

## Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 13th December, 1899.

Paper presented—Motion: Storage Sheds for Agricultural Produce—Motion: Bunbury Harbour, Select Committee (withdrawn)—Supreme Court Building Site, Report of Joint Committee—Electoral Bill, third reading—Loan Bill, £750,000, in Committee, Divisions (3), reported—Adjournment.

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

## PRAYERS.

## PAPER PRESENTED.

By the COLONIAL SECRETARY: Boulder Nor-West Lease, return as to surrender of surface rights, moved for by Hon. A. P. Matheson.

Ordered to lie on the table.

## MOTION—STORAGE SHEDS FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER (East) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, it would materially benefit all growers of agricultural produce if sheds were provided by the Government for storage purposes at the principal goldfields towns and other large receiving centres, at a moderate charge for storage, until the sale of such produce could be effected.

If storage sheds were provided by the Government, these would enable farmers to send produce to the goldfields and other large centres of population, and the producers would not be entirely at the mercy of some buyers who found a pretext, sometimes of an inexcusable kind, to condemn produce sent to them, the result being that the produce was left in trucks, demurrage was charged, and the owners did not know what to do with the produce. Frequently a price which would not pay railage for the produce had to be accepted. If the Government would receive the produce and store it at a moderate charge, this would be a great boon to those who supplied the goldfields with produce. Already the Government had large sheds for which they had little or no use; and the storage of a few hundred tons of chaff for a little time, or a month or two, would not amount to a great deal. He could not give the railway authorities much credit for meeting the

requirements of producers at the present time. If a small parcel, no bigger than a man's hat, was sent by rail to a place, and the owner did not know that the parcel was coming, the parcel would be stored and a charge of threepence or fourpence, or even a shilling per day made for storage. The Railway Department ought to make some effort to meet the requirements of the public, and of those who contributed so largely towards the revenue of the railways. There was great reason to complain of the way in which the public were served by the railways. It was not the fault of the station masters, who had instructions which they could not depart from to serve all alike, and had to charge storage at extortionate rates for parcels which were not claimed immediately. This was a matter which required looking into, as it was not right for the department to tyrannise over people and treat them in an arbitrary way. As for this motion, the Government would not be out of pocket if sheds were erected for the storage of produce, because a reasonable rate could be charged for storage. It would be a great boon and benefit to the producers. On one occasion he was on the goldfields when a truck of chaff was rejected by a purchaser, and if he (Mr. Dempster) had not been present the stuff would have been thrown out into the railway yard and sold for what it would fetch, but he found another purchaser for the produce at five shillings per ton more than the produce was originally sold for. Last Saturday a meeting was held at Northam, when a resolution was carried to the effect that it was desirable that receiving sheds should be constructed and maintained by the Government, and that owners of produce should be charged a moderate rate for storage. He hoped the House would support the motion, and recommend it for the consideration of another place.

HON. H. LUKIN (East): A great many of the business men on the goldfields had taken advantage of the position of the producers. He would give an instance which came under his notice last year. A gentleman in his district was under a contract to supply a certain amount of chaff at a certain price at Kalgoorlie. The chaff was really of first-class sample, and was being sent up at the rate of from 15 to 20 tons per day.

In the meantime the price of chaff fell, and the purchaser saw there was a chance of getting the chaff cheaper; consequently, in the middle of the contract, when there were about eight or nine trucks of chaff at Kalgoorlie, the purchaser wrote to the producer that the chaff was not up to the sample and he would not take it.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: The usual trick.

HON. H. LUKIN: The producer in question wired back to say that he was positive the chaff was equal to sample, that it was all cut out of the same stack, and that he was willing to submit the matter to arbitration. A wire came back that the trucks of chaff were at the station at the producer's risk, and that the purchaser would not take delivery. The producer had to send an agent all the way from Beverley to Kalgoorlie to take over the chaff, or a considerable amount of demurrage would have been charged. That was only one instance of dozens which he could relate. If the Government were to erect sheds at all the large centres, producers who were put into a corner in this way could make use of the sheds and store their produce. Instead of having to send to the goldfields the producer could wire to an agent, "Store at my cost." The producers would not in such a case be at the mercy of the buyers. The motion would have a double effect, because if buyers knew that the producer had this card to play, they would not impose on the producers in the way they had done in the past.

HON. R. G. BURGESS (East): This motion was one he had pleasure in supporting. Considering the circumstances of small producers who were Government tenants, and to whom money was lent from the Agricultural Bank, it was to the interest of the Government to try to assist these producers in the direction indicated. There might be some objection to the proposal on the ground of the cost that would be incurred in building sheds as suggested. The Premier had been interviewed, and the right hon. gentleman suggested that in Coolgardie the Exhibition buildings could be converted into produce sheds. The difficulty could be overcome there, and he (Mr. Burgess) supposed that accommodation could be found in most large centres. The producers expected to have to pay for the convenience. The

trouble indicated was particularly felt on the goldfields, and it also occurred in Perth every day. A produce agent in Perth told him that several trucks of chaff had been sent down by certain firms, but had been rejected and put up to auction, the highest price realised being 32s. 6d. per ton, and the chaff was purchased by the very man who had rejected it. Some men rushed chaff into the market in the early part of the season, and soon it was rejected and the market was ruined. Thirty shillings a ton did not pay the freight, the cost of the bags, and commission, an actual loss being experienced by the producer. The Government had helped all other interests, and had helped the producers, but it was necessary to assist the producers to get a market for their produce and to aid them in every way possible. Some of the small producers could not pay their rents, and had not been able to pay the interest to the Agricultural Bank. In the end they would not be able to pay the principal, and, if something was not done to assist them, they would have to give up the land altogether in some cases.

HON. C. A. PIESSE (South-East): To his mind the producer at present stood somewhat in the position of being between the devil and the deep sea, so far as consignments to the goldfields and big centres were concerned. In one instance last year 16 tons of chaff, purchased at Wagin for £5 a ton, were sent to Kalgoorlie, but, although true to sample, were rejected and thrown on the hands of the consignee, who either had to pay something like 5s. or 6s. per day per ton or truck, or sell the chaff at what price he could obtain, and it was disposed of at £3 per ton. Many cases of that kind, although not perhaps so glaring, had happened during the last few years. It had become a custom for people on the goldfields to go back, as it were, on a purchase.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: It was just the same in Perth.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: That was done when there was a possibility of obtaining the produce later on at a cheaper rate. People said that the produce was not up to sample, and by the time it was proved to be up to sample the whole thing was swamped in expenses. Something must be done, and the question was whether it

should be by private enterprise or by the Government. Sheds must be built, if producers were to obtain justice and receive for their produce anything like the amount they should. In one case a person sent certain truck-loads of vegetables, and gave instructions to a clerk to follow up those vegetables and see the procedure adopted at the sale. The vegetables were sent from Albany to Coolgardie, but there was no buyer, and they were forwarded to Kalgoorlie, where they were again put up without being sold. Two hours afterwards they were sold as perishable goods, and the producer obtained a farthing a pound over and above expenses. The clerk had received instructions to re-purchase certain quantities of cabbages and potatoes for use at his employer's own table, and in one case the price paid was at the rate of £34 per ton, and in the other £32 per ton. This sort of thing was really the keynote of the trouble between the old West Australians and the new people on the goldfields. The people on the goldfields thought the producers were fleecing them, whereas the trouble lay at their own door. People who would put up with the system of shilling drinks when they could get six-penny drinks if they were a little firmer, would put up with the same sort of thing when the principle was applied in other directions. Last year people could not get more than one penny per pound for tomatoes in cases, and purchasers could indeed get as many as they liked at a halfpenny per pound, whereas on the goldfields the price never went below a shilling. Whose fault was that? The producer was blamed for it, but the whole trouble was caused by the middleman. He (Mr. Piesse) hoped the motion now before the House would be carried, and it could afterwards be shown whether it was more advisable for private people to build these sheds than for the Government to do so.

**THE PRESIDENT:** The Council could only go into the abstract subject, and not into any question involving expense.

**HON. H. J. SAUNDERS (Metropolitan):** This motion appeared to be in the interests of the farming community, but it could be dealt with better by private enterprise. If the Government proceeded on the lines of this motion and

erected sheds, the Government would be in a very awkward position.

**HON. R. G. BURGESS:** The sheds the Government already possessed would be sufficient for a long time.

**HON. H. J. SAUNDERS:** Supposing anything happened to the contents of these sheds, the Government would be liable to any number of actions.

**A MEMBER:** The contents could be insured.

**HON. H. J. SAUNDERS:** It would be far better for the undertaking to be carried out by private enterprise, instead of the farmers being spoon-fed by the Government as they had been in the past.

**HON. R. G. BURGESS:** What about spoon-feeding the goldfields?

**HON. H. J. SAUNDERS:** The farming community were in the same category, and seemed indeed to depend entirely on the Government.

**HON. C. A. PIESSE:** People engaged in agriculture worked 16 hours a day.

**HON. H. J. SAUNDERS:** If the agriculturists could not find sheds for their produce, that was their lookout, and they had to take the consequence.

Question put and passed.

#### MOTION—BUNBURY HARBOUR, SELECT COMMITTEE.

**HON. F. WHITCOMBE (Central)** moved :

That a select committee of (central) members be appointed by this House, to inquire into and report upon the silting up of and the proposed improvements to the Bunbury harbour; with power to call for persons and papers. It was rather late in the session to ask for a select committee to make an examination so far away as Bunbury; but he was so much impressed with what he saw when at Bunbury last week, that he came to the conclusion the subject should be brought before the House, before proceeding with the consideration of the Loan Bill schedule, in which we were asked to approve of the expenditure of certain money upon the harbour at Bunbury. He was informed that on the completion of the present breakwater in that harbour, the depth of water at the end of the structure was 26ft.

**HON. C. A. PIESSE:** Eighteen feet.

**HON. F. WHITCOMBE:** The information given him was that it was 26 feet, whereas the depth of water now at

the end of the structure was considerably less than 17 feet. He was also informed that along the last 300 feet on the inner side of the structure there was an immense silting up of sand against the breastwork itself, to a depth of two feet. There was a travelling sand on the other side of the breastwork which must in time, if not properly checked, so endanger the success of the breakwater scheme as to render the matter a subject for serious consideration before we authorised the expenditure of more money in furtherance of the scheme. We must assume that the question of travelling sand was taken into consideration when the scheme was first entered upon, but he did not think the matter could have been sufficiently considered by the Engineer-in-Chief, who, in New Zealand, had had a great many years of experience in relation to harbours and harbour construction where this difficulty of travelling sand had always been confronted and had to be provided against. Shortly after this work at Bunbury was in hand there was what was called a settling of a portion of it, due, as he was informed, to the construction of the breastwork upon a silted sand formation instead of a basaltic formation on a true bottom upon which the work could be carried out. If his informant was correct, the same difficulty would be met with in relation to the proposed extension, to the extent of a possible settlement. The work now proposed was to cost a trifle of £40,000 for the extension of the breastwork for 1,000 feet. He doubted whether 1,000 feet could be constructed for £40,000. This 1,000 feet was to be a portion of the extension of 3,000 feet from the present termination of the breakwater. He thought the complete scheme could not be carried out for a less sum than £350,000 or £400,000. At the origin of this scheme an alternative proposal was put forward by the Engineer-in-Chief for the opening up of the estuary, but this proposal was opposed, as the authorities desired to carry out the breastwork scheme.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: The Engineer-in-Chief did not advise the alternative scheme being carried out.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The Engineer-in-Chief recommended the present scheme as an alternative. He first

recommended the making of a harbour in the estuary, as the only solution of the difficulty; but in consequence of the large amount of money necessary to carry out that scheme, he afterwards declined to recommend it.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: Since that day we were told that the Engineer-in-Chief had disclaimed any responsibility for the success or failure of the work.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY said he was only speaking from memory.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: The scheme, so far as it had been carried out, combined the elements of failure in that if this silting up could not be prevented altogether it would have to be coped with by a regular annual expenditure, either in the form of dredging or some other way, to enable the harbour to be utilised. While it was the object of the Government to make a harbour, and a trade for this port, full inquiry should be made into the matter as to what would be the probable effect, what methods had better be adopted, if any, for the prevention of the defects, and whether the alternative scheme would not be better, even at this stage. The alternative scheme was the opening of the estuary, which would create a safe harbour, and which was recommended by the Engineer-in-Chief. He did not feel inclined to acquiesce in the authorisation of £40,000 for Bunbury harbour under present circumstances, and the only way in which we could force a full consideration of the position before the expenditure was entered into was to propose that a select committee be appointed.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. G. Randell): One was always ready to fall in with a motion of this description for obtaining information; but at this late period of the session, it would be impossible for a select committee to cope with the important question the hon. member had rightly raised. No exception could be taken to the hon. member raising the question, from the information received by him as to the silting up of the breakwater; but it was impossible for a select committee to deal with this matter, as it would be desirable to ask for the co-operation of an equal number of members from another branch of the Legislature. Therefore the hon. member having brought this matter before the House, and seeing that the

only way in which a committee could deal with the question would be to sit during the recess, and seeing also that the inquiry would involve the taking of expert evidence, at the site of the breakwater, and that a considerable expenditure of time would be involved, no possible good could be done by passing the motion. With regard to the question itself, there was no doubt this difficulty always occurred in the erection of breakwaters on the coast line. He was not intimately acquainted with the Bunbury breakwater, but when the matter came before the Assembly, he expressed himself somewhat to this effect, that while he felt qualified to give an opinion as to the harbour at Fremantle, yet not knowing the conditions at Bunbury, he was unable to do so in regard to that harbour; and he thought he had intimated also that the breakwater would not afford the protection it was desired to give, and possibly there would be an inclination to silt up. That appeared to be the case but in these days, engineering science would be able to meet the difficulties arising, and when the breakwater was extended somewhat further towards the point on the opposite shore, this silting up might be decreased. Some time ago in the south bay at Fremantle, when there was a small solid jetty run out, the same thing occurred, and it was feared at one time that the bay would silt up: but after a certain time these fears were not realised, for certain influences were at work which prevented the silting up of the bay to a considerable extent. Although there was some reason to think the silting up might go on at Bunbury, he was sure, although perhaps at some expense, the harbour would be preserved for the purpose of commerce, because engineers possessed knowledge as to how to deal with these matters. In the abstract, it must be conceded at once that it was desirable to create a harbour at Bunbury for the purpose of commerce, and for developing the large interests which existed in the neighbourhood. Although the Government might be called on from time to time to expend money for dredging, and keeping the harbour at a reasonable depth, he did not think there would be a serious tax on the country for this work. The hon. member mentioned New Zea-

land, and no doubt in that country difficulties of that kind occurred, also in other parts of the world, and to such an extent as to lead Sir John Cooode, and other eminent engineers, to be cautious as to recommending works of this nature. It was to the extremely unreasonable prudence of Sir John Cooode that the harbour works at Fremantle were delayed so long. We had had experience that a safe harbour could be constructed on our coast, because such a harbour had been created. The conditions at Bunbury, however, were very different. There was a very small bay there, the opposite coast line was a long distance off, and there was some sand drift in this locality, but it would always be the case that when breakwaters were erected for the protection of shipping, some silting up would occur. He did not think any harm would arise from this silting up for a considerable time. Of course the wharves would be protected by being erected alongside the breakwater, for the purpose of loading or discharging vessels.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: The hon. member said that was impossible, at the beginning of the session.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY said he did not remember making such a remark.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: The hon. member said that it would be impossible to erect wharves inside the breakwater.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: That was not what he intended. If he used the words, they were used under a misconception, because it was not impossible to do anything if the money were available. There was always a risk in making wharves inside a breakwater unless the wharves were very high, because the wharves would be exposed to seas breaking right over the breakwater, and vessels would have to leave the wharves and not carry on their operations at a certain time of the year; but it did not follow that for nine months of the year the work could not be carried on at these wharves. Perhaps for three months, owing to tempestuous weather, such wharves could not be used, because the seas which rolled into Bunbury harbour were much heavier than the seas in Gage Roads. He hoped the hon. member would not press the motion, as no real benefit could accrue to the country or to

the House, from the appointment of a select committee at this late period of the session. We were hoping to prorogue within the course of the next few days, and it would take weeks or months, possibly, for any committee to obtain information to enable members to form any opinion as to what was happening at Bunbury. The harbour works at Bunbury were not yet completed, and probably the condition of things might change—he did not say they would—he did not expect they would very much, still they might change. He had seen pier-heads carried into the sea in the north of England, into the German Ocean, and these pier-heads had always been kept clear. At Seaham, about five miles from the town of Sunderland, which was constructed on the coast-line in an unprotected position, a harbour had been constructed into which ships entered in all weathers between the pier heads, and the loading and discharge of vessels was kept going. The pier heads were kept free from the silting up by dredges, and a very large shipping trade was carried on in this harbour. He did not think we need despair in regard to Bunbury providing an efficient harbour for the export of timber and coal for the future.

HON. A. P. MATHESON (North-East): It was surprising to find the Colonial Secretary considered it unnecessary that the select committee proposed by Mr. Whitcombe should be appointed.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: What he said was that it was unnecessary at the present time.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Whether the hon. gentleman was prepared to move an amendment that there should be a joint committee of members of both Houses, one did not know.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: No. He was not prepared to move such amendment.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: To his mind the subject demanded investigation at the present moment. On referring to *Hansard*, he found that both the Premier and Mr. Leake were apparently agreed in the opinion that an expenditure of £280,000 would be required before the Bunbury harbour works were finished. It appeared that about £100,000 had already been spent, and the expenditure of £40,000 more was now contemplated.

It seemed that the mole was originally to have been carried out some 6,000 feet, and 3,200 feet of that had been already constructed. It was perfectly clear that as the mole was extended the cost would become greater and greater. The country would demand some sort of explanation from the department of the Engineer-in-Chief, because it was an undoubted fact that the harbour was silting up, and the people would also want an estimate of the cost that would be incurred in dredging to keep a channel in the harbour. The Colonial Secretary had rightly said that engineering talent had reached such a pitch that it could cope with these difficulties, but the hon. gentleman had not for a moment suggested that the difficulty referred to did not exist. The House should suggest to another place that the £40,000 should be struck out at present, and that the work should not be continued until a report had been obtained as to the usefulness or uselessness of the harbour hereafter. If the harbour would not be practicable, or the expense of keeping it open would be more than the dues derived from shipping, the work should not be continued. The matter required the attention of a joint select committee.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER (East): There was no wish to be antagonistic to anything for the advancement and improvement of Bunbury harbour, because he knew how important it was that the harbour should be made a good one, but it would be wrong to consent to the expenditure of £40,000 unless we were satisfied that the work would be desirable and not be labour in vain.

HON. J. W. HACKETT (South-West): If, by appointing a committee as proposed, anything could be gained towards obtaining a better harbour for Bunbury or avoiding any mistakes, he would heartily support the proposition; but he hardly saw how the appointment of a select committee could have any effect in that direction. After listening to some of the remarks that had been uttered, one would suppose the Engineer-in-Chief had formed a scheme in his mind and condemned the other scheme, and that the Government had set aside the scheme that gentleman approved of and had called upon him to endeavour to carry out a scheme of which he disapproved.

If the Government were acting contrary to the wish of the Engineer-in-Chief, the sooner they were called over the coals the better; but that could be discovered without recourse to the cumbrous and protracted appliance of a select committee. As a matter of fact, two schemes were before the Engineer-in-Chief, but that gentleman had to condemn the one which he would have preferred, because of the hopeless cost, which would have been from half-a-million to three-quarters of a million. In fact there would have been no end to the cost, and the Engineer-in-Chief explained why the scheme could not be adopted.

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY:** That scheme would have been subject to the same disabilities as this.

**HON. J. W. HACKETT:** Doubtless. There was a very interesting interview between the Engineer-in-Chief and the Town Council or Chamber of Commerce of Bunbury, in which the Engineer-in-Chief fully went into the question and gave his reasons why he was compelled to recommend this smaller and less costly scheme, which would never be a perfect one, and would probably have to give way to the larger and more expensive scheme in generations to come, by which time Western Australia would have grown up to its needs and would have money to provide the work.

**A MEMBER:** It was previously stated that the scheme was to cost only £100,000.

**HON. J. W. HACKETT:** That was not the case. £100,000 was to be advanced out of the current revenue, but he did not think anyone pledged himself that the scheme would cost only that amount. Mr. O'Connor would not dream of carrying out a scheme of this kind unless he thought he saw the outcome of it. This breakwater had been carried out a certain distance, and, as Mr. O'Connor anticipated all along, there had been a drifting of sand along one end. The main object of inserting this item of £40,000 was to deal with that drift, and, if the £40,000 was not expended, that drift might continue and threaten serious consequences to the harbour. The House might rest assured that Mr. O'Connor would see the money was spent to advantage and in the right direction. If a select committee had to report exhaustively in relation to Bunbury, why should

not inquiries also be made relative to the harbours at Busselton and Carnarvon, which presented their own problems? The different conditions prevailing would have to be dealt with in different ways, but all in accordance with the advice and approval of the Engineer-in-Chief. Something must be done to stop this sand drift at Bunbury Harbour. Lately there were eight ships waiting to be loaded, and four others were expected shortly. Of the eight ships referred to, only four could obtain berths. No more than four berths could be provided until the breakwater was lengthened and greater shelter and protection afforded, for at present there was really only an open roadstead. It was to be hoped Mr. Whitcombe would not press his motion, having drawn attention to the matter.

**HON. F. WHITCOMBE (in reply):** As stated at the commencement of his remarks, he recognised that it was very late in the session to bring this matter forward. He would have liked an assurance from the leader of the House that no step would be taken to expend this money until after a special inquiry had been made into the present condition of the harbour.

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY:** The hon. member might depend on it that such inquiry had been already held.

**HON. F. WHITCOMBE:** If the hon. gentleman would give him that assurance, he would have pleasure in withdrawing the motion.

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY:** A guarantee could be given that full inquiry would be made.

**HON. F. WHITCOMBE:** And that the result of the inquiry would be made public before anything was done?

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY:** The result would be made public through the Press.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

#### SUPREME COURT BUILDING SITE.

##### REPORT OF JOINT COMMITTEE.

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY** brought up the report of the Joint Select Committee appointed to consider as to the site of proposed new Supreme Court building.

Report received and ordered to be printed.

## ELECTORAL BILL.

Read a third time, and *passed*.

## LOAN BILL, £750,000.

## IN COMMITTEE.

Clauses 1 to 6, inclusive—agreed to.

Schedule—Part I., Harbour Works, Jetties, Approaches, etc., £154,000 :

Item, Albany, £10,000 :

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY : The item included the extension of the present jetty, and the provision of four new berths for ocean-going steamers, to cost £6,000; the redecking and completion of the approaches to the shore to connect with the railway system, £1,500, the balance being for additional works not yet fully decided on.

HON. H. J. SAUNDERS moved, as a suggestion to the Legislative Assembly, that the item be reduced by £5,000. Mr. A. Y. Hassell, who represented a neighbouring constituency in the Legislative Assembly, had expressed the opinion that the work on which it was proposed to spend this money would be absolutely useless; and if such a prominent resident was opposed to the item, it was hard to see why the Government should be allowed to expend the money.

HON. S. J. HAYNES : The suggestion made by Mr. Saunders ought not to be agreed to, as the bulk of the money was for the completion of works in progress.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY : That was quite true.

HON. S. J. HAYNES : Mr. Saunders must have been mistaken as to what Mr. Hassell said.

HON. H. J. SAUNDERS : There was no mistake, and he was surprised to hear Mr. Hassell express the opinion.

HON. S. J. HAYNES : Then Mr. Hassell must have spoken under a misapprehension. It was true the scheme now in progress was not that which the people of Albany desired, because what they wanted was the reclamation of the foreshore; but the present scheme was accepted because it was the only one which the Public Works Department would grant. The redecking of the jetty was absolutely necessary, because at present it was a source of danger to the travelling public; and he had more than once drawn attention to the fact that if an accident were to occur, an action for

heavy damages would lie against the Government. The work of connecting the jetty with the railway system was unfinished at present, and if not completed, it would remain a monument of folly. The works proposed would be serviceable, and, at any rate, give increased berthing accommodation, which was very much wanted at the present time.

HON. A. P. MATHESON : Having been present when Mr. Hassell spoke to Mr. Saunders on this subject, the view of Mr. Hassell corresponded with what had just been presented by Mr. Haynes. No doubt Mr. Hassell condemned the work, because he regarded it as entirely inadequate; but he never contemplated that his words would be used as condemning the expenditure of the money. Mr. Hassell was then only urging, with some indignation, what he considered were the just claims of Albany, and he pointed out that from a return which had been furnished, it appeared that over a period of years the amount spent on the port of Albany was a mere bagatelle, compared with the enormous revenue derived by the Government from that source. The Committee would not be justified in suggesting a reduction of the vote. On the other hand, had it been in their power to suggest an increase, that would have gone much further to meet Mr. Hassell's view than would the suggested reduction.

HON. H. J. SAUNDERS : After the explanation given he would withdraw the motion.

Motion by leave withdrawn, and the item passed.

Item, Bunbury £40,000 :

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY : This had been fully discussed, and the facts all brought out on the motion submitted this evening by Mr. Whitcombe. It was proposed to spend the money on the extension of the breakwater by 1,000 feet, and in providing additional berthing accommodation. That a large shipping business was arising at Bunbury, there was no doubt, and there were reasons for supposing great developments would occur in the future, especially if proper facilities were afforded. It was highly desirable to create a good port, or a fairly moderately good port, at Bunbury, seeing the position that town occupied in relation to great national resources.



HON. F. WHITCOMBE: What was the estimated cost of the additional 1,000 feet to the breakwater?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Detailed information was not at hand.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: Was this £40,000 for the extension of the breakwater?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes; and also for additional berthing accommodation.

HON. F. M. STONE moved that a suggestion be sent to the Legislative Assembly to strike out the item. The Committee had heard about the serious condition of the harbour at Bunbury, and there ought to be some information from the Engineer-in-Chief as to whether the proposed expenditure on the extension of the breakwater would improve the harbour, and as to the cost of removing or preventing the siltage. On these points the Committee were entirely in the dark, and had it not been so late in the session a select committee ought to have been appointed to examine the Engineer-in-Chief on the matter. The Committee knew that amounts were voted for political reasons, and there were no means of ascertaining the opinion of the Engineer-in-Chief in regard to the proposed works. When the proposal to spend £100,000 on this work was before Parliament, he contended that the Bunbury harbour works would prove a perfect sink to the colony, and his words were coming true. Even on that occasion hon. members had no information from the Engineer-in-Chief, but were told his opinion was that the breakwater would be a success. The Engineer-in-Chief had been asked how much it would cost to extend the breakwater 1,000 feet; but he (Mr. Stone) would like to have the Engineer-in-Chief present, or to have his opinion in writing as to whether the extension of the breakwater would decrease the siltage, what would be the cost of removing the silt, and what the cost to prevent siltage. If we were going to commit the country to a large sum for the purpose of making a harbour in that part of the country, he would vote against it. The 3,000 feet of breakwater which had now been carried out would not accommodate more than six vessels. It was proposed, out of the amount of £40,000 to be voted, to extend the breakwater, but

we had no information as to what amount was to be expended on the extension of the jetty. Considering that hon. members were against any borrowing unless it was absolutely necessary, the Committee should set its face against the item and leave it out till some future time when we had further information before us.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: What future time?

HON. F. M. STONE: Next session. Mr. Hackett would, no doubt, say that this £40,000 was to stop the silting up, but what ground would the hon. member have for saying that? Absolutely none. We should find that a further £20,000, or £30,000 would have to be provided to prevent the silting up. If the Government came down and said they required a sum of money for the removal of the siltage, or to prevent it, then perhaps the House would unanimously vote for the amount because we had gone so far with this work and we might as well finish it, but in the absence of such information hon. members should not vote this amount.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: One was really surprised that an hon. member like Mr. Stone, who had great intelligence and love of his country, should move a recommendation of this description. One would have thought his natural love of this country would have prompted him to do all in his power in the interests of the country. The hon. member must be satisfied that the creation of a harbour at Bunbury was an absolute necessity, and in the interests of the country. The Committee could not refuse to continue a work such as this, even if it cost another £40,000, and even another £40,000 after that. The money would be well spent. The Suez Canal, after it was excavated, employed dredges of great capacity up to the present time, and in the River Thames dredges were constantly at work to keep the navigation of the river clear. In various parts of the world dredging appliances were made use of to keep harbours and rivers clear of silt, so that works which had been carried out should not go to ruin.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Think of the tonnage at those places.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Look at the amount of money we had expended at Bunbury, and compare it

with the millions which had been expended on the Suez Canal and the dredging of the Thames. One would have thought that even as a harbour of refuge, Bunbury should be created, so that it would give facilities to vessels when in trouble. It was the only place between Fremantle and Albany that could be really called a harbour, and it was open to the general trade of the country, while steamers from the colonies and vessels from foreign parts were in the habit of visiting and taking away produce from the forests and the mines of this country. He trusted that hon. members would see, in the interests of the country, that it was desirable to expend this money, and he hoped the motion would be withdrawn. He understood the extension of the breakwater was to cost about £35,000, and to give greater facilities on the jetty a sum of £5,000 was to be spent. He did not know what further information hon. members required, unless they wanted the opinion of an expert engineer outside this colony as to whether the work would be a success in the future. Possibly the harbour might have to be dredged in the future.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: The Colonial Secretary might have placed more information before members. He might have given us a little information as to the present trade of Bunbury, which would have been useful to us, because in future the trade might fall off to a considerable extent. We were told that the timber trade of the colony was carried on at a loss. One timber company had closed up, and two or three other companies proposed to follow that deed, and close their works.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Who said all this?

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: It was the records of the *West Australian*.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: The hon. member would not find it there, indeed.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: It was only right we should have some information on this point, and although it might be necessary for further accommodation on the jetty, he failed to see that there was any necessity to vote £35,000 for the extension of the breakwater.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: The hon. member would increase the jetty accommodation?

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: If Mr. Hackett had been to Bunbury lately he would have seen that a great portion of the £5,000 would be expended in repairing the jetty—that portion which had been built and had been declared useless. It was that portion known as the Grant contract. All the piles which had been driven were now being drawn and replaced in consequence of the improper driving of them. He did not object to repairing the present jetty, but he objected to £35,000 being expended in the extension of the breakwater. The £35,000 would not be sufficient to carry out an extension for a thousand feet. That extension would run the country into something like £80,000, the following thousand feet would cost the country £140,000, and the further extension of 1,000 feet a similar sum. Therefore it would cost the country something like £360,000 to extend this breakwater. From what we knew of the estimates of public works, the £35,000 now required would be increased to £75,000 before the extension was finished.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: The Colonial Secretary was unfair in his criticism of Mr. Stone's remarks. It reminded him (Mr. Matheson) of the manner in which the predecessor of the Colonial Secretary used to treat any honest suggestions which emanated from him (Mr. Matheson). Every member of the House, he felt sure, was satisfied that Mr. Stone had one consideration only, the safety and prosperity of the colony.

HON. C. A. PRESSE: He voted against the goldfields railway lines.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: That did not matter. If the hon. member did so, he was actuated by a sincere conviction that the railways were not desirable ones. And in the position which Mr. Stone now took up he was animated with a sincere conviction that the money would be wasted. Considering the circumstances of the colony, one was sure the people of the country would be in accord with the motion, although he did not think the members of the Committee would.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: How did the hon. member know that?

HON. A. P. MATHESON said he moved about the country and he heard matters discussed in every quarter, whereas the Colonial Secretary was confined to his

official duties, and only received the reflection of those in official positions, and those in official positions were in favour of expending money, possibly at Bunbury.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: The Colonial Secretary read the newspapers.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Newspapers, especially those in Perth, were the worst possible guide of the feelings of the people of the country. Another point raised by the Colonial Secretary, which was nothing more than drawing a red herring across the trail, was the comparison of the expenditure on seaports like London and great international works such as the Suez Canal, with the expenditure of this £40,000 at Bunbury. He had pointed out by his interjection that the Colonial Secretary could not give any information as to the relative tonnage using that national work or that port, compared with the tonnage using the port of Bunbury. Nobody could wish that this money should be wasted. Hon. members were of opinion that before money was voted, we should receive some guarantee from the Engineer-in-Chief that it would not be wasted. He would support the suggestion of Mr. Stone, and he trusted that other hon. members who had the interests of the colony in view would do the same.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: After the usual homily of the hon. member upon the iniquity of everything in Perth—the newspapers, Government, Parliament, associations and all the rest—and having in view the perfect purity and propriety of all that surrounded the hon. member, especially in his dealings with the goldfields—

HON. A. P. MATHESON: No suggestion had been made by him as to purity and propriety, either in connection with himself or the goldfields.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: What was alluded to was the hon. member's attitude in relation to the goldfields, especially in regard to the motives which led the hon. member on a recent occasion to declare himself a separationist, no doubt to put himself into line with those who desired the good of Western Australia, to advance the country's welfare, and to act as a loyal and patriotic son of this old colony. One also coincided with the hon. member in his eulogy of Mr. Stone,

whilst at the same time one entirely believed in what the Colonial Secretary said. When Mr. Stone first came into this House, that hon. member was the champion of retrogression, everything progressive finding in him a determined opponent. If *Hansard* were searched, it would be found that Mr. Stone was opposed to every one of the works which had gone to lift this colony to its present high state among the colonies of Australia.

HON. C. A. PRESSE: Without exception.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: In the last year or so a change had come over Mr. Stone, who had been educated up to the wants of the time; and no one had shown himself more forward in social progress, in advocating the amelioration of the condition of the different classes of society, and in bringing forward measures which tended in that direction. Whenever anyone wanted a Bill which might produce a social reform, that person was safe if he went to the hon. member and asked him to father it. He (Mr. Hackett) deplored that the hon. member made the speech he did, relative to the one harbour we possessed in the South-West of the colony. The mere cost of carriage rendered it absolutely essential that there should be a harbour at Bunbury, where so many producing interests met. Essential as it was to begin to improve the Bunbury harbour, it was ten times more essential that we should further improve it and complete it as far as we had funds to do so. As to this miserable £40,000, he wished there were a couple of noughts added, to give some dignity to the discussion. £40,000 was the seventieth part of the national income of this colony. The hon. member asked that the sum should be wiped out of the schedule, leaving thereby all the work that had been done absolutely useless, and rendering it almost a certainty that, in a very short time, the harbour would still further deteriorate, and the trade carried on still further diminish. Mr. Whitcombe said we should be prepared to spend £5,000 on the jetty, but objected seriously to the expenditure of £35,000 upon the breakwater. It was, however, the other way about. We wanted the breakwater to run out to such a point that it would protect the ships, and then it would be necessary to protect the jetty, and add

sufficient berthage accommodation to allow us to carry on the small trade we had at present, and afford some hope of increasing it in the future.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: £5,000 would be required to do the repairs.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Then it was all the more essential that the work proposed should be done. The state of Bunbury harbour was a menace to the fair fame of this colony, and unless we did something to improve the harbour, we should be guilty of a serious wrong to our own colony, and still further damage our credit in the eyes of the English shipping community. In speaking as he did of the Ministry, Mr. Stone really aimed a blow at the Engineer-in-Chief, because if blunders had been committed they were the blunders of Mr. O'Connor.

HON. F. M. STONE: Nothing had been said by him about blunders being committed. What he said was that we had no opinion from the Engineer-in-Chief that this work would effect the object in view, that of increasing the accommodation for vessels and removing the siltage.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: The Engineer-in-Chief entirely approved of the sum mentioned in the schedule.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Certainly.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: The Engineer-in-Chief considered it absolutely necessary that this money should be spent in order to undo some of the evils and mischiefs pointed out by Mr. Stone. He (Mr. Hackett) did not think that he had spoken about this subject before, for he always felt a delicacy about referring to a matter that concerned the leading town in his province. The expenditure of the money mentioned would be for the welfare of the colony as well as for that of Bunbury itself.

HON. E. McLARTY: The assurance given by the leader of the House, that this money would not be expended until the Government were perfectly satisfied in relation to the matter, should be a sufficient guarantee for voting the sum. He (Mr. McLarty) was not going to attempt to deny that siltage was going on in the harbour, nor was he prepared to say the Engineer-in-Chief was of opinion that the siltage would not continue to a certain extent; but he believed it was intended to alter the direction westward, or at all events to some point, and this change

would perhaps have a great effect in stopping the siltage from coming inside the wharf. Mr. Stone seemed to have a very imperfect knowledge of the work which had been done there, for he stated that the harbour only gave accommodation to six or eight vessels. The hon. member seemed to be confusing the work of the breakwater with that of the wharf. It was the wharf that would not afford accommodation for more than four or half-a-dozen vessels. Inside the breakwater there was accommodation for 20, or perhaps 50 vessels. When the matter was discussed some time ago Mr. Stone opposed it, and that hon. member had opposed every progressive work for the Southern district. The hon. member advocated that the shipping should be done at Fremantle, and he (Mr. McLarty) considered him greatly in error in advocating such a thing. Three or four days ago one read in the *Bunbury Herald* that there were (if his memory served him correctly) eight vessels in the harbour and six more were expected in at once. This showed that Bunbury harbour was of some importance, and that the shipping was increasing far beyond the anticipations of any hon. member in this House. When £100,000 was voted to commence this work at Bunbury, the port was described as a port of one vessel. It was said that one vessel had gone into the harbour and had never left it again, but was wrecked. In view of the fact that there were eight vessels in the harbour at one time, and that six more were expected, there was some necessity for increased shipping accommodation. He saw no reason to believe that the shipping was going to be less. The traffic on the railways had become almost congested with the timber and other business, and doubtless in the near future a great deal of coal would be taken to Bunbury and shipped to Fremantle and other parts of the colony. The small amount of £40,000 was absolutely necessary, and the fact that the siltage was going on, and that we wanted to alter the conditions before the harbour got into a worse state, was an argument in favour of the expenditure of the money. He did not pose as an engineer, but from information he had gained from the Engineer-in-Chief his impression was that after the extension of this mole, the siltage would be very

slight indeed. If for no other reason than that, the money should be voted. The wharfrage accommodation was admittedly insufficient. After the remarks of the Colonial Secretary all must agree to the extension of the jetty and increased facilities for shipping, especially as the money voted would not be spent unless it could be spent to advantage.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: While sympathising with Bunbury in its requirements, he must support the amendment of Mr. Stone.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Had not the hon. member voted for the preceding item?

HON. S. J. HAYNES: Yes; and he had given his reasons for so doing. From the remarks of hon. members generally, it appeared that the House had been misled as to the ultimate cost of the Bunbury harbour, and the money already spent appeared to have been absolutely wasted. He had been informed by a recent visitor to the works that where there was at one time 18 feet of water there was now only three feet.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: What about the increased berthage?

HON. S. J. HAYNES: Apparently the ships could not get to the wharves.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Nonsense!

HON. S. J. HAYNES: No doubt Mr. Hackett was purely disinterested, but his arguments were sentimental and not practical, for the hon. member failed to show that the works done so far were useful. The Colonial Secretary had accused Mr. Stone of want of patriotism in opposing this expenditure, which would involve a loss to the colony.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Want of intelligence.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: No; of want of patriotism. The truest patriotism was to keep the country out of debt. All hon. members who had opposed the lavish expenditure of the Government had been accused of croaking; but the time would come when this country would find itself as heavily indebted as New Zealand, and the "croakers" would then be justified.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: The hon. member had opposed everything.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: No; he had consistently supported reasonable propositions from time to time. Were we in a position to expend even £40,000, which would probably be wasted in

experimenting? Money should now be saved instead of wasted. The House should have fuller details showing the ultimate cost of this harbour, and whether the scheme would be effective. Hon. members would willingly vote a reasonable amount.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: How much?

HON. S. J. HAYNES: For Bunbury a total expenditure of £150,000 should be sufficient, but to make that harbour safe and commodious would apparently cost half a million. He would support the motion of Mr. Stone.

HON. W. T. LOTON: After the motion of Mr. Whitcombe to appoint a select committee on this question, and the Colonial Secretary's statement that full information from the Engineer-in-Chief would be given, Mr. Stone's motion came as a surprise, although the Colonial Secretary had left the hon. member room to move by failing to give the House the information afforded by Mr. Hackett, to the effect that this money was to be expended on the Engineer-in-Chief's recommendation.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: That was a natural conclusion.

HON. W. T. LOTON: Hardly; but it should have come from the Minister, for had it done so, the discussion would probably have ceased. With the acquiescence of the Engineer-in-Chief, certain money was voted to give more protection to shipping at Bunbury by forming a breakwater, which had been carried out a certain distance. It now appeared necessary to protect the jetty, and to prevent further silting by further extending the breakwater.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: To save wasting more money?

HON. W. T. LOTON: Else the money already spent would be wasted. Though the Government apparently had not the assurance of the Engineer-in-Chief that the money to be voted would make the harbour secure or complete, nevertheless, in view of the increasing export trade of Bunbury, with its coal, timber, and other resources, all must recognise that the work already commenced must be carried on towards completion, though it could not be completed for £40,000. This was not a new work, and its continuation was as necessary as the payment of civil servants' salaries.

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY:** The success which had attended the works done at Bunbury necessitated this expenditure. At one time two ships per annum came to Bunbury; now there were eight ships in the harbour waiting their opportunity to load. No more need be said. There was cargo to be shipped, the ships were waiting to take it, and Parliament was asked to give the port the facilities it required.

**HON. E. McLARTY:** Mr. Haynes misconceived the question of siltage, that did not affect the wharves. The siltage was within a few yards of the breakwater, and in no way interfered with vessels entering or leaving the port.

Motion (Mr. Stone's) put and negatived, and the item passed.

At 6:30 the CHAIRMAN left the Chair.

At 7:30, Chair resumed.

Item, Busselton £4,000:

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY:** This money was to be used for the scantling of the jetty, so as to enable it to carry an engine, also for widening the jetty and for additions.

Item passed.

Item, Carnarvon £5,000:

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY:** This amount was to be spent in carrying the jetty over the Gascoyne River, so as to run a tramway there.

Item passed.

Item, Fremantle (including wharves and jetties, £25,000), £70,000:

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY:** Of this amount, £25,000 was for the construction of wharf sheds, and the balance was for the construction of a jetty on the north side for mail steamers, which was now in hand, and for the extension of the Mole.

Item passed.

Item, Improvements to Harbours and Rivers, £5,000:

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY:** This amount was generally for the improvement of the navigation of Perth Water. It was known to hon. members that there had been some dredging carried on here, and the vote was to be used in completing the dredging and continuing it to Coode Street jetty. There was great difficulty in ferry steamers passing between Perth

and South Perth, for when there was a low tide the steamers could not reach the south-side jetty, and people were then deprived of ferry communication with Perth. This amount would also be used for improvements to rivers in other parts.

**HON. A. P. MATHESON:** There was no intention on his part to oppose this item, but he wished to urge on the Colonial Secretary the advisability of using a portion of the sum for lighting Crawley spit-post, off the Point. He understood this money was to be devoted entirely to the improvement of the navigation of the Swan River. When the "Manx Fairy" went out at night it had to leave a boat, with a light on it, at the spit point, in order to pick up the post again on coming back. On one occasion when the "Manx Fairy" neglected to do this, the steamer ran on the spit and spent the night there. It was impossible for ordinary persons who used the river for pleasure or business to pick up the post at night, unless a light was placed there.

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY:** Had any representations been made to the Government on this point?

**HON. A. P. MATHESON** said he had written to the Government on the matter, and the Swan River Shipping Company had communicated with the Government time after time, but had always been met with the reply that no vote of money was available for this purpose. The Government were now proposing to vote £5,000 for the improvement of the Swan, and had he noticed this item earlier, when the Bill was in another place, he would have written to the department and endeavoured to secure a pledge that a portion of the money would be devoted for the purpose of lighting this spit-post, which was absolutely necessary.

**HON. D. McKAY:** Would not a bell-buoy do?

**HON. A. P. MATHESON:** No, because vessels had to pick up this post at night. The Colonial Secretary had pointed out to him (Mr. Matheson) that in the early days this had not been found necessary, and that he and his friends had always been able to pick up the post at night. That might be so from a very great acquaintance with the river, which did not exist to-day amongst captains who came here. It was dead certain that

unless the spit-post was lighted, a wreck would take place there and possibly loss of life. When the "Manx Fairy" ran on to the spit and spent the night there, there was a scene of revelry on board which he would not like to describe.

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY:** The matter would be brought under the notice of the department concerned, but he did not think Mr. Matheson would suggest a convenience of this sort should find a place in a Loan Bill, because such expenditure ought to be made from revenue. Some one would have to attend to the light every night, because moonlight was most deceptive and dangerous.

**HON. A. P. MATHESON:** If the Government would provide a lantern, he would undertake that the people interested in the navigation of the river would see to the lighting every night.

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY:** Then the difficulty vanished at once.

Item passed.

Item, Lighthouses £20,000:

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY:** This money was for the commencement of the new lighthouse at Breaksea, the machinery for which was lying at Albany, and it was intended to proceed with the work at once. The item also provided for the commencement of a lighthouse and a leading light south and east of Fremantle, to indicate the entrance to the channel, and for another lighthouse at Rottneest Island for the same purpose.

**HON. S. J. HAYNES:** On another occasion he had drawn attention to the disgraceful fact that the machinery for the lighthouse at Breaksea, had been lying at Albany for the last two years, and he was pleased to hear now that the erection of that lighthouse would be proceeded with immediately.

**HON. F. WHITCOMBE:** How were the amounts allocated to the three different lighthouses?

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY:** At the present time he was not prepared to say, but he would try to obtain the information later on.

**HON. F. WHITCOMBE:** The Committee were first asked to vote the item, and then promised the information afterwards.

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY:** Surely the explanation of the item was sufficiently explicit.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** Lighthouses were expensive structures, and the Colonial Secretary had said the money was to be devoted to that work.

Item passed, and the vote (Part I.) agreed to.

Part II.—Railways, £520,000:

Item, Additions and improvements to opened lines (construction) £65,000:

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY:** Of this item £15,000 was for the Kalgoorlie yard, £3,000 for the Fremantle yard, £2,500 for the overhead bridge from Philimore Street to the wharves, Fremantle, £15,000 for relaying the Yilgarn line with heavy rails for 60 miles, and the balance for additions generally throughout the colony.

Item passed.

Coolgardie to Bonnie Vale (construction) £10,000:—

**HON. F. M. STONE** moved that a suggestion be sent to the Legislative Assembly that the item be struck out. Last session the Council passed a resolution against further borrowing, and on that occasion negatived a proposal for a railway from Coolgardie to Bonnie Vale. No additional reasons had been urged in the meantime why this item should be passed. Bonnie Vale was only seven or eight miles from Coolgardie, and possessed no more than one or two mines; and if these mines could not pay that short distance from the centre, the country ought not to be put to this expense, on their account. For similar reasons it was his intention to move that the Legislative Assembly be requested to also strike out the other railway items, as unnecessary at the present time. At any rate, whatever might be thought of the merits of the other lines, no one could say the Coolgardie-Bonnie Vale line was necessary.

**HON. J. E. RICHARDSON:** The item ought to be struck out. Was £10,000 the total cost of the line?

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY:** The total cost would be about £17,000.

**HON. J. E. RICHARDSON:** Inclusive of rolling-stock?

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY:** In no case did the items include rolling-stock, but there would be no great outlay in this direction, because the present rolling-stock would be utilised to a very large extent on the new lines.

HON. J. E. RICHARDSON: A short time ago he read a newspaper article written at Bonnie Vale, and stating that the distance from Coolgardie was only seven miles, that the population of Bonnie Vale was 300, that two mines were closed down, and two remained in operation, capable of sustaining a population of 200, though the stone was of very poor quality.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: It seemed strange that the Government should ask for £10,000, when it was admitted the line would cost nearer £20,000.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The cost of rails and fastenings, provided for in another item, had to be added to the £10,000.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: It would be more satisfactory if the estimated cost of each line, inclusive of all details, were shown. The system of dividing the amounts, as in the schedule, gave the department a power of control which ought not to be allowed, because if any one of the railways cost less than the sum estimated, the department would have so much more money than was originally intended, free for appropriation towards other items from time to time. He supported the motion, because for the last two years he had consistently set his face against railway extension under the existing circumstances of the colony. This line could not be of so much importance as to justify the Government paying 6½ per cent. or 7 per cent. for money, merely to save the people of Bonnie Vale half-an-hour's drive.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Would the interest be so high as that?

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: By the time the money was obtained, he would not be surprised if the interest totalled 9 per cent. or 10 per cent.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: The House had already passed a resolution against further borrowing by the Government, and surely very reasonable railway facilities had already been granted to the people of Coolgardie, who would next be asking for lines to their very doors. The distance of six miles from Coolgardie was nothing, if the mines at Bonnie Vale were worth working.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: This line covered a distance of 8½ miles. The line would serve that important

institution the Bonnie Vale racecourse, and there were some good mines at that place, which, though not working at present, would probably resume operations after completion of the line.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: There were only 300 men there now.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The railway went towards Cunanalling, where there were other mines. The line would add to the importance and prosperity of Coolgardie, and it was surprising that hon. members representing that district did not support this item.

HON. A. P. MATHESON said he had not supported the item, because though a member for the district, he was personally interested in the construction of this line, owing to certain investments at Bonnie Vale. He had therefore said nothing, and did not mean to say anything, on the item.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: It would be inconsistent to support this line. Bonnie Vale was within eight miles and a half of Coolgardie, and consequently of a railway service. The importance of the district would not justify the construction.

HON. A. G. JENKINS said he had not previously spoken because he did not believe the line was urgently needed before the next session of Parliament, though it might benefit his district.

Motion (Mr. Stone's) put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	...	...	...	12
Noes	...	...	...	5

Majority for ... .. 7

AYES.	NOES.
Hon. H. Briggs	Hon. A. G. Jenkins
Hon. R. G. Burgess	Hon. H. Lukin
Hon. C. E. Dempster	Hon. A. P. Matheson
Hon. W. T. Loton	Hon. G. Randell
Hon. D. McKay	Hon. W. Spencer (Teller).
Hon. E. McLarty	
Hon. C. A. Plesse	
Hon. J. E. Richardson	
Hon. H. J. Saunders	
Hon. F. M. Stone	
Hon. F. Whitcombe	
Hon. S. J. Haynes (Teller).	

Motion thus passed, and the item negatived by suggestion.

Item—Coolgardie-Norseman, first instalment £60,000:

HON. F. M. STONE moved that a suggestion be sent to the Legislative Assembly that the item be struck out. It was encouraging, on the division just taken, to receive the support of one hon. member who had accused him (Mr. Stone)



of having always opposed the progressive policy of the Government. At last that hon. member had the courage of his convictions. The Colonial Secretary had accused him of lack of patriotism and intelligence.

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY:** No; not lack of intelligence.

**HON. F. M. STONE:** Against extravagant expenditure and reckless borrowing he had always voted, and was justified by the fact that many public works had been recklessly constructed with borrowed money. In supporting this item, the Colonial Secretary had made a half-hearted speech, to the effect that there were a few mines at Norseman, the total output being some 30,000 ounces a year; yet £60,000 was to be expended as a first instalment. What would be the total expenditure?

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY:** About twice as much.

**HON. F. M. STONE:** One hundred and twenty thousand pounds?

**HON. J. W. HACKETT:** With rails and fastenings, £290,000.

**HON. F. M. STONE:** That made the case worse. Would anyone say this line was necessary, or warranted by the gold output of the district? Enough had been borrowed already, without this large expenditure. The Colonial Secretary had not even supported the item, but was evidently listening to the arguments of hon. members in order to pick up some points in favour of the project. Had the district deserved the line something would have been said which might have prevented him (Mr. Stone) from moving the rejection of the item; but as hon. members had already set their faces against further borrowing, and as the colony was now borrowing largely at high interest, let us say that, in present circumstances, this line was not warranted.

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY:** The last speaker was not quite fair, because he (the Colonial Secretary) had already given all particulars necessary to enable hon. members to judge of these items, and there was now before them the departmental report giving further information. The line would pass through a well-timbered country and would be fairly easy of construction. There were three dams on the route, each capable of holding three

million gallons of water, and there was good auriferous country nearly all the way.

**HON. W. T. LOTON:** Where were the dams?

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY:** At Londonderry, Widgeemooltha, and the 50-Mile Soak. According to the official report, these dams were full in September last, and there were other catchment areas along the route.

**HON. W. T. LOTON:** What was the population at Widgeemooltha?

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY:** There were 97 men employed on reefing properties and 157 at Londonderry. Although the Norseman mines were not of the highest grade, they were consistent in their output, and were worked at less expense than any others in the country. It appeared that a better result was obtained from these low-grade ores at Norseman than could be shown elsewhere. It remained for hon. members to say whether the onward progress of the field was to be stopped. Surely they had not lost faith in the country. The facts of the case were before the Committee, and it was unfair for Mr. Stone to charge him with having waited until others had spoken to obtain material for a reply. It was not his (the Colonial Secretary's) custom to do that, but rather to furnish all information in his power on any matter he brought before the House.

**HON. F. M. STONE** said he had not meant to convey that the Minister had withheld information, but that very little information had been given.

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY:** All information had been given which was necessary to form an opinion on this line, the need for which it was his duty to impress on hon. members. He trusted that on a division he would have a good following, notwithstanding the opposition exhibited.

**HON. A. G. JENKINS** hoped the committee would not follow Mr. Stone on this occasion. The Norseman district was considered by experts the largest low-grade centre on the Eastern goldfields. He had recently been told by the late manager of the Norseman mine, the largest on the field, that this mine worked 6dwt. stone at a profit, which profit would have been much larger but for the exorbitant cost of cartage from Norseman

to Coolgardie. Nearly all the present traffic with Norseman came by the Eastern railway *via* Coolgardie. So far as the trade from Norseman to Esperance was concerned, that practically had ceased to exist. As hon. members desired to stifle the Esperance bogey, he might tell them the best way to do it was to vote for the Coolgardie-Norseman line. The people of Norseman did not desire to conduct their business with Esperance, but with the Eastern goldfields, and so with the capital city. It was said the estimated cost of this line was £300,000; but what was the interest on that money? What was a paltry £12,000 a year, which was all the country would have to pay for opening up an enormous district? The producers wished to be brought in contact with the goldfields, so as to obtain a market for their produce; therefore the best thing to do was to extend the goldfields lines as far as possible. The goldfields lines at the present time were bearing the main portion of the burden of the country. They were paying for most of the agricultural lines, and he was satisfied that if this railway was extended to Norseman, and the forward policy of the Government upheld by this Committee, hon. members would have no reason to regret it in the future. In the past members could look with satisfaction on all the goldfields lines and the results obtained from them. He was satisfied that the report of Mr. John Muir was under the estimate. The number of men employed at Red Hill, from his knowledge, was very much larger than that given by Mr. Muir, who had only taken the men working at the mine. But there were more mines being equipped, and he was sure there were considerably more than 97 employed. Burbanks was within easy distance of Coolgardie, but the cartage meant a great deal to the owners of the mine. A short line from Burbanks to Coolgardie would be quite justified. There had been 15,000 tons of ore carried between Burbanks and Coolgardie per month for the last three or four months, and if the line went no further than Burbanks or Londonderry it would be quite justified. We must not only consider the number of men employed on the Norseman mine. There was a township at Norseman and there were three mines which were likely to come into

prominence in the future. He hoped the Committee would remember the excellent results from the goldfields lines in the past, and if members voted for the line now under consideration they would have no cause to regret the result in the future.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: There was no hesitation whatever on his part in supporting the proposed expenditure on this line, because he believed it would be to the advantage of the colony. He explained before that he would have nothing to say on the Bonnie Vale line, because he had a personal interest in Bonnie Vale, but he had no interest to serve at Norseman; therefore there was no reason why he should not express candidly the opinions he held as to the prospects of the line in question. The warden had estimated that there were 1,600 people residing around Norseman and the immediate district. He had taken pains to get the statistical information confirmed by the mayor of the town so that there should be no misapprehension in the minds of hon. members. The mayor confirmed the warden in every particular. The statement by Mr. Muir that there were only 518 men was simply the number of men employed on the mine. All round Norseman there were mines. To the south there was Dundas, to the east Buldanya, and in the district to the north-east there were the Killaloe group, which almost touched the proposed railway line, and there were mines showing permanent development to the west. This railway, if built, would run through auriferous country nearly the whole way. Widgemooltha was auriferous. There were 368 persons, according to the statistics, employed there at present, but owing to the fact that the miners could not get their supplies cheaply, the low grade ores were not being worked. There were very large deposits of low grade ores at Widgemooltha, and in the intervening country between that and Londonderry there were frequent discoveries of low grade ore being made, but these ores could not be worked until the railway went there, because the miners could not get the supplies cheaply to enable them to work their property. When Red Hill was alluded to in another place, the member for East Coolgardie said the line did not run to Red Hill. As soon as the Red Hill district obtained cheap transit

it would come rapidly to the front. He had been to Red Hill when he was interested in the Hampton Plains estate, although he was not interested in that estate now, and he knew that the district must come prominently forward. There were mines there which had the greatest possible resemblance to the mines at Kalgoorlie, with this exception, they did not carry five or six or seven ounce stuff, but they carried fifteen pennyweights and one ounce stuff. Members should not take a narrow-minded view of this line, and say that because in one particular place only a certain number of men were working that the line should not be built. The number of men at present employed would be multiplied enormously when the line went there. The only reason the men were at present working there was to preserve their claims; they were waiting for the line to go through. If a mine turned out ore which ran only a few pennyweights to the ton, that mine could not be worked at a profit if the stone had to be carted a long distance. The line would pay, and if hon. members were going to consider the question as to whether the expenditure was justified, this was a railway that must be passed. He would put it to members in the way in which Mr. Dempster put a matter yesterday. Mr. Dempster wondered why the Government refused to allow private enterprise to come into play; and he further said that he was prepared to advocate private enterprise. He (Mr. Matheson) asked hon. members to apply that test to this railway, as it was a proper test to apply. Let hon. members ask themselves whether this was a line that would be built by private enterprise, and if so let hon. members vote for the railway unhesitatingly. If private enterprise was found willing to build the line, it was worth while for the Government to build it.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: Would private enterprise undertake it?

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Undoubtedly, and carry the line to Norseman. Mr. Burges was opposing the line, not because he believed that it would not pay, but because he believed the railway would ultimately go on to Esperance. Mr. Burges said the separationists had told him this; but when the colony was separated, the people in the separated portion could deal with the line without

coming to hon. members. When the colony was separated, and heaven forbid that it should be so—

HON. J. W. HACKETT said he hoped the reporters were taking this.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: In spite of the sarcasm of the member for the *West Australian*—he meant Western Australia—

HON. J. W. HACKETT: That was the third change of the hon. member's shirt.

HON. A. P. MATHESON said he did not know what the hon. member meant by the expression, which was hardly parliamentary, but which no doubt the hon. member was accustomed to in his rank in life.

HON. J. W. HACKETT said he wore a shirt.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: It was satisfactory to know that, because it was not apparent.

HON. J. W. HACKETT said he kept it on the one side too.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Possibly for several months. He would again say, heaven forbid separation! Nobody could be more opposed to separation than himself, so long as it was possible to avoid it; but when hon. members like Mr. Burges were prepared to advocate that the goldfields people should be denied railways which were absolutely due to them, and that they should be denied the right to vote on a Bill which he (Mr. Matheson) would not mention because it was not before the House, and when other hon. members were prepared to say the goldfields people should not be accorded the same facilities for voting and the same right—

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Who said so?

HON. A. P. MATHESON: That had been said in the House, but he would not say by whom.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Not by the majority.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: If the goldfields people were not to have the same facilities and the same rights of voting enjoyed by people on the coast, then, and then only, would he be prepared to say he was in favour of separation; and he hoped the reporters would take that down also. In reply to the challenge of Mr. Hackett, he hoped that gentleman's newspaper would report his remarks, because as a rule that paper did not publish any-

thing unfavourable to Mr. Hackett's views. He hoped the Press would take a note of the fact that Mr. Hackett was always in favour of applying the muzzle to anybody who had any independent view or views which differed from his own.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: The hon. member would be reported more fully than he liked.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: It was to be hoped the reporters would take a note of everything he had said.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: The reporters would give the hon. gentleman more reports yet; especially on the separation question.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: That would be a most unusual thing for the reporters to do. But to return to the subject from which he was afraid he had strayed, owing to the interruptions of the "hon. member for Bunbury."

HON. J. W. HACKETT: It was only paying the hon. member back in his own coin.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: In what sort of coin? In coin picked up in the gutter.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: It was the hon. member's own coin.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: It was coin picked up in the gutter; the only coin the hon. member dealt with in the House. Mr. Hackett had better hold his tongue.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Somebody else had better hold his tongue, too, and would for the future, no doubt.

HON. H. LUKIN: It was too hot for this sort of work.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: The interruption was to be regretted, because it did not deal with the question under debate, and he was sorry he had been led into a personal altercation which, however, he could hardly have avoided under the circumstances. He thought the Committee would agree with him to that extent, because he had either to allow these interruptions to be hurled at him without replying, or to enter into an altercation, which he regretted. There could be no doubt this line would pay, and was therefore justified; but he did not think he could add anything to the arguments which had been brought forward by the member representing the same province as himself.

HON. W. T. LOTON: No doubt hon. members were aware that in voting for this item of £60,000, they would be voting for an expenditure of £290,000, and that without including provision for rolling-stock. Mr. Matheson had said this line would pay; but that was a mere statement, and he (Mr. Loton) had not heard from any hon. member who had spoken in favour of the railway, that it was likely to pay in the near future. His object, however, was not to discuss the merits of the railway itself, because the time had not arrived when this colony was prepared in earnest to discuss the merits of this particular line. The financial position of the colony in regard to borrowing money for the construction of railways, or any public works which had been commenced, was a somewhat serious one. Last night he pointed out that position, and showed there was only half a million remaining to be raised under the present authorisation. He was not prepared to say how much of the last loan, raised in October, had been expended, but no doubt there was something left; and the immense work of constructing the goldfields water scheme had to be completed. The scheme had been undertaken, and money would have to be found to complete it, because money borrowed for the work had been reappropriated.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: Misappropriated.

HON. W. T. LOTON: The colony would have to sanction another loan in order to carry out the scheme. It was from this point of view he desired hon. members, at this particular stage, to view the question; and the colony was not in such a financial position at the present time as to justify the construction of any further railways, even though the Government could show the railways would pay. He would be as pleased as any hon. member to see a line of railway connecting Norseman with the goldfields.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: And so would every other hon. member when the time came.

HON. W. T. LOTON: But the Committee were not prepared to involve the colony at the present time, in further indebtedness in this direction, and that was the sole reason for his supporting the motion of Mr. Stone.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: Mr. Jenkins had referred to the possible attitude of agri-

cultural members on this question, and as an agricultural member he (Mr. Piesse) was only too pleased to support the construction of the Coolgardie-Norseman railway, because he had always been in favour of such a line, and had seen no reason to change his opinion. He could not understand why members should oppose this line on the ground that the colony had borrowed sufficient money; because no speaker yet had proved that the line was not necessary, and therefore they were taking up an untenable position. The line was wanted, and it had been promised, but last year the Council passed an unfortunate resolution to the effect that no more borrowing should be undertaken until the present authorisations had been exhausted. In view of that childish resolution hon. members, in a desire to be consistent, were now opposing the construction of this line, but it was really time they regarded the matter from a common-sense point of view.

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY:** Under the present loan authorisations, £950,000 remained to be raised.

**HON. F. WHITCOMBE:** It was not necessary for those who opposed the item to show the Coolgardie-Norseman line was not necessary, because it was the duty of the proposer of the work to show that it was necessary; and nothing had yet been heard to satisfy him that the work was indispensable to the welfare of the people or the welfare of the colony. When the Colonial Secretary said it was his duty—with an emphasis on “duty”—to make a proposal, he was only moving in a half-hearted way.

**THE COLONIAL SECRETARY:** It was very unfair to make a remark of that character.

**HON. F. WHITCOMBE:** There was nothing unfair about the remark. The position taken by Mr. Loton was a proper one, it being quite true we could not afford to borrow money to build lines, even if it could be shown that those lines would pay working expenses; and there certainly ought to be some change in the method of preparing estimates and information in regard to proposed railways.

**HON. C. E. DEMPSTER** said he could not consistently and conscientiously support this line. No doubt the railway would embrace Burbanks and Londonderry, two important mines, but those

places were only a few miles from Coolgardie and could be well served by existing railways, and to continue the railway to Widgemooltha and Dundas would open up a country not fully developed or, at any rate, not proved rich enough to justify this large expenditure. The cost of the railway would be nearly £300,000, and the country was not in a position to justify the voting of such a sum of money for the purpose. If it were a proposal to construct a line of railway from Esperance to Norseman by private enterprise, he would be pleased to support it; but what would be the result of a line from Coolgardie to Norseman? The latter place was within 120 miles of Esperance Bay, where there was a good port, from which the whole of the goldfields could be supplied; and would it be to the interests of the colony to connect the goldfields with Esperance? If there was a railway from that port, the goldfields people would receive all they required from the Eastern colonies; and on this ground he supported the motion of Mr. Stone.

**HON. E. McLARTY:** No doubt a good deal of sympathy could be felt with the people of the Norseman district, considering the large works going on there, and the population to be served; but he regretted he could not support the construction of this line. Considering the large population, no doubt the line was warranted, but with the items already authorised, the Government would have their hands full. Better wait to see how the new railways would pay. If the district continued to prosper the House might see its way to pass the railway at some future time, but the present time was inopportune, in view of the large demands made on the Treasury for the Coolgardie water scheme.

Motion (Mr. Stone's) put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	...	...	...	9
Noes	...	...	...	8

Majority for ... 1

**AYES.**  
 Hon. R. G. Burges  
 Hon. C. E. Dempster  
 Hon. W. T. Loton  
 Hon. E. McLarty  
 Hon. J. E. Richardson  
 Hon. H. J. Saunders  
 Hon. F. M. Stone  
 Hon. F. Whitcombe  
 Hon. S. J. Haynes (Teller).

**NOES.**  
 Hon. H. Briggs  
 Hon. J. W. Hackett  
 Hon. A. G. Jenkins  
 Hon. H. Lukin  
 Hon. A. P. Matheson  
 Hon. C. A. Piesse  
 Hon. G. Randell  
 Hon. W. Spencer (Teller).

Motion thus passed, and the item negatived by suggestion.

Item, Menzies to Leonora (first instalment, construction), £60,000:

HON. F. M. STONE moved that a suggestion be sent to the Legislative Assembly that this item be struck out. He moved this with regret, because he understood this was the only line the construction of which was justified. It was unnecessary to repeat the arguments used against previous items. Briefly, we should not borrow further at the present time.

HON. J. E. RICHARDSON regretted, on principle, to have to support the motion. He would oppose all the railways mentioned in the Bill.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: If there was one new public work which hon. members generally favoured, this was the work. The extent of auriferous country in the Mount Margaret district was so great that the House ought to face the borrowing necessary for the railway. The departmental report showed the disabilities under which this goldfield laboured, and that the traffic on the line must be great. To complete the line would only cost £165,000, and this expenditure from loan need not be feared, for the line will undoubtedly pay from the beginning. Mines in the district were springing up in all directions, and the country was already known as a sort of second Kalgoorlie. The inducements for constructing the line to Southern Cross were not so great as those held out in connection with this proposed railway.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: It was "Bayley's" which made the Southern Cross line.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: True; that line had ultimately been justified by results. In the Leonora district, mines were already in existence; timber was scarce, and had to be brought there by road; hence the railway would benefit the mercantile and producing classes, and would lead to the development of properties which at the present moment were standing idle.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: Why build the line to Leonora? Malcolm was a more central place.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: The line would go through Mt. Malcolm.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Moreover, the water supply in the

district was good. At Niagara fresh water could be obtained at moderate depth, which would be available for other goldfields railways. The total of £165,000 was made up of items mentioned on the last page of Mr. Muir's report. The important districts of Laverton, Mount Morgan, and neighbourhood would be brought into closer touch with the centres of population. To reject the items would throw back the prosperity of this district for a considerable time, and must give local residents keen disappointment. Let not hon. members throw out the item rashly, for the work should at once be undertaken, nor was there any reason, financial or otherwise, why it should not be put in hand.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: On the merits of the proposed railway all were agreed, but the question was, could the country afford to build it? The Government could not afford to borrow further at the present exorbitant rate of interest, 5 per cent. or  $5\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. including commission and other charges. The Colonial Secretary had referred to discoveries made subsequently to the building of the line to Southern Cross. Had it not been for the discovery of Coolgardie, that line would not have paid for axle-grease. Of all the railways in the schedule, this was the one that all could look at as meritorious.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Then vote for it.

HON. S. J. HAYNES said he could not do that. He could not plunge the colony into further debt at the present time.

HON. W. T. LOTON: With regard to this railway, whenever in Western Australia any railway extension took place, this would be one of the first lines to construct. The development between Menzies and Malcolm and Leonora was very considerable at the present time, and the development beyond those places was also considerable, both in the north-east and north-west. It was only a question whether the Government were prepared to provide the finances. The item on the schedule was for £60,000, but the estimate from the department, without rolling-stock, was £165,000, and the line as reported upon was to Malcolm, so that practically there were 14 or 15 miles in addition, which would increase the cost by one-fifth, or in round numbers bring

the estimate up to £200,000, exclusive of rolling-stock. On the same principle that he voted in regard to other lines, he thought this railway should remain over this session, at all events, and the Government be prepared with a loan policy in the future which would commend itself to both Houses of Parliament, and not come down at the end of the session, almost at the end of the Parliament, to obtain votes for loan moneys to prop up a deficit in the loan revenue on account of the works voted being all completed. Whenever this line was constructed, it should be carried to Malcolm and not to Leonora. This line will be a continuation of what we might call the main trunk line, and whenever the railway is extended it will probably have to go in two directions, to the north-east and the west. Leonora to the west, and to the other rich mines, and to Mt. Morgan and Laverton to the north-east. He was not going to discuss the matter whether the line was to go to Malcolm or Leonora, but he would point out that the department recommended Malcolm as the distributing centre. He would support the motion moved by Mr. Stone.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: One felt bound to support the motion to strike out the item, because it was the opinion of the province he represented that the whole of the back country and the Murchison would have the trade led away to Perth. The resources of the colony should not be diverted purely to the agricultural people of the colony, and the ports of the fields immediately concerned neglected. Apart from the evident wrong proposed to be committed by the Government to the Central Province, he could not see that the colony was justified at the present time in commencing this work, or authorising it, still less were the Government coming to Parliament for an authorisation when the Premier had stated that if Parliament authorised the loan, he would not bring in the Railway Bills until next session. We were not justified in constructing this line when the stability of the mines in the district had not been proved. There was not sufficient proof that the mines in the Leonora or Malcolm districts were permanent. The mines had not been proved beyond the depth of two hundred feet.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: The Sons of Gwalia mine was down over 300 feet, and the mine was as rich as any in Kalgoorlie.

HON. A. G. JENKINS: That one mine was valued at two and a half millions of money.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: If one mine was valued at two and a half millions of money, then that mine should ask to be allowed to build the railway for itself.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: We would take the hon. member at that.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: The Colonial Secretary had stated nothing which justified the Committee in committing the colony to this liability. We had no proof of the stability of the district beyond the fact of there being one mine there. The Government had not yet committed themselves to the whole principle of centralisation, although he believed that if the country was in a prosperous condition this vote would be carried on the voices, a course he would be very sorry to see. Even if we were justified, and the colony was in a position to warrant the Committee in authorising this liability, he could not allow the line to pass on the ground that he was opposed to the policy of centralisation, and of robbing the districts in the north for the benefit of the capital.

HON. A. G. JENKINS said he could indorse the words of the Colonial Secretary that there never was a railway proposed which was more justified than this line. Hon. members who had not visited the district had no possible idea of the development which had taken place, and which was taking place daily there. There were numbers of men employed, numbers of fresh batteries were being erected, and there were signs of progress at the places touched by the railway line which justified the railway being constructed. This line was justified as much as the lines to Coolgardie or Kalgoorlie were justified in the past. There was a group of mines at Leonora, even in this depressed time, of the value of four millions of money, yet hon. members were afraid to spend £165,000 to equip these magnificent mines. If we went to Menzies it would be found that carriers charged from £6 to £7 a ton to Mt. Leonora. This high charge would be done away with if the

line were built. If this item was passed he hoped the Government would endeavour to commence the work at once.

HON. E. McLARTY: This was the one line of railway proposed at the present time that should receive the unanimous support of hon. members. He was led to believe that the Mt. Margaret district was second only to any other district in the colony, and seeing the disadvantages under which the people of that district laboured, it was only just and right that the railway should be extended for their convenience. There was another reason why he intended to vote for this line. He did not wish it to go abroad that members were voting against the railways because they were opposed to extending lines to the goldfields. Hon. members had opposed certain lines to-night because the financial position of the colony would not enable them to be built. The Leonora line would repay the cost of construction, and he hoped there would be a unanimous vote for the item.

HON. R. G. BURGESS in supporting the item, said the report members had before them showed that the line was justified. There were extensive goldfields to the north and north-west of Menzies, and the proposal was very different to that for the construction of the Norseman-Coolgardie line. He hoped the item would be carried on the voices, as it was a necessary work. He suggested that Mr. Stone should withdraw the motion, considering what the goldfields had done for this country.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: This line would be reproductive, and many mining men of position had told him there were great probabilities of this goldfield proving even richer than Kalgoorlie. The route embraced a well-watered country, capable of supplying not only the line itself, but also the line from Menzies to Kalgoorlie.

Motion put and negatived, and the item passed.

Item (Railway) Northam towards Goomalling £20,000:

HON. F. M. STONE moved that a suggestion be sent to the Legislative Assembly that the item be struck out. No doubt Mr. Burgess and Mr. Dempster would point to great advantages to be derived from this line; but even if the railway were constructed, carting would

still have to go on. In any case, the whole of the produce would be carried over the line in three or four days, and the railway would be idle for the rest of the time. His reasons for opposing this item were the same as he had given for opposing the other items.

HON. H. LUKIN: A great many hon. members had a prejudice against agricultural railways, on the ground that such railways did not pay; but there were two ways of looking at the question. A railway to a gold-mining centre, for instance, if it did not pay directly, did not pay at all; but an agricultural railway might be run at a loss directly, and yet be paying the country handsomely indirectly. He had been told by the Commissioner of Crown Lands that along the projected route £200,000 worth of land had been sold or leased, simply on the strength of the promise by the Government that the railway would be constructed. An hon. member last night said that nothing had been shown to justify this railway, nobody having mentioned what the population was, or what land was under cultivation. But on good authority he could say that within seven miles of the railway, on either side, from Northam to Goomalling, there were over 2,000 people, and that within a similar radius 200,000 acres of land had been bought outright or under conditional purchase, and a great portion put under cultivation. On the same authority, he also had it that if there was an immediate possibility of the line being constructed, there would be a sale of quite 20,000 acres more; so that hon. members would see this was not a line to a "gum tree at nowhere," but a line through good agricultural land, already in occupation. Rails taken up from the Coolgardie line were available, and as the idea of the Government was to construct the line by day labour in a cheaper way than railways had been constructed in the past, it was likely that the whole work would not cost more than £20,000. This was not a through line, but purely and simply an agricultural line, and it was nonsense to construct a line of the latter description at the same cost as railways designed to carry a large passenger traffic. If the speed on an agricultural line averaged six or seven miles an hour, that was quite



sufficient, and just as good as 40 miles an hour.

HON. F. M. STONE: And would not the people grumble after they got such a line?

HON. H. LUKIN: It was no use urging this line would pay directly, because hon. members knew very well it would not, an agricultural line taking some time to develop; but so long as it paid the country indirectly, that was as much as could be expected. Some years ago at Northam, the Premier said he recognised the necessity for such a line, and would build it at the very first opportunity. That opportunity was presented now, and to neglect it would be doing an injustice, not only to the district, but to the colony at large.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: Hon. members would surely not be so uncharitable as to refuse authority for the construction of this line. An enormous number of selectors had taken up land, which they had fenced and made productive, along the line of route, on the assumption that the line would be built; and under the circumstances, it would be a burning shame if the work were not authorised. This line would open up more agricultural land than any other line of the same length in Western Australia; and it was the duty of Parliament to see that the people there were not disappointed. The line was necessary to enable the settlers to compete with others situated nearer to railways, the producer who had to cart his stuff 20 or 40 miles being very seriously handicapped; and members would be astonished at the amount of cultivation and improvement along the line of route. The hon. member (Mr. Stone) should not oppose the construction of this line, which was absolutely the only item in the Bill that directly concerned the agriculturists. The line had been promised for some time, and the members who directly represented that locality had placed a good case before the House. He hoped that this "wee lamb" of the agriculturists would be allowed to pass, and that the people would obtain the railway.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: It was a matter of regret to him that Mr. Stone had taken exception to this proposal, the amount being only about £52,000 out of a total involved in the Bill of something like a

million and a half. It would be a little hard if this item were struck out. A well-known farmer at Goomalling, Mr. Salter, who lived only 30 miles out, advertised in the local papers for tenders for the cartage of 3,000 bushels of wheat from Goomalling to Northam, and the lowest tender he received was 1s. per bushel. The Government induced people to cultivate land in the locality of Goomalling, and to grow corn; yet how could we expect people to work this land, borrow money, clear the country, and pay rents, if they had to pay 1s. a bushel for cartage to Northam, and experienced great difficulty in getting it done at that price? Settlers near the Eastern railways, at Newcastle and those places, got their corn conveyed at 2½d. per bushel; and it was unfair that other people settled round Goomalling should experience a loss of 8½d. or 9d. a bushel as regarded the cartage of their produce. Mr. Lukin had pointed out that it was the intention of the Government to use rails from the Yilgarn line; and, if that were done, the cost might be less than £52,000. It was quite unnecessary to build expensive stations, this line being purely an agricultural one. All that was wanted was a cheap line with shelter sheds at certain points and different sidings as loading places. As pointed out by Mr. Dempster the other night, the line could be made and kept in repair more cheaply than a good road through that country. In a dry country like this a road could be cut up by a thunderstorm in about half-an-hour, and the work would subsequently have to be done over again. The interest on the outlay for this line would be saved through the absence of necessity to keep up the ordinary roads, and by the receipt of rents and the sum paid for land purchased in the locality.

HON. F. M. STONE: What compensation would be given?

HON. R. G. BURGESS: None. A lot of settlers had already signed that they did not require compensation except for reclaiming land.

HON. F. M. STONE: Let members wait till the railway got there.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: The settlers had as much right to compensation as any other people, but he thought that question could easily be settled, and that they would be satisfied with getting the line.

A person could go into that locality and see 500 or 600 acres owned by one man and under cultivation. Supposing 10 bushels an acre were obtained from 100,000 acres a year, that alone would afford a large amount of traffic for this railway. The land was not second-class, but some of the best in the colony. It was unfair to expect people to go 50 or 60 miles out and encounter all the difficulties that existed, and then expect them to compete with people who had railways running through their holdings, or only a short distance from them. What was the good of the country unless we made use of it? If our agricultural land was not worth an expenditure of £50,000, we had better abandon it, because we could not obtain population unless we could get people to live permanently where we could grow enough for our coming goldfields. Our population had increased about fourfold since the gold industry had been established, and we hoped it would increase fourfold more, and that, with the assistance of these railways, we should be able to provide the cereals and produce required for our own people in our own country. He had no interest at all in this line, but he knew it was impossible to clear large areas of land and to make the undertaking pay unless railway accommodation was provided within easy distance. He hoped Mr. Stone would not press his amendment.

HON. A. P. MATHESON : The gentlemen who had advocated this line could hardly have done so seriously, seeing that Mr. Lukin was prepared to get up in his place and say the line could not pay, and that we also knew it was impossible at the present moment to borrow any money at a reasonable rate of interest. The question of a railway which would pay was one matter, but that of a railway which would not pay was another.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER : This railway would pay.

HON. A. P. MATHESON : Mr. Lukin said it would not pay, and, judging from the experience of another little branch line, it would not.

HON. R. G. BURGESS : The line would pay.

HON. A. P. MATHESON : There was a great deal of truth in what Mr. Dempster and other members had said as to the existence of districts which it

was desirable at times to open up with railways, even although the railways might not pay at the start; but this was not the right time for the colony to make such experiments. He would apply to this railway the test he urged the Committee to apply to other lines, namely, was this a line that private enterprise would construct? Distinctly it was not. Mr. Dempster and Mr. Burgess would not say that private enterprise should step in and build the line.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER : That he was not sure of.

HON. A. P. MATHESON : One regretted to have to oppose this line. Mr. Dempster had thrown new light on the question in pointing out that the settlers had taken up land on a pledge by the Government that a line would be built. Still, it was not an opportune time to build the line.

HON. E. McLARTY : At first he had some hesitation as to whether he would support the line, but he ultimately came to the conclusion that the cost of the Goomalling railway would not be more than that of a road, and in the case of a road the expenditure would have to be incurred year after year. Agricultural railways could be built at a very cheap rate. There was no necessity for the Government to run a fast train and to incur great expense in working the line. Emphasis had been laid on the fact that rolling-stock was not included in this amount, but that would really be a small item. Three trains a week to Goomalling would meet the requirements of the district, and give the settlers all the convenience they needed. Doubtless rolling-stock would often lie idle at Northam, and that could be utilised on the Goomalling line, the time occupied being only a few hours, so that there would be no necessity for expenditure in that direction. Taking the amount the Government had received for the land, and the rents, and also the large amount of land which doubtless would be bought as soon as the line was decided upon, he had no doubt the Government would receive in return quite as much as the cost of the line, and we had to consider the direct benefit the country would derive in other directions. It would ill become the Committee to refuse to pass this small item, for if the line

were not built, the upkeep of the roads would be a constant drain on the Government; moreover, the Government had in hand a large quantity of rails, and thus the cost of construction would be considerably reduced.

Motion (Mr. Stone's) put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	...	...	7
Noes	...	...	9

Majority against ... 2

Ayes.  
Hon. A. P. Matheson  
Hon. D. McKay  
Hon. J. E. Richardson  
Hon. H. J. Saunders  
Hon. F. M. Stone  
Hon. F. Whitcombe  
Hon. S. J. Haynes  
(Teller).

Noes.  
Hon. H. Briggs  
Hon. R. G. Burges  
Hon. C. E. Dempster  
Hon. J. W. Hackett  
Hon. H. Lukin  
Hon. C. A. Piesse  
Hon. G. Randall  
Hon. W. Spencer  
Hon. E. McLarty  
(Teller).

Motion thus negatived, and the item passed.

Item, Rails and fastenings £100,000:

HON. F. WHITCOMBE moved that it be a suggestion to the Legislative Assembly that this amount be reduced by £50,000. According to the Colonial Secretary, this £100,000 for rails and fastenings had been intended to be distributed amongst the whole of the lines proposed in the Bill, as well as lines already existing. As the amounts voted for new railways had been reduced by £70,000 it was only right that this item should be proportionately reduced.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The full amount of this item was absolutely required. Existing railways needed considerable attention, and it was necessary to relay 61 miles of rails on the gold-fields lines. The Committee should cheerfully assent to all the remaining items in the Bill, as, if these were not passed, the railway system of the colony would be seriously hampered, some risk would be run of interfering with the profitable working of the department, and perhaps other difficulties might arise. He understood from the Commissioner of Railways that this sum was required, and although a certain portion of the amount had been intended for lines proposed to be constructed, some of which had been thrown out to-night, nevertheless, rails would be required for the lines authorised this evening, as well as for existing railways.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: If that were so, the Committee had been misled, for either the department had at first asked for a good deal less than was required, or were now trying to insist on getting a good deal more. The department must stand by their estimates; and if £100,000 for rails and fastenings was sufficient for present requirements, and for the proposed lines in the Schedule, that sum should be proportionately reduced in respect of the lines just rejected.

Motion put and negatived, and the item passed.

Item, Railway Workshops £20,000—agreed to.

Item, Rolling-stock £165,000:

HON. F. WHITCOMBE asked the Colonial Secretary whether it was not a fact that the department had already announced this year that something like £430,000 was required to complete the plant of existing lines; and yet the department were only asking for £165,000.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: A larger amount, he believed, would be required for rolling-stock, but the amount in the schedule would suffice for some considerable time; in fact, in anticipation of future requirements an indent had been sent home for a portion of the stock required, the cost of which would have to be provided for in some other way.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: The old story. The goods were ordered first and sanction obtained afterwards.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: That practice was universal and must sometimes be adopted by all governments, and when the department found the traffic rapidly increasing, they were justified in taking this responsibility. All who did business with the railways agreed on the absolute necessity for new rolling-stock in order that the system might work satisfactorily. Recently there had been many complaints from producers of shortage in this item, and the sum now asked for would enable the department to meet the increasing traffic.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: Was this item for the replacement of disused stock or for equipping new lines?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It was to keep up the efficiency of the rolling-stock.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: Yet the balance-sheet of the department showed a profit of £20,000 for last year.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The rolling-stock was required partly for new lines and partly for those already built.

Item put and passed.

HON. F. M. STONE said he would move that "£520,000" be struck out and "£450,000" inserted. This would reduce paragraph 2 of the schedule in accordance with the resolutions already passed.

THE PRESIDENT: There was no occasion to do so, as the House never touched the totals. The necessary alterations were made by the Legislative Assembly.

Part III.—Development of goldfields and mineral resources:

Item, Public batteries £30,000—agreed to.

Item, Development generally £20,000—agreed to.

Part IV.—Departmental:

Item, Departmental £26,000—agreed to.

These votes completed the schedule.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that the Chairman do report that the Committee recommend that the Bill be returned to the Legislative Assembly, with a message conveying the suggestions agreed to; and that the Committee have leave to sit again on receipt of a message in reply from the Legislative Assembly.

Motion put and passed.

Resolutions reported, and the report adopted. Bill accordingly returned to the Assembly with suggested amendments.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10 o'clock until the next day.

## Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 13th December, 1899.

Paper presented—Supreme Court, Site for Building, Report—Fremantle Water Supply Bill, third reading—Sunday Labour in Mines Bill, third reading—Totalisator Act Amendment Bill, third reading—Bank Holidays Amendment Bill, third reading—Sluicing and Dredging for Gold Bill, Council's Amendments—Fisheries Amendment Bill, Council's Amendments—Constitution Acts Amendment Bill, Council's Amendments—Health Act Amendment Bill, second reading—Fire Brigades Amendment Bill, second reading, Division (no quorum)—Adjournment.

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

#### PRAYERS.

#### PAPER PRESENTED.

By the PREMIER: Report of Registrar General, Industrial Statistics.

Ordered to lie on the table.

#### SUPREME COURT, SITE FOR BUILDING.

##### JOINT COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

HON. F. H. PIESSE brought up the report of the Joint Select Committee, as follows:

The Committee have considered the question, and have agreed to the following resolution, which they recommend to the House, "That the proposed new Law Courts be erected upon the site occupied by the present Supreme Court."

Report received, and to be considered next day.

#### FREMANTLE WATER SUPPLY BILL.

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

#### SUNDAY LABOUR IN MINES BILL.

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

#### TOTALISATOR ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time, on motion by MR. MONGER, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

#### BANK HOLIDAYS AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time, on motion by MR. MONGER (for Mr. Higham), and returned to the Legislative Council with an amendment.