act for the importation of this class of labour below the 27th degree of latitude, but the amendment has this object in view: it seeks to amend Section 35, which is the section which makes the exceptions in the Bill, and consequently enables these persons to be brought on to any part of the coast of Western Australia. Section 35 was enacted for the purpose of the pearl shell fishery, but the amendment proposed seeks to allow coloured labourers to be employed as the crew of any coasting vessel, any lightering vessel, or any other vessel.

HON. S. BURT: Only in that part of the colony north of the 27th parallel. That is stated in Section 35.

MR. EWING: Section 35 reads in this way:

This Act shall not apply (except in respect of vaccination) to any person brought into this colony for employment in the pearl shell fishery, or upon the Abrolhos Islands, and kept employed under contract in such fishery or upon such islands, or in temporary employment on shore, and only in that part of the coast of the colony situate to the northward of the 27th parallel of South latitude, according and subject to the regulations authorised by the Acts in that behalf.

These are exceptions that are made. Coloured labourers may be imported North of that degree, and surely they may be imported as far South as the Abrolhos Islands.

HON. S. BURT: For the Abrolhos Islands.

MR. EWING: But the hon. member must see that he seeks to put coloured labourers on coasting vessels, lightering vessels, and other vessels, and these men are to be employed as the crews of these vessels. I do not follow the hon. member when he says "North of the 27th parallel." I take it the Abrolhos Islands are South of the 27th parallel, and the object of Section 35 is, notwithstanding the parallel of latitude, to allow coloured labourers to come to the Abrolhos Islands, and the hon. member seeks to expand the provisions of that section. If these men are going to be employed on the coast in lightering vessels, we know perfectly

well they will not always be under the observation of the police, and this Bill is only opening the door in a ready and easy manner for coloured labourers to be brought into the colony without any restrictions whatever. I think this Bill is a means of evading the Act. It seems that the people in the North are not satisfied with one Chinaman to every 500 tons of a ship's burden, but they want one Chinaman to every 200 tons. When coloured labourers are employed in lighters on the coast they cannot possibly be watched by the police, and the men will be at liberty at all times to desert. The consequence is that we have a large number of men in the colony which we did not intend should come here.

MR. HUBBLE called attention to the state of House.

Quorum formed.

Question—that the Bill be now read a second time—put, and a division taken with the following result.

|          |    |
|----------|----|
| Ayes ... | 10 |
| Noes ... | 14 |

Majority against ... 4

| AYES.               | NOES.               |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| Hon. S. Burt        | Mr. Ewing           |
| Mr. A. Forrest      | Mr. George          |
| Mr. Hubble          | Mr. Gregory         |
| Mr. Lefroy          | Mr. Holmes          |
| Mr. Monger          | Mr. Illingworth     |
| Mr. Pennefather     | Mr. Kingsmill       |
| Mr. Piesse          | Mr. Leake           |
| Mr. Throssell       | Mr. Oats            |
| Mr. Wood            | Mr. Robson          |
| Mr. Rason (Teller). | Mr. Solomon         |
|                     | Mr. Vosper          |
|                     | Mr. Wallace         |
|                     | Mr. Wilson          |
|                     | Mr. James (Teller). |

Question thus negatived, the amendment passed, and the Bill suspended.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10.45 o'clock until the next day.