

# Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, October 26th, 1899.

Message: Transvaal War, W.A. Contingent—Sluicing and Dredging for Gold Bill, second reading—Land Act Amendment Bill, second reading (moved)—Fisheries Bill, second reading—Pharmacy and Poisons Act Amendment Bill, in Committee, new clauses, schedules, reported—Motion: Draft Commonwealth Bill, Joint Committee's Recommendations, seventh day (adjourned)—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

MESSAGE—TRANSCAAL WAR, W.A. CONTINGENT.

A Message from the Governor was received and read, as follows:

The Governor has the honour to inform the Legislative Assembly that he has received the following telegram from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen, through South Australia:—"Her Majesty the Queen desires to thank the people of her colonies in Australasia for the striking manifestation of loyalty and patriotism in their voluntary offer to send troops to co-operate with Her Majesty's Imperial forces in maintaining her position and the rights of British subjects in South Africa. She wishes the troops God-speed and a safe return."

SLUICING AND DREDGING FOR GOLD BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE MINISTER OF MINES (Hon. H. B. Lefroy), in moving the second reading, said: This Bill is introduced for the purpose of enabling people to obtain larger areas than can be granted under our present Goldfields Act, on the salt lakes in the interior of this colony, for dredging for gold. During the last 12 months many persons have been making inquiries through the Mines Department as to whether it is possible for the Government to grant areas for the purpose of dredging for gold on some of the salt lakes. I informed them that the Government had no power to grant any larger areas than were provided for by the Goldfields Act, and at present were not in a position to grant areas such as those persons required for dredging purposes. There is a large extent of this lake country to the eastward, and there are persons under the belief that these lakes contain a

certain amount of gold which they desire to have the power to take out. That can only be done by means of expensive machinery, and in order to make it payable they require larger areas than we are enabled to grant them under the present Goldfields Act. It is not proposed under this Bill to include anything but the lake areas. I am not inclined at the present time to ask the House to agree to lease ordinary abandoned alluvial land in large areas, because I do not think the time has arrived in this colony when we should throw open abandoned alluvial ground for leasing purposes. No doubt the time will arrive by and by, but I repeat that I do not think we should throw open those areas for selection under lease at the present time. I think that by granting areas of this lake country we shall not be doing injury to anybody, and that we may be doing a considerable amount of benefit to the individual and also to the country. Those who have inquired into the matter will agree there is a certain amount of probability that some of the gold which has been disintegrated from the reefs and lodes throughout this country has been washed down by the process of time into these large salt lakes. If there are people prepared to ascertain the truth of this and to put their money into the venture, I think we should give them every encouragement to do so. As I say, it is not proposed to grant under lease under this Act anything but the lakes themselves. My idea is that those who endeavour to enter upon this work should take up machinery areas alongside the lakes under the Goldfields Act, for housing their machinery, if necessary, for putting up their buildings, offices, and so on, and that nothing but the lakes themselves up to high-water mark should be granted under lease under this Act. There are certain high-water marks, and you can generally tell where the water has been to. I have been over a good many of the salt lakes in the interior of the colony, and have had great difficulty in getting across some of them.

MR. KINGSMILL: Lake Moore, for instance.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Yes; I have been across it. There is always a certain high-water mark, and it is easy to define the lake itself. The

rental is fixed at one shilling per acre, and the area which it is proposed to grant is 640 acres, or one square mile. There are some persons I believe who consider this area is not sufficiently large, and I shall be pleased to have an expression of opinion from hon. members who have a knowledge of this sort of work, as to whether this area is sufficiently large or not.

MR. EWING: A person can take up more than one area.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Yes; a person can take up more than one area, and can amalgamate under the regulations which will be framed. I have been informed by some persons who are desirous of taking up land for this purpose that the area is sufficiently large, and there are others who have expressed their desire of entering into this class of work who think the area is not large enough. I know there are people who desire to get as much as they possibly can; I do not blame them for that, but there are people who are always looking out for concessions, and who desire to acquire as much territory as they can for the purpose for which they require it. My opinion is that 640 acres are enough, and if a person desires to take up a larger area, that person must take up a number of leases and amalgamate them.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: A person can take up two areas.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Yes, just the same as a company can now take up any number of 24-acre leases; but the area to be granted in one lease must not embrace more than 640 acres. It is intended to frame regulations under the Act, and areas can be amalgamated just the same as areas are amalgamated under the Goldfields Act.

MR. EWING: Are there to be labour conditions?

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Under the Bill no labour conditions are required, the only thing to be done by a person obtaining an area is to put machinery on the land during the first 12 months of the value of £3,000, after that the lessee must keep the machinery going continuously at the work of dredging for gold on the land demised during the term of the lease, except during such term as lawful exemption may be obtained under the Bill. Hon. members will

understand that this class of mining is different from ordinary mining, and any person who takes up a lease of this kind must be given time to prospect to find out where to go to work, and time should be given persons to build their dredges with which they will carry on the work. Therefore we do not ask for more during the first 12 months than that machinery to a certain value shall be erected; after that the machinery is to be kept continuously going.

MR. EWING: What is "continuously" going? Has work to be carried on day and night, or for 48 hours a week?

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Hon. members will notice there are considerable powers given in the Bill to draw up regulations, for, amongst other things, prescribing the mode of applying for leases, and the reservations, covenants and conditions to be inserted therein. Also for prescribing the procedure for forfeiture of leases and carrying out and giving force and effect to the object and purposes of the Bill. These regulations will lay down exactly what it is intended to do.

MR. GREGORY: Will the regulations give power to amalgamate?

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The regulations will do that. In some of the other colonies the Government grant leases for dredging purposes under their ordinary Goldfields Act without reference to Parliament. In Victoria the Government have power to grant large areas for the purpose of dredging, and they can make any conditions they like.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: So have you.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: We have no power to grant any area over 24 acres.

MR. VOSPER: You can grant special leases.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: There is no power under the Goldfields Act to grant any special leases for gold-mining purposes.

MR. EWING: There is the inherent power to make a special grant.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: There is no power under the Goldfields Act to grant large areas for gold-mining, therefore it is necessary to bring forward such a Bill as this, and it is better to have a small Bill introduced than to provide for this class of gold-mining in one clause in

the Goldfields Act. As is stated in the Bill, after the first 12 months the lessee shall keep continuously employed in sluicing or dredging for gold upon the land demised machinery of the value of not less than £3,000. Some hon. members have asked what is meant by "continuously employed." Was it intended that work should be carried on for eight hours a day, or for 24 hours? I should say if the machinery is kept employed for eight hours a day, that would be "continuously employed," and under the regulations we shall have to provide that. Under the Goldfields Act, all a person is obliged to do to comply with the labour regulations is to work for eight hours on an ordinary day, and four hours on Saturday. He is not obliged to do anything more: he can work 24 hours if he likes, but he is not obliged under the law to work for more than eight hours a day. Under the regulations for carrying out this Bill we can provide that. I do not contemplate any difficulties in working this Act. We simply place persons on country which is really of no value to anyone without the expenditure of capital. If persons are willing to test these lakes, we should give them an opportunity to do so, with every reward we possibly can for their labour. Hon. members will notice that the Minister may at any time suspend or waive all or any of the covenants or conditions contained in the lease in any case where he is satisfied that by reason of special circumstances it would be impossible to comply with, or would inflict great hardship upon the lessee to enforce, such covenants or conditions, and then Clause 7 goes on to say that a return of all suspensions or waivers, with the reasons therefor, shall be annually laid before Parliament within one month after the opening of Parliament. Therefore it is intended that Parliament shall be kept strictly informed of everything that is going on. I trust hon. members will be satisfied with this little Bill. I feel satisfied that there will be no difficulty in working it when the land is applied for. I do not think the Bill will affect any interest in existence at the present time. I do not think the ordinary alluvial miner is likely to go out dry-blowing on salt lakes, or to look for a deep lead there, therefore if we get people to take up areas and work

them, as is proposed under this Bill, it will be doing good to the individual, and I hope the country will benefit by it. I do not think this is the most profitable style of mining for any country; there may be a certain amount of gold found, but I do not contemplate a great amount of labour being employed in taking the gold out. I think the labour employed in taking out the gold will be less in proportion to the labour employed in lode mining. At the same time the return from the one will in no way correspond to that of the other. Notwithstanding that it will not be such a profitable investment to the country as lode mining, at the same time while gold is there, or is supposed to be there, we should give encouragement to people to take it out. All I hope is that if people do enter on this work and take out gold, they will try to keep the gold in Western Australia and not send it away.

MR. VOSPER: I am sure they will.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: I am afraid people who enter into gold mining have none of those philanthropic motives: they desire to get all they can and take it away.

MR. VOSPER: And keep all they make.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Yes, and keep all they make. I am sure there is a great deal of that feeling in connection with gold-mining in this country at the present time. The desire is to take all the gold out as quickly as possible, and then go away. I hope the people, who will engage in the class of mining provided for in the Bill, will try and keep some of the gold here. I hope they will spend it in Western Australia and try and put some of it back again into the ground to produce something which will be of use to the community.

MR. GREGORY: You must give them consideration when they come here.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: I commend the Bill to hon. members.

MR. LEAKE (Albany): It is my intention to support the second reading of this Bill, and in doing so the observations I make will, I hope, be regarded merely as fair criticism and expressing no hostile spirit whatever. Of course this is a new departure, and I take it that in order to effect the object we have in view, the duty of hon. members should be to

make what suggestions they can; and although my view may not fall in with the Minister's on every occasion, I hope he will understand my only desire is to assist in the discussion. To begin with, I cannot exactly see the necessity for a separate Bill in dealing with this matter. I cannot see why we could not have made an amendment of the Goldfields Act, and consequently made applicable to the work of the nature contemplated by the Bill the whole of the machinery of the Goldfields Act. Practically this Bill will be outside the jurisdiction of the wardens, and in cases of dispute which may possibly arise, it is a question how these disputes will be settled. I take it on these points the Minister will be able to advise us when in Committee. There will have to be special machinery for working this Bill unless it is brought within the scope of the Goldfields Act.

**THE MINISTER OF MINES:** The leases have to be recommended by the warden.

**MR. LEAKE:** I notice that.

**THE MINISTER OF MINES:** You said the wardens had no jurisdiction.

**MR. LEAKE:** Not as to the administration of the Act generally. There will have to be a special set of regulations for these leases. I am only throwing this out by way of suggestion that these leases should be worked under the goldfields legislation. Clause 4 seems to contain the principal provision in the Bill; providing there shall be a lease for 21 years, with a rental of 1s. per acre of an area not exceeding 640 acres. I do not suppose anybody will dispute the fact that these leases must be worked, if at all, upon a very large scale; and it behoves us to consider whether an area of 640 acres is sufficient. I anticipate the Minister of Mines will say, "Well, if a person desires a larger area he can apply for more leases." But then comes the question as to whether there shall be any special conditions, labour or otherwise, beyond those contemplated by the Bill; and I notice that a special condition is that at least £3,000 shall be spent on a lease. The probability is, if a company start sluicing or dredging on these lakes, they will require very expensive and extensive machinery; and an expenditure of £3,000 condition is next to nothing under

the circumstances. I am not altogether in favour of a rent of 1s. per acre, inasmuch as the leaseholder will have to take great risk, and test his property before anything can be done, and we should place as few obstacles as possible in the way of people who propose to prospect this class of country. I take it that those lakes cannot be prospected without the expenditure of a large sum of money, and in order to protect the interests of the State we should not charge a nominal rent of 1s. per acre, but a royalty on the gold produced. By this means, both the leaseholder and the State participate in the possible profit, and the capitalist or the leaseholder is encouraged to spend his money without having any extra imposition put upon him.

**MR. VOSPER:** Would it not be difficult to charge a royalty?

**MR. LEAKE:** I do not see any difficulty under this Bill. I know the principle of a royalty cannot, for instance, be applied to the alluvial miner; but it can be applied to large areas and large companies, who must publish returns for the benefit of shareholders, thus giving the Government the same means of knowing the profits as the shareholders themselves; and companies must be honest, in their own protection, not because they like being honest, but because it suits them to be so under the circumstances of the moment.

**MR. VOSPER:** Companies could be compelled to publish the returns.

**MR. LEAKE:** No doubt companies could be compelled to publish returns. Practically, the whole thing is a speculation, and the great idea is that the country shall take part in the profits, if any, of the speculation.

**HON. H. W. VENN:** Why not apply the principle to all mining?

**MR. LEAKE:** I admit I am in favour of a royalty rather than rent; but the former principle has never been enforced, and the difficulty of collection has always been a great objection in its application to alluvial mining. There would be no difficulty in collecting a royalty from large mines, like the Lake View or the Boulder, and it does seem a monstrous absurdity that those mines should pay the State only £1 per annum, while they distribute hundreds of thousands of pounds in dividends each year.

MR. MONGER: What about the dividend tax?

MR. LEAKE: That is a mere drop in the bucket; though I admit that the dividend tax is a step in the right direction. Under the Bill, I am certain the leaseholder would be perfectly willing to submit to a royalty, knowing he would not have to pay anything unless his efforts met with success. We are not asking the unsuccessful man to pay, or asking a speculative price which the leaseholder would otherwise have to pay on land that might or might not turn out to be valueless. It is true the rent of 1s. per acre is small, but it is too big for land which is worthless, while not enough for land that is valuable; and, consequently, I advocate a royalty. When the Bill gets into Committee I shall propose an amendment in this direction, and shall be glad of the Minister's support; or if the Minister should see his way clear to propose the amendment, I shall have pleasure in supporting him. The other clauses of the Bill do not call for any comment at this stage, though they may lead to some little discussion in Committee. As I have said, hon. members will find Clause 4 embodies the whole principle of the Bill, and if we can agree on the terms to be inserted in that clause, I dare say we shall make a good Bill. But I ask the Minister of Mines to consider whether it is not in the best interests of his department, as well as in the interests of the public, that this Bill should be embodied in the Goldfields Act, so that in the administration of the principle, we may have the machinery at present available for gold-mining in general. I do not throw this out as an objection to the measure, but as a suggestion which we may discuss, and then determine what is best in the circumstances.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Central Murchison): The leader of the Opposition has expressed practically my own thoughts about this Bill, the second reading of which I have pleasure in supporting. On a former occasion when this question was discussed, I expressed the conviction that it ought to be part of the Goldfields Act, and I still think so, for reasons which have been better expressed by the leader of the Opposition. I am also strongly in favour of the suggestion the hon. member made in reference to making the pro-

posed dredging and sluicing a matter of royalty rather than one of rent, and the reasons given by him are sufficient. The area proposed is, in my opinion, altogether too small to make it possible to carry out the design and intention of the Bill; because 640 acres is only one mile by one mile, and we cannot expect people to erect the necessary plant for dredging and sluicing operations with only that extent in which to operate. That objection is answered, and so far properly answered, by the statement that the lessee may take up other areas alongside; but someone else may take up the areas adjoining that of the successful company, simply for speculative purposes, merely putting in a sufficient amount of machinery to justify their occupation, and then without the slightest intention of working their holding, blackmail the company. In every case, a company who propose to take up an area of this kind will do a good deal of exploring before they apply for a lease; and having satisfied themselves there is some prospect of getting gold, they will find it necessary to put up effective and expensive plant. We ought to encourage such companies to erect the most effective plant, because there may be gold which can be won by certain appliances, and not by others. The proper course would be to enlarge the area from 640 acres, or one mile by one mile, to 5,760 acres, or three miles by three miles, though I question whether even the latter area would be sufficient in many cases. If there be gold in a lake, whether that lake be large or small—though I am not speaking of very large lakes, but the ordinary kind of lake that we meet with—it practically means the area should be in the hands of one company. The system of dredging, I believe, is to cut a sort of channel through the lake, and there would be no end of difficulty if more than one company were in possession. Companies would, I understand, have to cut their canal, and float their machinery on dredges in order to carry on the work, moving the stuff over and over as they pass along. Though I do not know anything about dredging for gold other than I have been told, it seems to me we should give companies an opportunity of taking up a sufficient area to warrant their putting up the most expensive machinery required for the work; and I hope the

Minister will be prepared in Committee to consider an amendment of Clause 4 in this direction. If it be intended to carry out what I understand to be the character of the work, it probably means an expenditure of £40,000 or £50,000 for proper machinery; and companies will make themselves fairly certain by tests, before they go to such an expense, that there is gold to be won. Having satisfied themselves of the fact, they will put up machinery, just in proportion to the quantity of ground under their direct control; and I do not think any company would find it remunerative enough to erect the necessary machinery on 640 acres. There is always a danger, as I mentioned before, that in testing 640 acres, prospectors would make such discoveries, that the ground all round will be pegged out by others, and the company thereby prevented from extending their area in such a way as to make the work profitable. Either the ground is blocked and the gold not won, or the owners of the adjoining claims will blackmail the company. For these reasons I hope the Government will see their way to enlarge the area. Clause 6 seems to throw the whole authority and power of the working of the Bill almost entirely in the hands of the Minister; and to some extent that must be so, though Parliament ought to have a say on some points. This clause, for instance, gives power to the Minister to prescribe the procedure for the forfeiture of leases. We have to take humanity as it is, and humanity is not absolutely perfect as yet, though it is going in that direction, slowly I am sorry to say. In some future age, 200 years or 20 years hence, we may have another Minister of Mines who may not be as perfect as the present Minister, and under this clause it would be possible for a great deal of collusion and malpractice to go on; and if the whole question of forfeiture rests with the Minister under the Bill, it seems to me such a system will open a very wide door.

**THE MINISTER OF MINES:** At present, under the regulations it rests pretty well with the Minister.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** I am aware of that; but this Bill will practically bring it under the Act. At present, Parliament have some control over the matter, though not much. Of course

Parliament have a certain control over a Minister, as they can put him out of office; but even if they do put him out, the mischief is already done. I am, of course, speaking of ordinary Ministers. We can put them out, but we can never put out the Premier: he lives for ever. Ministers come and go, but the Premier remains; and it is possible that a junior Minister may be removed.

**MR. HIGHAM:** For insubordination?

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** For insubordination; and we have heard of such things in our time.

**MR. MITCHELL:** The Minister of Mines would not be guilty of insubordination.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** Too much power is given by Clause 6, which we shall have to consider in Committee. However, I congratulate the Government on the introduction of the Bill. I suppose we must also congratulate our new goldfields member (Mr. Locke) for having suggested the Bill by motion in this House. I hope the new goldfield recently discovered in the South will be as profitable as the Boulder and Kalgoorlie goldfields put together; and I hope its development will be as satisfactory to that hon. member as it will be to the country at large. I have great pleasure in supporting this Bill; but I think the suggestions made, especially as to royalty instead of rent, and also the suggested increase of areas, are two points which the Minister might fairly consider, and which he should be prepared to accept, when the Bill is in Committee.

**MR. VOSPER (North-East Coolgardie):** I also support the Bill, in pursuance of the support I gave to the motion of the member for Sussex (Mr. Locke). I must say, however, that I do not think it wise to limit the area to 640 acres. We have to deal with land which, in ordinary circumstances, there is no probability of anyone taking up and working; and under the Bill it is provided that machinery to the value of £3,000 must be put on a 640-acre block; and if a company deem it necessary to take up three or four such blocks, they will have to comply with the provisions of the Bill by putting £3,000 worth of machinery on each of those leases. A dredge worth £3,000 is capable of working, say, four

or five acres in the course of 21 years, and the dredge itself would be pretty well worked out in that time. As a matter of fact, the dredge, to be workable at all, will have to be some special form of dredge, which will probably take the form of a steam scoop, and will have to be run on a kind of rough railway.

**THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS:** No. I believe it is proposed to get water from somewhere to float the dredges.

**MR. VOSPER:** At all events, it will hardly be possible to float them, because most of the lakes are not very deep, and I should not think they would propose to dredge very deeply. However, it is very probable that the dredge, whether floated or not, will go out in a given straight line, and that a lead of gold will be found in the lake, as it is anywhere else, and will probably be found in narrow strips. This is what one would expect where there has been a great amount of denudation in the surrounding country, and where large floods have carried various materials into the lake. Thus it would take no time worth mentioning to dredge a square mile as proposed in this Bill, and we should therefore provide for a larger area. I have always been opposed to monopolies: I do not like large areas and large concessions; but this is a special case, which I think should be met by special treatment; and I do not think that to give a square mile in consideration of the erection of £23,000 worth of machinery is a sufficient inducement; for there are thousands of acres in these lakes which will not yield one pennyweight to the acre, though there are others that will doubtless yield very good results. However, it is a question of chance, and speculators, who will have to test the country at the risk of their capital, should therefore be allowed great latitude. I would call the attention of the Minister of Mines to one complication likely to arise out of this Bill, and which neither he nor other hon. members who have spoken have taken into consideration. The bottom of a lake is doubtless very similar in most respects to the country surrounding it. The same kind of rocks will be found there; and much the same geological phenomena must have occurred in the bottom of the lake as on the surface of the surrounding country; consequently we may expect that the rocks

under the lake will be fissured and seamed, and that reefs and lodes existing in the surrounding country will continue in their full strength underneath the lakes. If that be the case, and the holders of a dredging lease dredge into the alluvial on the top, and expose a gold-bearing reef, they cannot work the reef with the dredge, or under the conditions of the dredging lease; and the Goldfields Act says that if a reef be discovered, any person can go in and can take up a lease: consequently we may see the ordinary leaseholder going into a dredging lease, taking up a 24-acre lease under the Goldfields Act, and starting to sink for gold, thereby again establishing the dual title; and this contingency will put the small leaseholder in the same position as the alluvial digger now occupies.

**THE MINISTER OF MINES:** All land leased from the Crown is not "Crown land" under the Goldfields Act; therefore land leased.—

**MR. VOSPER:** But I think you will find the situation very difficult, because here you are granting a special lease under the terms of this Bill. At all events, it is a point well worth considering.

**THE MINISTER OF MINES:** The land leased for gold-mining purposes could not be entered upon as Crown land.

**MR. VOSPER:** This is a special lease for special purposes, and for the development of a special form of gold-mining. It is a dredging lease: all the gold must be obtained by dredging. If gold be found on the lease which cannot be obtained by dredging, is not the ordinary leaseholder entitled to go on that ground? And if he be not so entitled, is not that state of affairs equally injurious? Because, if gold be discovered by the dredging company in a form in which they are prohibited from working it, is there any reason why it should not be worked?

**THE MINISTER OF MINES:** We can alter the clause if necessary.

**MR. VOSPER:** The member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) reminds me that most of these lakes are situated in declared goldfields, which circumstance will add to the complication. Either we shall have a dual title with two contending sets of leaseholders—a state of affairs far worse than the present alluvial diffi-

culty—or else we are going to exclude the possibility of discovering reef gold. Which of the two evils are we going to choose? The position is worthy of the very best attention of the Minister and of this House, because we do not wish to have in the future any more difficulties similar to those we have had in the past.

MR. LOCKE (Sussex): I am much pleased to congratulate the Government on bringing forward this Bill in accordance with the suggestion I made in this House some little time ago, and I am further pleased with the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Leake) and other hon. members on his side of the House for having supported the measure. I hope we shall be able to make of it a good and workable Act, and I think that is about all that is expected. There are several alterations and suggestions I should like to make with regard to the Bill as it stands, and though this may not be the proper time, I shall at all events mention a few of them. We know that there are millions of acres of land suitable for "sluicing and dredging for gold," and I think that, as the Bill provides that a lessee shall not get more than 640 acres, the result will be very injurious. I know that the people who first suggested the idea to me decided there and then, when they heard of this limit, that it would not be advisable to go any further with their project; and, in fact, that the Bill would be altogether useless. I do not know whether I am rightly informed, but I believe that the lakes in this colony vary in depth from a few inches to about nine feet.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Put a "ten-foot drop" on.

MR. LOCKE: And a dredge is useless in the absence of water: one can dredge only where there is sufficient water or sufficient sluicing. In the absence of water, I do not know what would happen if the dredge got on one of those reefs of which the member for North-East Coolgardie has been speaking. The dredge would certainly be of no use.

MR. VOSPER: I suppose if the dredge struck a reef, she would sink.

MR. LOCKE: Therefore I hope the Minister will see his way to increase the area. I know it is possible to amalgamate several of these leases; but I think if investors were given the privilege of

dredging in 5,000-acre blocks, such blocks would be very small patches in comparison with the millions of such acres we have in this colony; and such a provision would induce people with capital to endeavour to open up an industry which has hitherto never been thought of or suggested in this country; and possibly this might lead to a great increase in the output of gold, if the industry were successful. If successful, the cost to the country would be nothing, because intending investors do not ask any more than that they shall be allowed to try this ground; and if it be found there is a sufficient quantity of alluvial matter and sufficient water, they will take up the land and go to work with sufficient machinery. With regard to the £3,000, I do not care if that be increased. It might well be considerably increased, from what I am informed; for I do not think £3,000 would be of any use on even a square mile of country. One could not build a dredge for £3,000, and if one put anything on such a lease, I presume it would be a dredge capable of doing the work; so I do not mind increasing the provisions of the Bill in that regard, so long as hon. members will give investors sufficient areas, so that the company or companies who start this industry may be able to take up enough country to admit of profitable working, and may see their way clear, if they do find gold and if their dredging be successful, to go on at all events for some years.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Say £3,000 per square mile.

MR. LOCKE: That would be all right, providing we were allowed to amalgamate a sufficient number of square miles. Moreover, I do not think these lakes are in the form of squares: from what I understand, they are very long, sometimes very narrow; therefore it would be necessary to take up a large area of country and a long strip of lake, in order to be able to work successfully. If the Government will increase the acreage, I do not think there is much else to find fault with in the Bill, and personally I do not care whether the payment be a royalty or a fixed rental.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: A royalty is best.

MR. LOCKE: Originally I suggested a royalty on the gold won: that was what I was asked to suggest. I believe there



is some difficulty in collecting rents and other payments; and as this is a new industry, and may possibly grow into something bigger eventually, I hope hon. members will not try to hamper it in any way, because I think it may be the means of bringing a lot of capital and many people to this country that would never come here otherwise. I again congratulate the Government on bringing the Bill forward, and am much obliged to those hon. members who have spoken in its favour; and I hope, when it goes into Committee, we shall be able to make it a good and useful measure.

MR. KINGSMILL (Pilbarra): I am glad to be able to give my general support to the Bill; but one or two little things in it might be somewhat altered with advantage. In the first place, I am getting rather tired of continually uttering a protest—as I recognise the futility of it—against the vitality of any Bill being embodied in the regulations. As I say, I am almost at my last gasp.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Do not die.

MR. KINGSMILL: Although it is not the rule in other countries, it seems to be an accepted fact in Western Australia that the regulations must contain absolutely the vital part of the Bill. However, I will not say any more on that point. As to the method of compensation, and the consideration to be paid to the Government for this land taking the form of rent or a royalty, whilst admitting that the contentions of the member for Albany (Mr. Leake) have a good deal of weight, I am not enamoured of the idea he has put forward, and I think there may be a way out of the difficulty which may prove acceptable to both parties. As members are aware, there is a certain probationary period allowed at present under the Goldfields Act between the application for a lease when the rent is paid as a deposit, and the first hearing by the warden. The period of probation in regard to northern goldfields mining leases amounts to 30 days.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Thirty days from the recommendation of the warden, under the Goldfields Act.

MR. KINGSMILL: I will try to make my point clear. I do not think the Minister quite grasps what I mean. I believe that the procedure at present with regard to taking up a gold-mining lease is that

the applicant shall peg out the ground and post his notice, which must remain 10 days. After 10 days he makes his application (which is received by the warden or his substitute), and has to deposit his rent. No further action is then taken. Within 30 days from date of application the warden hears the case. I think I am right so far. That is the period which I refer to as the probation period, and I think that for purposes of finding out whether the ground which persons propose to take up is payable or not, the requirements of the proposed lessees under this Bill would be met, if that probation period were extended to, say, either three or six months; and if the proposed lessees found that the ground pegged out was not likely to prove payable, then, as is the case in regard to a gold-mining lease at present, their rent, survey fee, and other charges should be returned to them. I do not propose to insist upon this point when the Bill is in Committee, but I merely put it forward as a suggestion to hon. members so that, if they have not thought of it, they may consider its value. There is another point, with regard to the provisions to take the place of the labour conditions on these leases, and I notice that the Minister has taken what is practically the system in vogue, and has been in vogue for some years past, in some of the United States of America, as a basis on which to construct the proposed legislation. I think it is the custom in the States for leaseholders from the Crown to covenant to spend so much money per annum upon their holdings, and the only fault I have to find with the clause of the Bill which deals with the subject is that the method in which this money has to be spent is rather too strictly specified. Although, as the Minister pointed out, not a great deal of labour will be involved in working these leases, I think it would be just as well if it were made possible for the proposed lessee to include the cost of all labour with the machinery which he has to employ upon his lease. I fancy that the gentleman to whom the member for Sussex (Mr. Locke) alluded as having suggested this new departure in mining will probably find that the conditions are not quite the same as in other colonies; therefore, the method of work in Western

Australia will have to be considerably modified, and I fancy that a good deal of the machinery will have to be erected outside high-water mark. Of course that is only my own opinion, but I think it very likely that the system of dredging which obtains in Victoria and New Zealand will not be applicable here. I am afraid the leaseholders would not have the depth of water to enable them to float their dredges. However, it is a matter upon which, no doubt, those gentlemen have made inquiries, and are more fully informed than I am myself. I only put that forward, too, as a suggestion in order that means may be thought of, if necessary, to provide for machinery areas upon the banks of lakes. With regard to these people, I notice with a good deal of satisfaction the point brought forward by the hon. member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper), and it would appear to me to be a very undesirable thing if we found the would-be reefing miners in Western Australia occupying the position which some little time back was held by the alluvial miners against them, and I think every consideration ought to be given by the Minister to the point which the hon. member has raised. As far as I am concerned, speaking as a layman putting forward legal opinions which are, I expect, absolutely without any weight whatever, my view is that the reefing leaseholder would not have a right of entry upon these leases, and therefore the granting of the leases should all the more be cautiously proceeded with.

**THE MINISTER OF MINES:** The country is all the same.

**MR. VOSPER:** There may be an out-crop in a lease.

**THE MINISTER OF MINES:** Some big pumping machinery will be wanted.

**MR. KINGSMILL:** Build coffer dams on the lake. If we limit the area of the reefing lease to 24 acres, I do not think we ought to make it possible, under conditions which may or may not be *bona fide*, to take up huge areas, which may hereafter be used for reefing purposes. I would remind the Minister that certain areas in Western Australia, and in my own district, have been used for purposes which I think were, at the time they were taken up, very far from the minds of the gentlemen who took them up, and I hope

this sort of thing will not recur in Western Australia. I have much pleasure in giving to the Bill the general support I have indicated.

**MR. GREGORY (North Coolgardie):** I am very pleased to see this Bill has been brought before us, and I hope it will prove a strong incentive to start a new industry in this colony. I agree with the leader of the Opposition in his remarks that this measure should be a Mines Act Amendment Bill, giving to the Minister the powers which he has under the Goldfields Act, and strengthening the powers more distinctly than this Bill provides. The powers given to the Minister in this Bill are either very great or very small. It is hard to decide by a casual glance whether the Minister has these powers or not. A question has arisen as to what area should be granted under these leases. I think the proposed area is rather small, but I strongly object to any power being given to the Minister for the purposes of amalgamation of these leases. The present alluvial difficulty on the fields is due to a great extent to this system of allowing concentration of labour on leases. Work has been done on certain areas and centralised on one spot, large areas being held to await development by other companies; and I think we should decide to-night what area should be granted as a dredging lease. It should be stated distinctly in the Bill how much land we shall give as a dredging lease, and only that amount should be given. If a person wishes to take up two areas, let him work both areas. The process is simple enough. The leaseholders have to provide a dredge, and the Minister asks that a sum of £3,000 shall be spent on an area within 12 months. I have no objection to 1,000 acres or even up to 2,000 acres, because I think it would be very wise for us to do all we can to assist in having this industry started; but we want it started on fair lines, and I see no reason whatever why we should give these great powers to the Minister, enabling him to allow a concentration of labour or the amalgamation of a large number of these areas, instead of stating distinctly to a person, "You can have a certain area, and you will have to work that area." I repeat that in my opinion the Minister ought not to have the power to allow

leases to be amalgamated. I think that when we get into Committee we will have it definitely stated that each area—and make the area large, giving every possible inducement to take up areas—shall be worked. I do not want to see one person taking up 10 or 12 blocks of 640 acres each, and then amalgamating them. We should not have the industry pushed forward with the same vigour as it would be if we said “Well, you can have 2,000 acres of this land, and when you get it you will have to do certain work on it.” I also agree with the proposal that we should charge a royalty. It would be a greater inducement, and I think it would pay the colony much better. It would be a better thing for the Minister. With companies, they have to provide short returns, and I think the royalty could easily be obtained. I hope the Minister will seriously consider the question, and, if possible, agree to my suggestion. In regard to gold-mining leases in the event of any reefs being discovered on these lake properties, to my mind it would be absolutely impossible for any person to come and take up a gold-mining lease on any land reserved in these lakes. The only way I can see would be for the lessee to abandon a certain portion of his area and be allowed to take it up as a gold-mining lease. The lease would be granted by the Minister.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: He could let it himself under tribute.

MR. GREGORY: No; because the Bill only gives power for sluicing and dredging. Sub-clause 2 of Clause 5 says:

That the lessee will not, without the permission in writing of the Minister, use the land demised for any other purpose than that of sluicing and dredging for gold.

It is not Crown land, and no person could come upon his leasehold and peg out a lease.

MR. VOSPER: A nice dilemma!

MR. GREGORY: The man who discovered the gold would be the lessee, and he would have to surrender a portion of his area, apply for a gold-mining lease, and comply with the conditions which apply to a gold-mining lease. This class of mining should be brought under the Goldfields Act, as the Minister will then

be able to insist on the work being carried out under conditions that obtain under the Goldfields Act. I hope the areas proposed will be enlarged.

MR. A. FORREST (West Kimberley): I would like to say a few words on this Bill. I am glad to find from the remarks of hon. members, that they do not wish to see this question surrounded by unnecessary impediments; for there are at least 20,000,000 acres of such land which have been traversed by many prospectors here and by people from other colonies, and in no instance has any one attempted to dig for alluvial gold on this kind of land, except on the edge of the lakes, where a few shafts have been sunk, and then the prospectors have been driven away by the influx of water. If we wish to get capital into this country for dredging purposes we must be liberal in our terms, because we are offering something which nobody here will take. If a man requires a large area of land, the rent alone will make him a bit frightened. A man will think twice, if he wants 10,000 acres, because the rent yearly will be £500, and he will have to spend some £50,000 before he can get a plant sufficient to carry on the work. Although it has been said that not much labour will be required for the work, I believe a lot of labour will be required. It will not be found that there is all drift sand in the lakes: there will be found clay and rock, and there will be great difficulty in dredging the lakes. I would like to see the Bill made as liberal as possible, and that people who take up the areas should have no rights on the mainland except a lease or a license for the purpose of erecting their plant, also that they should not be able to deal with quartz for crushing purposes. If a man is fortunate enough to have 5,000 acres, and comes across a quartz reef, he must be sharp and put in his pegs, and then employ the labour on the lease. The lessee of the 5,000 acres would not hold the land long if anyone found out there was a quartz reef on it when the lessee had not taken out a lease for working that quartz reef. This Bill will not give people the right to put down shafts for quartz-mining purposes. It is not my intention at any rate that we should give rights to people to put down shafts in the middle of a lake and timber them up.

MR. KINGSMILL: Suppose a man saw a quartz reef running into a lake, and pursued it by taking up a lease?

MR. A. FORREST: If anyone attempted to obtain quartz from a reef in a lake, he would require a large amount of money for pumping plant.

MR. KINGSMILL: I do not think so. There is a lot of surface water.

MR. A. FORREST: My experience of the lakes is that one cannot bale the water out for a long time: especially is that so in regard to the lakes in the Murchison district, where the lakes are not very wide, but have a certain amount of depth in them like a river. It is likely that persons who go in for this kind of gold-mining will in the first instance go to the Murchison district: they are not likely to go eastward to such a place as Lake Lefroy. Our object should be to make the Bill a liberal one, and not ask people to come here and expend a large amount of money to take something that no one else in the country is game enough to tackle. We should not limit the area to 640 acres, but we should do as the member for North Coolgardie (Mr. Gregory) suggests, not allow amalgamation, but grant an area not exceeding 5,000 acres. I am assured that no one will build a large dredging plant to dredge 640 acres. Unless we give a liberal area, the Bill will become a dead letter, and of no benefit to the country. We should try and attract people to take up these areas, because we know the people here will not attempt this work themselves. If I had all the money of the Rothschilds, I should not attempt to put a plant on a lake to dredge for gold.

HON. H. W. VENN (Wellington): From the discussion it is clear that we require more information on this subject than we have at present. We are legislating on a subject which we know nothing about; and when hon. members speak about being liberal and opening the door to induce capitalists to come here, we must remember that we have had a dose of this before. We have been boomed and boomed, and we are now on the eve of a sluicing boom. It is therefore necessary to be very careful as to this sluicing business, inasmuch as we know the lakes for the best part of the year are absolutely dry, and when we

speak of sluicing operations in connection with these lakes, we really refer to sand operations, except when a certain depth is reached, and then water is found at one time of the year. In New Zealand, sluicing operations have been carried out, but we cannot well be guided by the experience of that country, because the operations in this country will be very different. The operations here must take place in the interior of the country, and as far as I am able to judge, we have no similar circumstances to those which prevail in other countries in regard to dredging lakes for gold. Therefore it is necessary we should be very careful as to the areas to be granted or the terms given, to induce people in other parts of the world to be moved by boomers and speculators.

MR. A. FORREST: They made you, and made this country.

HON. H. W. VENN: The country has made itself. We cannot be too careful in this matter. A suggestion has been thrown out by the leader of the Opposition in regard to a royalty, and that suggestion is worthy of great consideration. This is an experiment in regard to mining operations in this country, and some people think it is an experiment well worth trying. Following up the argument of the member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest), who wanted to offer inducements for people to come here, I should think that hon. member would rather favour the levying of a royalty in preference to granting a license or a lease, because a lease or a license may be oppressive at first, whereas a royalty would be paid only if gold were obtained. As to sluicing as applied to the interior of this country, I think we should have more information from the experts who perhaps prompted the member (Mr. Locke) who moved in the first instance in regard to this matter. It would have been well if that hon. member had given us more information, and I was anxious to learn from him the probabilities of sluicing operations being carried on in this colony. Personally, I am at one with a great many members of the House in thinking that at this moment we know very little about sluicing for gold, therefore we should approach the subject with great care, and not land ourselves in

another boom that may be disastrous to the country.

MR. MONGER (York): I rise with great pleasure to support the second reading of the Bill, and I am more than astonished that a Bill like this should meet with the slightest opposition even from the member for Wellington (Hon. H. W. Venn). I am more than surprised, especially in view of the remarks that fell from the member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest), who told us—and I think his figures in connection with matters of this kind are always taken as practically correct—that we have in this territory of Western Australia 20,000,000 acres of salt-lake country; and if something can be produced from these 20,000,000 acres, one thirty-second portion of this vast territory, then the Legislature will be doing something for the advancement of the country. If we can utilise that thirty-second portion of this territory and make it productive in some way, it will be an advantage. It is admitted in all directions that at present this area is valueless. We look on it as a nightmare when anyone has to pass over one of these big salt lakes. Now a mild suggestion is brought forward, and the Government are asked to make some sort of liberal concession, especially in the first instance, to people who are willing to work these salt lakes. I have spoken with some of the gentlemen who are interested in being permitted to sluice for gold in the salt lakes, and I am told that in South Australia—and I do not think we shall be very far wrong in taking a precedent from that colony—the Government grant as much as 5,000 acres of salt lakes to persons or companies who will provide the plant for working them. If in South Australia, where I believe it is generally admitted the total area of their salt-lake country is not equal to or not in excess of what we have in Western Australia, the Government are willing to offer in the first instance large tracts of country to those who are willing to try and establish a new industry, it is also in the interests of Western Australia to grant similar privileges to capitalists prepared to divert a portion of their capital to Western Australia to work what we look upon today as absolutely useless and valueless country. When I first heard of this

motion being brought forward by the member for Sussex, and the way in which it was framed and worded, I thought the last person who would offer opposition to the Bill would be the member for Wellington (Hon. H. W. Venn), because this Bill gives the same privilege to people to go and sluice those big marshes, those fresh-water lakes which are supposed to be on the border of one of the greatest goldfields the world has ever seen, Donnybrook; and under this Bill the hon. member can take dredges down there and dredge those lakes for gold, if he likes. Yet the hon. member, who gets this concession for his own district, says he will not allow that to be done.

HON. H. W. VENN: I said the matter needed further inquiry.

MR. MONGER: The hon. member, in saying we ought to look further into the matter, adopted a sort of dog-in-the-manger attitude. These lakes cover very large areas, and yet sooner than give fair privileges to people who first come over and put down dredges to work the lakes, there are members who would keep the lakes in the same condition they have been in ever since Western Australia was Western Australia. Personally I would like to see some of the salt lakes tested, and a fair reward claim given by the Government for the first production of one thousand, five thousand, or ten thousand ounces of gold. Some sort of encouragement ought to be given to people to work these salt lakes, which today are looked upon as useless; and the suggestion of the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Leake), that a royalty should be charged instead of rent, is fair and reasonable. If all the suggestions which emanate from the noble mind of that hon. member were similarly good, nothing would give me greater pleasure than to support them. These lakes and barren marshes, if they are going to be as rich in gold as some members believe, will prove, by means of a royalty, a vast source of revenue to the colony; and I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill.

MR. WALLACE (Yalgoo): I do not intend to offer any opposition to the Bill. At the same time, I have a little diffidence in supporting it. Most members will agree that the Bill is not likely to be availed of to any great extent.

MR. MONGER: Why not?

MR. WALLACE: The richest discovery made on a lake in Western Australia was in the early days, on Lake Nannine at the Murchison, by prospector Bayley and his mates. This is an illustration of gold being discovered, but not in sufficient quantity to induce companies to sluice: and another instance is shown at Lake Austin, on the edge of which gold was found, and some sluicing took place, with results not sufficient to justify the prospectors going on with the enterprise.

MR. A. FORREST: The appliances were very primitive, then.

MR. WALLACE: But these primitive appliances are sufficient to prove whether the quantity of gold in the alluvial soil is enough to warrant expenditure on such machinery as will be necessary to work the areas contemplated under the Bill. The Bill only gives to lessees the right to work alluvial, and I say there is not sufficient depth of soil in the lakes to compensate a company with adequate capital to go in for this kind of enterprise; but if hon. members, assisted by the Minister with his experience of the different mining localities, can devise some scheme by which persons sinking for gold in the lakes, shall have a right to a larger area, and to obtain gold whether by dredging or sluicing or sinking, companies may be induced to take up these lake lands and prospect. The Orient property on Lake Austin, from which a mint of gold has been taken, is said to be still very valuable, and there it has been found impossible to sink the shaft, owing to the great inflow of water; but if this company were given a sufficient area, there is every reason to believe that enough gold is there to induce them to erect the necessary pumping plant. The reason I have a little difficulty in supporting the Bill is that I do not think it altogether wise to pass measures which, to a great extent, are unnecessary and superfluous. Greater privileges could be given to gold-seeking companies in prospecting these lakes, than by confining them to a small depth of from five to eight feet of alluvial soil. Even with areas of 1,000 acres, there would have to be a system of railways, in order to treat five to eight feet of soil with sluicing plant; and while working this area of swamp land, where would the

company conserve water? If the company have to sink for water, and while sinking, come upon a rich lode, are they to cease operations and go elsewhere? I make these remarks, not as an experienced miner, but merely as suggesting that the Bill will not be availed of to the extent enthusiastic members believe. In my opinion, more encouragement would be given to prospecting these lakes, if large areas were given to companies, and the right extended to work the ground to a depth.

MR. MITCHELL (Murchison): Undoubtedly this is a country of salt lakes, and I would like to ask members who are not in favour of giving large areas, what good are the lakes at the present time? They are not of the slightest good; and I fall in with the suggestion of the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Leake), that companies ought to be allowed to prospect and work them on payment of a royalty, because it would be hard if people who came here and spent much money in providing machinery should be asked to pay what in mining is termed a "dead rent." The proper plan is to make them pay according to what they make out of the speculation. It has been said that this leasing of lakes may lead to a boom. I do not know whether it will lead to a boom or not, but if it does, that is the people's own look-out, and seeing these salt lakes are now lying dormant, a boom which results in their being worked will do no injury to the colony's credit in any shape or form. I would rather give the salt lakes to people who would work them systematically, than see the areas remain valueless.

MR. MORAN (East Coolgardie): Like many other hon. members I support the second reading of the Bill, and I shall be very pleased when the first picnic is given on one of these powerful dredges floating over the dry sand of the salt lakes. It will be seen that I am sceptical about these dredges, which it is said are going to be floated inland on these lakes, because the idea appears to me ridiculous. These big areas could be utilised by other means than dredges, and there is no reason why they should not be prospected and worked, because if gold be found, the scoop system could be adopted, or centrifugal pumps might be used to draw water to the high ground. But surely

no hon. member expects to see a dredge floating about the salt lakes! Such a dredge would have to be a traction engine as well, and be taken overland. While there is no doubt gold will be found in those lakes, it will, on the whole, be poor, and exist in leads and take a lot of prospecting. At Lake Lefroy and near Lake Monger, gold has been found, and in dry seasons it is sometimes picked up on the surface; and the same may be said of the lakes at Bulong and Kurnalpi; indeed, wherever there are lakes, gold can be found, but the stuff is terribly difficult to work. It is all slime and slush, which cannot be dealt with in the ordinary manner, but has to be treated with a tremendous quantity of water and churned up; and we should not be niggardly in giving a decent area of country to people prepared to search for gold. The leader of the Opposition (Mr. Leake) has suggested a royalty, but even without a royalty it would pay the country if people could be found willing to invest a few thousand pounds in this work. Trenches could be cut through the lakes, where the average depth is not more than 10 feet; and when the country rock is reached, a dredge would be useless, and the stuff found would have to be got on to the high ground by scooping and travelling trucks. But what does it matter which plan is adopted, if gold be found? If a royalty be charged, it should be merely nominal, just to show authority. Whatever gold may be found on the lakes will be found with great difficulty; and while good patches no doubt may be discovered, they will not make up for the amount of dead work that will have to be done if the enterprise be carried out on a large scale. I say by all means let us be generous in the matter, and, if necessary, let us forego the consideration of rent or anything else in order to encourage people who (we are told, though I do not believe it) are going to spend £50,000 or £60,000 in machinery for working these lakes. With the hope of catching some of those people, I say, let us be generous and give them all possible facilities.

MR. OATS (Yilgarn): A short time ago, in the other colonies, I paid great attention to this subject. In New Zealand I found that sluicing had been carried on very successfully.

MR. MORAN: And dredging too.

MR. OATS: I mean dredging. In that colony there was the advantage of great rivers, and in one instance there dredging has been very profitable. In New South Wales, at the time of my inquiries, people had just begun to interest themselves in the matter; and in that colony the circumstances are the same as we have here, for the New South Wales lakes are numerous. In that colony I had conversations with the best men I could find, and they thought that in some instances success in dredging might be attained; but, generally speaking, I found that success was very problematical, that gold would probably be found to some extent, but that generally the operations conducted would be more in the way of discovering what was below the drift than in getting gold in the drift itself. In Victoria, too, these operations excite great interest. Dredges are being manufactured, and the enterprise ought to be successful, though I never heard a single individual say he believed it would be a success. However, they are trying in those other colonies to win gold from their lakes, and generally speaking there is more gold in the lakes of the other colonies than there is in our lakes.

MR. MORAN: And more fresh water, too.

MR. OATS: Yes. Nevertheless, we have a great country; we have a lot of gold; I see no reason why there should not be gold in our lakes; and therefore I should like to give every possible facility for people to invest their capital and to introduce machinery for experimental dredging, to see whether this lake gold exists. I shall support the Bill as it stands, though I quite agree with the member for Albany (Mr. Leake) that a small royalty should be imposed; but there can be no doubt as to the advisableness of encouraging capitalists to open up this lake country, and to find whatever gold may be there.

MR. MORAN: By charging a royalty, if a man strike a rich patch, then the colony gets the benefit of it.

MR. OATS: Of course.

THE MINISTER OF MINES (in reply): I wish the House would deal with all Bills in the way they have dealt with this one. Scarcely any hon. member who has expressed his views on this

measure has spoken for much longer than 10 minutes. I think the House has this evening set a good example, which I hope will be strictly followed in future. I should like to point out that it is not intended, I think, to treat those lakes by sluicing, but by dredging.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** The two must go together.

**THE MINISTER OF MINES:** But it is intended to raise this stuff by dredging; and I believe it is actually intended to float the dredges, and to get the water somehow. Some people who have examined the lakes believe there is sufficient water there; and I believe it is their intention to float the dredge, to raise stuff from the bottom into the dredge, to treat it on the dredge, to pass it through the tables, to throw it out on the side and leave it there, just as one would trench a garden or vineyard. That is the proposed method, I believe; but whether it will succeed or not is not for me to say. I am sure I am much obliged to hon. members for the advice they have given me with regard to the Bill. I am also obliged to the member for Albany (Mr. Leake) for the remarks he has been good enough to make, and I shall be pleased to take those suggestions into consideration. Hon. members seem generally to consider that a larger area than that named in the Bill is required: they all seem to think it would be better to lower the rent and to charge a royalty. Well, I am with hon. members so far, for I do not think it is the rent that we so much require in this colony. My idea of charging rent for the land is that it should be done chiefly by way of a guarantee of good faith. I do not want people to take up lands and pay nothing for them, and then to go hawking them round Australia, and other parts of the world, trying to get investors to put money into them. I want such lands, if possible, to be in the hands of principals—the people who have the money behind them; and if a man cannot pay £100 as rent for a property such as is contemplated by this Bill, all I can say is that such a man ought not to be granted a lease, for he is not a fit person to entrust with the working of such an enterprise.

**MR. MORAN:** Put that in your conditions.

**THE MINISTER OF MINES:** There are many people going about saying, "We should like to take this; we should like to have a concession for a time: let us off paying the rent until we can get the money." I prefer to see the moneyed people in the concern at the start; and for that reason I prefer to charge a rental of one shilling an acre as a guarantee, to some extent, that the lessees will pay. I have thought of the question of a royalty, but it seemed to me that there might be some difficulty in collecting it. However, royalties are not altogether novel in this colony's mining laws. In our Mineral Lands Act we provide that where gold is found in association with minerals taken from a mineral lease, a royalty shall be paid upon such gold; so that a royalty is not novel. I dare say we might manage to impose royalties, and I shall be very happy to give the question my consideration, and to see whether we can model the Bill on those lines when we go into Committee. In regard to the question of mining for lode material on those areas, I am prepared to give my advice, which I can guarantee is perfectly correct. The persons who take up those leases will have no right to do anything but dredge for gold. If they can get the gold out of the reefs underneath the water by dredging and sluicing, well and good.

**MR. MORAN:** You might give them a preferential right.

**THE MINISTER OF MINES:** Yet if they work the lodes in any other way, their leases will become liable to forfeiture. But, on the other hand, under our Goldfields Act no one will be able to take up any of those lodes, because the land will not be Crown land; and no one can get, under a miner's right or can take as a lease, land which is not Crown land; and this land will not be Crown land under the Goldfields Act, because it will be land held under lease for gold-mining purposes. All we can say is that as soon as a certain area of land is dredged, it will be of no further use to the lessee, and it will be abandoned; and I think it might be useful to make some provision to the effect that, as soon as the land is worked out, it shall become Crown land again, so that if any one desire the area for ordinary mining purposes, he can take it up under the Goldfields Act. On the other hand, if a dredging lessee found a



reef and desired to take up a gold-mining lease, he would have no difficulty in surrendering a portion of his dredging lease, thus making that portion Crown land once more, and then take it up as an ordinary gold-mining lease. I do not fear any of those difficulties; and all we want to do is to let people have the chance of investing their money in this way. Many of them are desirous of doing so, or rather they are not desirous of investing their own money, but that of somebody else. I hope they will find the investments profitable. I may say that I do not think the member for Pilbarra (Mr. Kingsmill) really regrets that we are going to provide in this Bill for doing so many things by regulation. That hon. member said it was peculiar to the mining laws of Western Australia that so much was provided for by regulation; and I am surprised that the hon. member, whom I know to be a man of inquiring mind, and one who reads extensively, should say that our gold-mining laws provide more largely for carrying out certain things by regulation than do any other mining laws in Australia. The mining laws throughout Australia and New Zealand provide for a great deal of machinery under regulation; and our mining law is in no way peculiar; in fact, I am perfectly safe in saying that there are many matters contained in the body of our Goldfields Act which are not contained in the mining Acts of the other colonies, but are there provided for by regulation. I think we can very well provide in this instance for the carrying out of much by regulation. I shall be pleased to consider the suggestions made by hon. members, and I hope that when in Committee we shall be able, with no greater acrimony than has been exhibited this evening, to turn this little Bill into a useful measure which will be of benefit to the country. I do not think it necessary to say more on this subject, but I am obliged to hon. members for the advice they have given, and for the suggestions they have thrown out.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

At 6:30, the SPEAKER left the Chair.

At 7:30, Chair resumed.

# LAND ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING (MOVED).

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. G. Throssell), in moving the second reading, said: In dealing with this short amending Bill, I would explain that the measure has become necessary even to amend omissions in the principal Act when dealing with the subject; notably Clause 2 of this Bill. When the principal Act was being framed, it was quite overlooked, in fixing the maximum of 20,000 acres for pastoral leases, that there were pastoral leases of much larger extent already in existence. Therefore the amending provision seeks to allow those larger leases to come under this Bill without being cut up. It was also overlooked that in the South-West Division, the rent of pastoral leases had always been £1 per 1,000 acres, while in the Act a hard-and-fast rule was fixed of 10s. per 1,000 acres. The amendment simply provides that a leaseholder shall be able to bring his leases under the new measure, notwithstanding that the area comprised therein exceeds 20,000 acres; and notwithstanding anything in the principal Act, the rent of pastoral leases within goldfields and mining districts in the South-Western Division shall be £1 per 1,000 acres, as it always has been. With regard to Clause 3, that is introduced simply for correcting an error. As to Clause 4, Section 116 of the principal Act mentions no time during which the holders of special timber licenses shall exercise their option of obtaining leases under the Land Act, and as the Crown Law Department think this may give rise to some trouble, it is considered advisable to add to the section as provided. In regard to Clause 5, provision is made in the principal Act for holders of timber leases to connect with existing railways, and Clause 5 of the Bill was considered necessary by the Railway Department in order to make the meaning of the Act clearer. Clause 6 provides for form of lease for timber areas only. The new Act left the form of lease to be dealt with under the regulations, but it was thought necessary to include it in this amendment of the Act. Clause 6 deals with that, and the lease will be found in the schedule duly prepared. Clause 7, which is probably the most important clause of the Bill, provides for the issuing

of gold-mining and mineral leases and other holdings under the Goldfields Act or Mineral Lands Act, over timber leases. When the Act was being framed it was little thought that we should have goldfields at such places as Donnybrook. Very large areas have been set aside there and have been, or will be shortly, advertised as a goldfield; and as the greater part of that area consists of timber lands, it has been thought necessary by the Mines Department that provision shall be made for granting gold-mining leases over this particular part of the country. I have much pleasure in moving the second reading of the Bill.

MR. WILSON (Canning): I move the adjournment of the debate, as I want time to look into those provisions which deal with timber leases.

Motion put and passed, and the debate adjourned.

#### FISHERIES BILL.

##### SECOND READING.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. G. Throssell), in moving the second reading, said: In dealing with this Fisheries Bill, I may inform hon. members that the measure appears to need little explanation from me. Members already know that in the past it has been very difficult to deal with this fishing industry, which is becoming very important indeed; and great abuses have existed in different parts of the country, notably at Mandurah and Bunbury, and more recently on the River Swan. Under the existing Act very few powers are left to us to make regulations. By the present Bill it is proposed to repeal the existing Act, and to make necessary regulations for the control of this important industry. Notably for the first time a system of licenses is proposed, not only for boat-owners, but for those who work in the boats, and I think I am right in saying that this system is in existence in the other colonies. Under the present Bill an annual license will be issued for each boat on payment of a fee of £1, or 10s. after the 30th of June, and every license will expire on 31st December. For every adult working a boat there will have to be a license of 10s. per annum, and for every youth a license of 5s. per annum. It is estimated that these fees will bring

in £200 or £250 a year. Every boat will be licensed and will have to be numbered. The number of the license will have to be fixed in large figures on the bow above the water-line, and on the mainsail (if any), and this will materially assist the inspectors in the execution of their duties. In the past one very great source of complaint has been the destruction of shell fish, notably crayfish, and in the interpretation of the present Act the word "fish" was not taken to include shellfish. One of the necessary alterations proposed is that "fish" comprises every description of fish, including shellfish. I do not know much about this fishing business.

MR. VOSPER: We are not "fish," anyhow.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS: I have taken the trouble to consult gentlemen, both inside and outside the House, and I am assured the Bill before us is a practical and useful measure. Of course everyone going about this city must have observed a large number of whiting and other small fish. The present Bill controls not only the size of mesh used in fishing, but also the length of the net itself. It is said that one of the abuses existing at present is that not only do those who fish use single nets, but they have double nets, one being underneath the other, and they drag them up, the consequence being a great destruction of fish. I will ask members to look carefully through this little Bill, and I have every reason to believe it will prove a very useful measure. We have a gentleman at the head of the fisheries branch who has had considerable experience in the North-West. Some time ago there was a gentleman here from New South Wales, who I think was the originator of the present Bill, and this measure has been brought up to date by Mr. Gale. If the Bill becomes law, many of the abuses we are troubled with will be swept away. I am assured by gentlemen opposite who know something about fishing, that this will be a useful measure and meet all the requirements of the colony. I do not think any further explanation is needed from me in regard to this simple Bill.

MR. KINGSMILL (Pilbarra): I have very much pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill, and I am

indeed glad the Government show signs that they are about to recognise the importance of the fishing industry. Hon. members know that a considerable amount of attention has been given and a considerable amount of legislation passed with regard to the other food supplying industries of the colony, such as the agricultural, fruit-growing, and pastoral industries; but hitherto the fishing industry, which I claim is not the least important branch of the food-producing industries of Western Australia, has been neglected. I hold that in the fish which inhabit the seas surrounding the coasts of Western Australia, this colony has an extremely valuable asset; and this I think is coming more into evidence when we consider, as I have been informed on reliable authority, that steps are being taken by persons and firms in the other colonies to export from our shores fish to the larger markets of Eastern Australia. It is therefore abundantly evident to members that the fishing industry is one that demands a large amount of protection and fostering. I take it that there are two ways of fostering this industry: the first will be by protection of our existing fish, and any hon. member who has taken the trouble to study the life history of fish must admit that from the ovum upwards the fish has a most undesirable existence. At one moment it is fleeing from the pursuit of the larger species of fish, and at other times it is being pursued by man. The existence of a fish is about as bad as the position of a Cabinet Minister at Estimates time. I would seriously ask hon. members, when these unfortunate fish have all these difficulties to overcome, why should we contribute to add one more terrible enemy to their existence. When fish have to escape all their natural enemies, why should we not legislate against those persons who wilfully destroy what will be a valuable food in a few years time in their mature condition? As the Commissioner of Crown Lands has remarked, the Bill is so plainly worded, and its provisions are so clear, that any remarks are scarcely needed in reference to the measure; but I have one or two words to say with regard to the future administration of the Bill. In the first place I would like to ask the gentlemen who occupy the front Treasury bench to

consider the position of their inspectors. A most arduous duty is placed on the inspectors: they practically have no hours in which to work, and their efforts to detect the wrong-doer are met with the utmost cunning. If the inspectors wish to stop the actions of people who are breaking the regulations, they have to forfeit their rest, and I ask hon. members to look through the Estimates and see how these inspectors are proposed to be paid. I mentioned the other evening that during last year the Chief Inspector of Fisheries, who is a man of undoubtedly wide experience in his special business, was remunerated by this Government with the most munificent salary. When his agreement was up, the office of Chief Inspector of Fisheries I believe was not abolished, or if it was abolished verbally it was not morally, and another gentleman was appointed to take the place of Chief Inspector. This gentleman, although perhaps he may not have a technical knowledge of fishing, is a capable officer and a man of great energy and zeal in the prosecution of his duties; and if hon. members look through the Estimates they will see that this Government, which prides itself on the rate of pay in the civil service, is proposing to remunerate this gentleman at the rate of £200 per annum, and the sub-inspectors from £150 a year downwards. As I was saying privately to the Minister of Lands, I do not think it is fair that the Government should expect anybody to be enthusiastic on a salary like that, and I say the Government manifestly neglect the importance of this industry when they devote so small an amount of money to pay the officials who have to see that the provisions of the Bill are carried out. When another Bill was before the House this evening I had to enter a protest against the regulations being the life of the Bill. That charge also lies against the Bill now before the House, but not in so large a degree. As the regulations will not be before hon. members when the Bill goes into Committee, I would like to make one or two suggestions with regard to them. In the first place, the Bill now before the House, although it defines the word "engine" in the interpretation clause, does not make any provision for the prohibition of "engines" in any of the waters of Western Australia. In fact

the only place where "engine" appears in the Bill is in the interpretation clause. I would like to ask the Minister to take into consideration the advisability of prohibiting the use of "engines," which hon. members will see means "any hedge, weir, net, device or contrivance of any kind for the purposes of catching fish or taking the spawn of fish." I think we should prohibit the use of these "engines" within the closed waters of Western Australia. Again, there is another suggestion I wish to make, which will operate I think for the benefit of those people who will be engaged in the fishing industry under the Bill, as much as for the benefit of officials. In addition to the schedule of weights of the various kinds of fish provided at the end of the Bill, the Government should take steps to ascertain the approximate length of each kind of fish in proportion to its weight. I would like to point out that all fish of the same species are practically of the same shape and build, and whereas it is not very easy for fishermen to estimate the weight of fish, it would be extremely easy to estimate the length, and if there were provisions as to the weight and length of fish, that would make evasions of the Bill less easy, and the size of the fish could be more readily taken note of by the inspectors. I would like to make a few remarks, if I am in order, about what I think is the second method of protecting or fostering the fishing industry in this colony. Although this does not enter into the subject matter of this Bill, but as the Minister of Lands has the control of the department, I might possibly crave the indulgence of the House to make a few remarks about it. The method I allude to is that of acclimatisation. We have in this colony, I believe, an Acclimatisation Society, which does its work, in so far as its scope goes, in a laudable and praiseworthy manner; but I would call the attention of the Government to the fact that this department, which I maintain is worthy of every support, only receives the sum of £250 a year to play with. Not much work can be done with that, and in view of my contention that this department can be made one of great importance to the colony, I would like to call the attention of members to what is done in other parts of the world as to the acclimatisation and cultivation of fish.

Hon. members no doubt have read of the cultivation of the mussel and the edible oyster, and I may tell the House that on the coast of France, in the town of Arcachon, in the South, people are making small fortunes by the cultivation of the edible oyster. I would like the Lands Department to be empowered by the Government of the colony to make experiments, or to grant money to the Acclimatisation Society, so that they can make experiments with regard to this branch of fish culture. Again, the United States of America offer a most valuable example to the rest of the world with regard to fish culture. I have had the pleasure of reading an article, to which my attention was drawn by the member for Albany (Mr. Leake), written by one of the foremost authorities in the world on this branch of fishing, Mr. Moreton Frewen, in which facts were stated which are worthy the consideration of hon. members. This gentleman points out one instance alone in which the Government of the United States had spent, in acclimatising two sorts of fish on the Pacific coast of America, 5,000 dollars, or £1,000, and the result from the spending of that money in five years now amounts to 192,000 dollars' worth of fish yearly. Is that not an example that might be followed by a country like Western Australia? Of course, I am perfectly aware of the reluctance of the Government to make any new departure; but, as I pointed out some little time ago, they now have an opportunity of making a departure which will not cost much money, and which, if carefully carried out, cannot result in anything but extreme good to the colony. Certain remarks have been made inside and outside the House, as to this Bill being the result of an agitation on the part of sportsmen. I can only speak for myself, and although I must plead guilty to the impeachment of being a votary of the gentle art of angling, and to always having taken an interest in the sport, the remarks I have addressed to the House are actuated by no other motive than a desire to see the Government take steps to foster an industry which may be justly reckoned amongst the most important Western Australia possesses. I have every pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill.

MR. VOSPER (North-East Coolgardie): I notice that in the Bill certain provisions are made for the inspection of fish, and for punishing persons who expose for sale fish below a certain size; and there might be some provision in the Bill whereby the protection of fish generally might with great advantage be facilitated. So long as inspectors have to go round to the various fish shops in Perth, Fremantle, and elsewhere, once or twice a day, a large number of inspectors must be required, or, if there be a small number, they must be arduously and continuously employed, if only because fish are scattered over a large area in small quantities. It is pretty well known in Perth that, in addition to a meat ring, there is also a fish ring, with the result that the price of fish is often kept up to an abnormal and unnecessary height. It is very difficult to find a remedy for this state of affairs, but one thing certainly could be done: the fish trade might be concentrated within reasonable limits, and so rendered more easy of inspection. The practice of fish dealers in Perth is to expose a stock of fish, and when the day's sales are over, to send the remainder to the Government Cool Stores, where it is kept over night; in short, fish is warmed by day and frozen by night, and may exist in that state of semi-putrefaction for a week or more, and then be sold for consumption. No one will assert that is good for the public health; and, moreover, this practice keeps up the price, because so long as the fishmongers are allowed to use the Cool Stores, they can regulate the market.

MR. A. FORREST: The fishmongers are all Greeks.

MR. VOSPER: Exactly; and they take advantage of every possible circumstance, and practically change the fish from being a perishable, into what is well-nigh an imperishable product. Another effect of this monopoly of the fish trade is seen at the auction sales after a catch comes in. There are a number of Greeks present, and may be some Europeans; and if the fish is sold to a European, the bidding is run up to a high price; but afterwards it is seen that sellers and Greek buyers are all in the same syndicate, and the fish is sold to the foreigner at a very much lower rate. The result is that the European finds himself under-

sold, and the monopoly of the fish trade remains in the hands of the Greeks. I have no objection to the Greeks as a nation or as a people, but they are not serving the public of Perth fairly in regard to the fish supply. The question is whether we cannot so arrange under this Bill, that all fish brought into towns like Perth and Fremantle shall pass through the corporation market, not necessarily for sale, but simply in order to provide a rendezvous for the inspection, the fish being either sold on the spot, or afterwards distributed at the fishmongers' establishments. The plan of first passing the fish through the market would make it simple and easy for the inspectors to do their work; because it could then be seen that only fish of a certain size and weight were exposed for sale, and there would be a better guarantee of freshness and wholesomeness. A regulation could be made that fish must be sold by public auction as soon as caught, and thus put an end to the present monopoly, and give to the people a good, healthy form of diet at a cheaper rate than now, while affording a means of revenue to the municipality in which the fish is sold. I commend these suggestions to the Minister, and trust that when the Bill is in Committee, he may see his way clear to doing something to break down the ring in the fish trade of Perth and Fremantle.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. F. H. Piessé): I can bear out in a great measure what has been said by the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) in connection with the cool storage of fish. No doubt there is what we may term a fish ring, who keep up prices by exhibiting small quantities in the different shops and leading people to believe there is a scarcity, while the dealers themselves draw the fish as required from the Cool Stores. My notice was directed to this matter some time ago, and the very suggestions made by the member for North-East Coolgardie were then made to me by a person who knows how the fish business is managed elsewhere. The suggestion then made was that all fish should pass through the markets, and thus afford a better means of supervision and of rejecting fish below the proper size, while placing a wholesome and necessary article of diet within the

reach of the people at a lower price. Efforts were made some time ago by some enterprising people to start fish-works on the river Murray, and they were successful in sending regular supplies to the city for some time; but immediately the fish monopolists heard of the daily consignments, they banded themselves together and, bringing in large supplies of fish from other places, over-stocked the market, with the result that the people on the Murray had to give way and leave the trade in the hands of the Greeks. I have not had an opportunity of mentioning this matter to my colleague, the Commissioner of Crown Lands, and I am glad the member for North-East Coolgardie has recalled it to my mind. There is every necessity for stringent measures in regard to the fish trade, with a view to breaking down the monopoly; and while there is no desire to act in too arbitrary a manner, fair means should be taken by legislation of the kind proposed, to bring about a better state of things. The cost of fish to the people of this colony is something enormous, compared with the price in the old days, when fish was caught in just as great quantities. The cause of all the trouble is the ring formed to monopolise the whole of the fish trade in Perth and Fremantle; but I anticipate some good will result from the discussion to-night. I hope steps will be taken to enable the people of Perth, the goldfields, and other parts of the colony, to obtain what is so desirable and necessary, namely a good, cheap fish supply.

**THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS** (in reply): I am much obliged for the remarks made by hon. members opposite on this question. As to the salary of the Chief Inspector, I am inclined to agree it is not as much as it ought to be, or one calculated to create much enthusiasm on the part of the man occupying the position; but I hope in due course to be able to remedy that defect. As to the Acclimatisation Society, I am glad to be able to inform members that something has been done in the introduction of fish, and though the quantity is not large, it is sufficient to give encouragement. Fish has been introduced in various pools and rivers in the colony, notably in the Avon Valley, where trout, eel, and perch have been successfully acclimatised, though, of

course, there have been a good many failures. In regard to the fishing industry itself, hon. members may be pleased to learn from a return I have had prepared, that at Fremantle there are 43 boats engaged in fishing, valued at £7,000, and employing 116 men; at Mandurah, 25 boats, employing 40 men; at Bunbury and the Vasse, 20 boats, employing 40 men; at Albany, 30 boats, employing 50 men; or a total of 118 boats, employing about 250 men. Under the Bill fishermen will be charged varying licenses of £1, 10s., and 5s. per year, so that there will be a little income to justify necessary expenditure in the future. I admit that, considering its importance, the matter of fisheries has not received the attention it merits, but I hope that under the new conditions, with a well-paid intelligent inspector, better things will be done. As to oysters, hon. members will be glad to learn we have not been neglectful. Oysters have been successfully produced at Albany and Mandurah, and I can speak for the Albany product, because we had sample bags sent up the other day from the Inspector, and they proved to be very good. I have no doubt this will prove a useful measure, and that the industry will in time be so controlled that abuses, which I am sorry to say exist, will be corrected. I have recently had serious complaints of fish having been caught in large quantities and thrown upon the beach to rot for the sake of being used as manure. This is an abominable state of things, when we remember the scarcity of fish in this city and in other places in the colony. I am sure, when the Bill passes into law, that in order to administer it properly and wisely we shall require an intelligent superintendent, and to assist him a steam-launch, or perhaps two launches, for the use of the inspectors controlling such large water areas; and I have a hope that my friend the Commissioner of Railways (Hon. F. H. Piessé) will be able to spare us one of his launches to be placed at the disposal of the Chief Inspector of Fisheries.

**THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS:** We will sell you one.

**THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS:** I hope the House will give me the wherewithal to indulge the inspector with a suitable launch; and possibly from time to time I shall be able to

extend an invitation to hon. members to go down the river to see the fish for themselves.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### PHARMACY AND POISONS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Consideration resumed from 24th October.

##### IN COMMITTEE.

New Clause :

Amendment had been moved by Mr. Ewing, to strike out Sub-clause (a), Sub-clause (b), and portion of Sub-clause (c) up to "aforesaid" in line 1, of following new clause proposed by Mr. James :

(1.) Any person may, upon a written application, obtain from the Council a certificate of registration if he—(a.) Has attained the age of 21 years ; and (b.) Has, for a period of one year at least immediately preceding the passing of this Act, been and still is the principal assistant and dispenser in the open shop of a registered pharmaceutical chemist in Western Australia, and during such period been engaged in dispensing the prescriptions of duly qualified medical practitioners ; and (c.) Is and for the period of one year aforesaid has been duly registered and entitled to practise as a chemist in an Australasian Colony where statutory provision is made for the qualification and registration of chemists.

2. No application under this section shall be received or be of any avail unless made within three months from the passing of this Act, and unless together with such application the applicant lodges with the Council a declaration in the Form A in the schedule hereto, accompanied by a certificate or certificates in the Form B in the schedule hereto.

MR. EWING : The object of the amendment was to allow persons duly qualified in other colonies to be admitted in this colony as pharmaceutical chemists ; and the member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest) had tabled another amendment, of which the first part was to the same effect, but the latter part contained a sting of which that hon. member was probably unaware. In this colony there were chemists with branch businesses in different towns, and a manager in charge of each ; and the hon. member's amendment provided that for a person coming from New South Wales with a proper diploma to be admitted, such person must, at the time of the passing of this Bill, be a manager or

chief assistant for some chemist in Western Australia ; so that chemists with shops on the goldfields would have their assistants and managers admitted, while an unfortunate qualified chemist holding a satisfactory diploma, but who might not be at that time in a shop and who might not have the means of starting a business, would be shut out. If a New South Wales certificate or diploma were sufficient, then whether a man held it or not when this Bill passed was immaterial, the object of the Bill being to admit duly qualified persons. His (Mr. Ewing's) amendment had this object, and provided that none should be admitted unless holding a certificate of one of the Australasian colonies in which there was statutory provision regulating the registration of chemists. There would thus be no danger of unqualified persons being admitted here from those colonies, save that danger which already existed in respect of the chemists who were practising in Western Australia at the time of the passing of this colony's original Act. In New South Wales, Victoria, and New Zealand, the Pharmaceutical Acts were of comparatively recent date, and when passed, all chemists then practising had to be admitted, though since that date admission was solely by examination. The same thing happened here under our original Act, and many local chemists who now objected to New South Wales' chemists as not having passed examinations were themselves open to the same objection. Parliament should not draw distinctions between those various qualifications. If a chemist were licensed under any Australasian Pharmacy Act, he should be entitled to admission. There was no question of admitting persons with qualifications inferior to those locally required. It would be very unfair to pass the proposed amendment of the member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest), providing that a fully qualified man, merely because he was unable to get a position in a chemist's shop at the time of the passing of the Bill, should not be admitted.

MR. SOLOMON : Was the New South Wales Act the same as ours ?

MR. EWING : Exactly the same.

MR. JAMES : But the hon. member wished to make it different.

MR. EWING: The Pharmacy Board under the local Act had framed regulations to exclude practitioners from the other colonies.

MR. JAMES: The same was done in New South Wales.

MR. EWING: If the hon. member had the New South Wales regulations with him, he (Mr. Ewing) would be surprised to learn that the board in that colony had overridden the spirit of their Act, as had been done by the board in Perth.

MR. JAMES: Rubbish!

MR. EWING: It was absolutely true. Besides, if wrong had been done in New South Wales, why should it be done here? Hon. members were legislating in the interests, not of chemists, but of the public; we were providing that only duly qualified persons be admitted, and also that it should not be possible for chemists now practising in this colony to form a ring to the exclusion of other qualified men. The amendment of the member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest) provided that an applicant for admission must not only be qualified, but must be a manager or assistant in a chemist's shop at the time of the passing of this Bill. That was evidently not the intention of the hon. member, who surely did not wish to build up a "ring," or to enable local chemists to "corner" all the pharmacy business in Western Australia.

MR. JAMES: *Prima facie*, there was no reason why we should depart from a rule which had been found to be necessary in New South Wales and the other colonies. The other colonies had the same legislation as that existing in Western Australia to-day. The member for the Swan (Mr. Ewing) was wrong in thinking that the pharmaceutical chemists desired to establish a ring. On the contrary, for some months they had been in communication with the pharmacy boards of the sister colonies with a view of procuring reciprocity. Only to-day he saw a letter from Queensland, in reply to one written some time ago, adopting these suggestions, and saying the matter had been referred on to New South Wales, that being the mother colony, with a view of seeing if some steps should not be taken to have reciprocity.

MR. EWING: If they wanted reciprocity why did they not admit into New

South Wales chemists from Western Australia?

MR. JAMES: There was no reciprocity as far as we were concerned, if the other colonies received all the benefits and none of the disadvantages. In New South Wales they kept close markets to themselves.

MR. EWING: That was not so.

MR. JAMES: The Act was the same there as here.

MR. EWING: The regulations were not, though.

MR. JAMES: The regulations were the same. They were the same in all the colonies except New Zealand, where a provision was inserted that any person holding an Australasian qualification was entitled to be admitted, if he had acted as manager or principal assistant in a chemist's shop. Even in New Zealand they did not admit men on the Australian qualification by itself, but required Australian qualification *plus* management or ownership of a chemist's shop. He proposed to withdraw his own amendment in favour of that of the member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest), and that amendment was far more liberal than the provision on the statute book of any other colony in Australia. In New South Wales an Act was passed in 1897 dealing with the question, and the great bulk of chemists in that colony were men who had not passed an examination, yet they were the men to whom by this suggested legislation we should be throwing open the door of admission to this colony.

MR. EWING: Three-fourths of the original Western Australian men were in the same position.

MR. JAMES: That was not correct. He pointed out last evening that out of 130, he thought, of those on the roll, about 40 or 50 had qualifications from the sister colonies or England.

MR. EWING: What he said was three-fourths of the original Western Australian men.

MR. JAMES: Supposing we admitted that, was that a reason why we should increase the number of those men who were not qualified? Were we to throw open the door to admit men who, the hon. member agreed, were not qualified?

MR. EWING: The assertion was not that they were not qualified, but they had



a different class of qualification—service instead of examination.

MR. JAMES: When an Act like that in existence was passed in the first instance, it was necessary to make a provision for the purpose of passing men who were in practice. In Western Australia no man from the sister colonies who had passed an examination had been refused admission, and anyone could see that the board was not so illiberal as had been suggested.

MR. A. FORREST: The amendment proposed by the member for the Swan (Mr. Ewing) would not be passed, he hoped, because the new clause moved by himself (Mr. A. Forrest) met the wishes of the whole of the persons concerned. He did not think that any person in the colony objected to it, and he was informed that any chemist qualified by examination who came here from any part of the world was admitted. Surely after this Act was passed we could not admit people who were not qualified? If two-thirds of those here were not qualified, surely we did not want to give to people who were not qualified an inducement to come to the colony. The time had arrived when no more chemists should be admitted unless they were qualified by proper examination, the same as members of other professions. In his opinion it was more important that a chemist should be qualified than any other man in the world.

MR. VOSPER: The amendment proposed by the member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest) more fully met his requirements than that proposed by the member for East Perth (Mr. James). There was one point, and that was whether the member for West Kimberley intended the amendment to apply to a manager and also a managing owner. He (Mr. Vosper) was speaking of persons who had legal qualifications from the other colonies, and who so far had not been admitted by the board here. He thought the amendment should apply to a manager and also a managing owner.

MR. JAMES: It would be made clear that the amendment would apply to a managing owner.

MR. VOSPER: If that alteration were made, he would be prepared to accept the amendment of the member for West Kimberley.

MR. EWING: The amendment said :

Nothing in this Act contained or in the principal Act shall prevent any person carrying on the business or occupation of a pharmaceutical chemist in Western Australia, who, at the passing of this Act, is possessed of any qualification legally recognised in any of the Australasian colonies.

Up to that point the hon. member and himself agreed, but he (Mr. Ewing) did not agree to the following :

and is engaged as manager or assistant in the business of a pharmaceutical chemist or company registered in accordance with the provisions of the principal Act, keeping open a shop in the colony of Western Australia, and such manager or assistant being at the time of the passing of this Act engaged in the dispensing of prescriptions of legally qualified medical practitioners.

They would not let anyone holding a qualification in unless he was employed by one of the existing chemists.

MR. JAMES: Yes, they would. After examination one could be admitted by the existing rules.

MR. EWING: All he asked was that nothing in the Bill should prevent a person holding a certificate recognised in any of the Australasian colonies from being registered in Western Australia. All he wanted was that qualified persons from the other colonies should be admitted here without examination. He could find nothing in the New South Wales Act which pointed to the fact that there was not reciprocity; the New South Wales Act expressly provided for the admission of duly qualified chemists from other parts of the world.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: There was no reciprocity between any of the colonies, as far as he understood.

MR. EWING: The member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest) wished to protect, not the people of Western Australia, nor persons who had come here, but the men who were employed by chemists. Were we to admit men because they held certain qualifications, or were we to admit them because they were employed by chemists in Western Australia? The proposed new clause had been framed in the interests of the existing chemists, and not in the interests of the public.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The position was not by any means clear. He believed he was strictly correct in saying there was no reciprocity whatever

as to the admission of chemists, between one colony and another. There had been a movement on foot for two or three years to bring this about in the Eastern Colonies, but so far the agitation had not been successful. The object of the proposed new clause was really to extend the saving provision of the principal Act towards chemists, or those practising chemistry here, since the passing of the Act, and to limit it to those persons. The member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) had made an appeal on behalf of those chemists who had come here ignorant of the fact that they could not get admitted on presenting their certificates. Finding they could not, they were engaged in the capacity of assistants. Was it a prudent or reasonable step to take to admit these persons now? He (the Attorney General) thought they ought to be admitted, as these persons had remained in the colony a number of years, and had shown their *bona fides* by getting up an agitation to be admitted. As to the wider question of admitting indiscriminately chemists without qualification from the other colonies, until there was reciprocity with the other colonies these men should not be admitted here.

MR. SOLOMON (South Fremantle): There had been no reciprocity shown by the other colonies which were so anxious for us to federate. That did not show a spirit of federation. There were people who had resided in the colony some time, and were willing to undergo an examination; and we should allow those persons to enter the Pharmaceutical Society.

Amendment (Mr. Ewing's) put and negatived.

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

Clause, by leave, withdrawn.

New Clause:

MR. A. FORREST moved that the following be inserted, to stand as Clause 7:

Nothing in this Act contained or in the principal Act shall prevent any person carrying on the business or occupation of a pharmaceutical chemist in Western Australia, who is at the passing of this Act possessing any qualification legally recognised in any of the Australasian colonies, and who is engaged as manager, managing owner, or assistant in the business of a pharmaceutical chemist or company registered in accordance with the provisions of the principal Act, keeping open shop in the Colony of Western Australia, and such

manager, managing owner, or assistant being at the time of the passing of this Act engaged in the dispensing of prescriptions of legally qualified medical practitioners: Provided that such manager, managing owner, or assistant shall apply to be registered under the provisions of this Act within three months after the passing thereof; and if such manager, managing owner, or assistant shall not so apply he shall be excluded from the provisions of this section.

MR. EWING moved, as an amendment, that all words after "Australasian colonies" be struck out. This would leave intact the first portion of the new clause, which allowed the admission of pharmaceutical chemists in Western Australia owing to want of proper qualifications at the passing of the Act. Thus chemists here would be able to get admitted whether managers or not. It was unfair that because a man was here and not fortunate enough to get employment, he should therefore be excluded from the privileges of the Bill. If we were to admit qualified men from other colonies who were in this colony at the time of the passing of the enactment, we should strike out the latter portion of the proposed new clause which provided also that these persons should be in the employment of some chemist. It was unfair to draw a distinction between men who had been able to get employment in the colony and men who had not.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: This amendment was much wider than the hon. member intended. The effect would be to establish reciprocity with the other colonies, or it was an offer on our part to receive chemists from other colonies while there was no corresponding offer on the part of other colonies to receive chemists from this colony. It would be well for the hon. member to alter his amendment, and make it applicable to the case which had been illustrated. Because a chemist had not been able to obtain employment, he ought not to be debarred from being admitted.

MR. A. FORREST said he had no objection to amend the proposal in that direction.

MR. EWING: In striking out the words after "Australasian colonies," he wished to substitute "and is at the present time a resident in the colony of Western Australia." This would cover not only those in employment, but those who were

not in employment, but were in this colony.

MR. VOSPER: It would be more desirable to say "and have been resident in Western Australia for a period of six months prior to the passing of the Act." Then it would be understood they were *bona fide* residents, and had some claim on the colony.

MR. EWING: The man who came to this colony yesterday with the intention of taking up his residence here was just as much entitled to consideration as the man who had been here six months. Could a distinction be drawn between a man who had been here three months and a man who arrived yesterday, provided the latter arrived before the passing of the Act? Of course, if a man came after the passing of the Act, he came with full notice that he could not be admitted. As, however, hon. members seemed to think there ought to be some time limit, he would modify his amendment and make the words he proposed to insert read as follow:—"And has been resident in the colony for a period of three months immediately preceding the passing of the Act."

Amendment, as altered, put and passed.

MR. EWING further moved that in line 8 the words "manager or assistant" be struck out and "person" inserted in lieu thereof.

Put and passed.

MR. EWING further moved that in line 8 the word "three" be struck out and "six" inserted in lieu thereof.

Put and negatived.

MR. EWING further moved that in line 9 the words "such manager or assistant" be struck out, and "such person" inserted in lieu thereof.

Put and passed, and the new clause as amended agreed to.

First Schedule:

MR. VOSPER moved that the following be added to the list of poisons in the schedule: Cocaine and its preparations, *cannabis Indicus* (Indian hemp), and iodine. He said cocaine, for instance, had of late come into use pretty much in the same way as morphia, being taken internally or injected, and such use had developed into a very vicious habit. It was hard to understand why cocaine had been omitted from the schedule, because it was obviously a poison the sale of

which ought to be safeguarded. Indian hemp was used mostly among Asiatics as an intoxicant, but was becoming known and used amongst Europeans; while chlorodyne was a compound or mixture of which it was difficult to obtain any particulars. There were two well-known compounds of chlorodyne, Freeman's and Dr. Collis Browne's, which appeared perfectly safe to use; but chemists were able to make up certain substitutes from particulars published in nearly every work on pharmaceutical chemistry, and these were sold if the safer brands did not happen to be in stock.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Would the Bill restrict the dispensing of this article in the ordinary way in country districts?

MR. VOSPER: No. The object was to prevent the illicit dispensing of a compound called chlorodyne, by chemists who did not know the actual composition of the drug, and also the illicit dispensing of "soothing syrups" such as Mrs. Winslow's.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: And Mother Siegel's.

MR. VOSPER: Mother Siegel's was by no means a soothing syrup; but the other "soothing syrups" had for their bases opium or morphia, and eminent authorities attributed an enormous infant mortality to their use. No harm could be done by inserting such drugs in the second part of the schedule, so that they might be sold only under proper restrictions. He moved that the following be inserted in Part I. of the schedule: after the word "chloroform," insert "cocaine and its preparations;" after "cocaine," insert "*cannabis Indicus*;" after "essential oil of almonds," insert "iodine."

Amendment put and passed.

MR. VOSPER further moved that in Part 2 of the schedule: after "colocynth bulb," there be inserted "chlorodyne;" also after "red precipitate" insert "soothing syrups and soothing powders."

Amendments put and passed, and the schedule as amended agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

MOTION — DRAFT COMMONWEALTH BILL, JOINT COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS.

SEVENTH DAY OF DEBATE.

Debate resumed on motion by the Premier (5th October), for referring to,

electors the Bill as amended at the Conference of Premiers, and the Bill as amended in the Joint Committee's report.

MR. WILSON (Canning): In discussing the motion of the Premier in regard to the report of the Joint Select Committee, I do not propose to go through the details of the Commonwealth Bill, or to go very fully into the financial aspect of federation, because I have already on a former occasion gone pretty deeply into the manner in which federation will financially affect Western Australia, and it would only be wearying the House and wearying myself if I repeated the figures which I then put forward. But I should like to state that, in my opinion, no actuarial calculations can be taken as accurate in regard to the effects of federation upon Western Australia; and my reason for saying so is that we have no correct bases for such calculations. Under federation, the conditions of any State must be completely altered from what they are at present, and altered, I hope, decidedly for the better and not for the worse. In listening the other evening to the very able and learned speech of the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper), I could not help admiring the way in which he treated this subject, and the very lengthy details into which he entered. I may say the hon. member's deliverance was something remarkable, such a speech as we do not often listen to, and a speech which we can all appreciate. But I must express my disappointment at the impression I received at the conclusion of his address, the impression that the hon. member really expected we could get a perfect Constitution for the federated States of Australia. To my mind, it is absolutely impossible to get anything perfect in this world, and I do not think anyone can expect that we shall have a perfect Constitution. But I was also disappointed inasmuch as, after the hon. member had dealt so fully with all the provisions of the Bill, with the effects of federation in other parts of the world, and with what he presumed would be its effects on Western Australia, I found I could only conclude that the hon. member had turned round from his previous convictions, and was absolutely opposed to federation at any price. The impression I gathered from the hon. member's speech was that he believed the whole of

the labours of the various Federal Conventions held during the past eight or nine years, the whole of the labours of the ablest men we have in the Australasian colonies and of our leading politicians, had been absolutely thrown away; for the hon. member stated that the Bill was full of defects, and he wound up by saying we must be very careful indeed how we decided upon accepting it. I am prepared to admit that this Commonwealth Bill as decided upon by the different Federal Conventions, and ultimately by the meeting of Premiers in the early part of this year, is and must necessarily be to some extent defective; but what we should inquire into is, how far those defects will warrant us in rejecting the Bill; and while the Bill must of necessity be defective, yet we must inquire as to what extent is it defective; and, as I said, we must inquire whether the labours of the leading statesmen of Australia during the past eight or nine years have been of so little account and have been so defective as to warrant us in now rejecting a Bill which has already been accepted by five of the other colonies. I do not think, and I should be sorry to think, that so able a member of Parliament as the member for North-East Coolgardie, a man who has such a wide grasp of this and of all other subjects, should now feel it incumbent on him to oppose federation for Western Australia at any price. With regard to the Premier's remarks when proposing his motion, I shall be as brief as possible; and I think he stated that he had never declared himself, nor had any other Western Australian delegate at the Federal Conventions declared himself, in favour of federation. All I can say is, that if the Premier did not believe in federation for Western Australia when he attended those Conventions, he had, to my mind, no right to be there. I do not think any member had a right to attend those Conventions, to sit year after year discussing the terms of the Commonwealth, finally to agree to certain terms, and then to turn round and say he was opposed to federation for this colony. If the Premier did not believe in federation for Western Australia, and did not personally express his opinion in its favour at the Convention, I venture to say, I think without fear of contradic-

tion, that the right hon. gentleman expressed himself very strongly in favour of federation, and of federation in the terms of the Commonwealth Bill, at the public meeting he addressed last year in St. George's Hall. The Premier also went on to say that with regard to the results of the Premiers' Conference held in Melbourne in the early portion of this year, he was very much disappointed, and that it had taken a great deal to make him swallow the alterations which had been effected owing to the action of the Premier of New South Wales, Mr. Reid. But the Premier did swallow those alterations. After discussing the Bill and attending the meetings with the other Premiers, our Premier accepted the alterations; and whether he took some considerable time to make up his mind to those alterations or not is, I think, beside the question. He accepted the alterations, and I believe in all honesty that he returned to Western Australia with the full intention of carrying out the agreement which had been come to at that Conference, and with the intention of submitting this Bill, and this Bill only, to the people of Western Australia. That, I contend, is the meaning, and the only meaning, which can be attached to this clause in the agreement which bears his signature. As I said at the outset, the financial clauses of the Commonwealth Bill have already been fully discussed; we have gone into the details; some have advanced the theory that we shall lose, and lose heavily, if we join the Commonwealth; others, myself included, have protested strongly that the loss of this or any other State can only be that State's proportion of the upkeep of the Federal Parliament. But I think the time has gone by when we need enter into the details of the financial aspect of this question. I do not believe, and I think I am perfectly justified in expressing emphatically this opinion here to-night, that there is one man in Western Australia, even including my friend the member for Beverley (Mr. Harper), who believes in his heart of hearts that federation means ruin to Western Australia.

MR. HARPER: I believe it means very serious injury.

MR. WILSON: That is a comparative term, to some extent. Federation may mean serious injury to some few callings

or industries, and perhaps I may remind the hon. member that no great movement, no national movement of this importance, can possibly be effected without injury to some of the individuals in the different States federated.

MR. HARPER: Without any good.

MR. WILSON: I wish to repeat that, in my opinion, whether we federate or do not federate, we have in Western Australia the natural resources of prosperity and success, and that nothing can remove those natural advantages from us. Whether we federate or stand out of federation, Western Australia will, I believe, be prosperous; but I honestly believe that we will advance much more quickly, and shall be much more prosperous, with federation than without it.

MR. HARPER: Tell us the grounds of your belief.

MR. HIGHAM: Prove it. Give some reasons.

MR. WILSON: I wish to refer to the report of the Select Committee which inquired into this Commonwealth Bill. Clause 10, which consists of the concluding remarks, is a very peculiar clause. It states that if the committee had been solely guided by the evidence of the witnesses examined, they would have been obliged to report that federation was undesirable for this colony at the present time.

MR. HIGHAM: Quite right.

MR. WILSON: I quite agree with that, and I think anyone reading the evidence of the witnesses who were called and who attended, must come to the conclusion that, if the committee had acted on the evidence of those witnesses, they should have recommended that Western Australia should stand out of federation. But what have they done? Instead of deciding upon the evidence which was placed before them, or which they called, they have decided upon their own ideas in connection with the matter. They are evidently afraid that if they reject, or recommend the people of this colony to reject federation altogether, they are going to miss something—something that they do not know themselves, and cannot define—which the other colonies under federation have already obtained. Therefore, not having the courage of their convictions, not saying at once to this House, "We recommend you to throw

out this Commonwealth Bill altogether, and not to submit it to the people," they say, "With certain alterations we recommend you to accept it." What is the meaning of that? The meaning of that is a continuance of the procrastinating policy pursued by those who do not want federation for Western Australia. The committee are not open and above-board: they are not brave enough to come forward and say to the people, "We will not have federation, and will not allow you to have it, because we do not believe in it," but they bring forward recommendations of this description, which are really of very little moment to the great question we are discussing, and by that means they hope to delay this momentous question for five or six years. I have no sympathy with this policy, this delay. My argument is that if federation would be good for Western Australia five years hence, it is good for Western Australia to-day, and I have not the slightest doubt that the result to Western Australia will be directly beneficial. Federation will result in increased population and increased prosperity to all of us.

MR. HARPER: Show us how.

MR. WILSON: One great point which was made in the report of the committee was that the Federal Government might be inclined to close down the Perth Mint, and do the minting in some of the mints of the other colonies, I presume. I do not think there is the slightest possibility of such a thing occurring. Apart from the fact that we shall have our own representatives in the Federal Parliament to protect the interests of Western Australia, there stands out the great principle that it is always well to have your industries as near the seat of supply and demand as possible; and will anyone say that the Federal Government would be so foolish as to close down the mint in the country producing the greatest quantity of gold, in order to carry it some thousands of miles to another country? I say, no. I do not think there is a man who can advance such a theory, or prove it by argument or debate. The thing is absurd. If any mints are closed down they will be the mints in the other colonies; and the mint in Western Australia, where the gold is produced, will be kept going. The same argument applies to any industry—I do

not care whether it is a flour mill, engineering works, or any other class of manufacture. Take milling, for instance. Our local millers—and I happen to be connected with one mill—will thrive better in the country where the wheat is produced than they can thrive here in the coastal districts, or any other part of the colony. The same argument applies to this question of minting the gold which is produced, and there is not the slightest fear. I am surprised that the committee should touch on such a trivial point as that. I agree with the member for Albany (Mr. Leake) in his statement that the amendments proposed by the committee are not of sufficient importance to risk delaying federation for the next five or six years, and I propose to very briefly deal with those amendments as they appear in the report. First of all we have the recommendation that we shall not federate unless we have the power to divide this colony into electorates. I think the reply to that was given in the Premier's own words when he was speaking the other evening. He then stated that if dividing the colony into several electorates were the only alteration required, he was not prepared to say he would make a demand; at any rate, not more than a request in regard to it. It was not for ever, but only until Parliament otherwise provided. I repeat that the Premier himself says this recommendation of the Select Committee is of so little moment that he would not even make a demand for the amendment; therefore I think we may safely dismiss that as being unworthy of the importance which members of the committee wish to place upon it. The second question is that of the transcontinental railway, and I am of opinion that all right-thinking people here must admit that there is something in the assurance we have received from South Australia. There is something in it also in the fact that South Australian interests must of necessity cause the people of that colony to favour the construction of this transcontinental railway.

MR. MORAN: They are individual assurances only. We have never had a public assurance.

MR. WILSON: Hon. members will have the right of placing their own arguments before the House, and I do

not wish to be led off the track. I am simply stating my opinion here with regard to these proposed amendments. I am trying to show from my standpoint that Western Australia should not be delayed from entering federation by trivial amendments, amendments in regard to which I am fully convinced we shall get all the satisfaction we require when we enter the Federal Parliament. I, for one, am prepared to accept the assurance we have received from the Premier of South Australia that South Australia will support the construction of this railway, and I am further prepared to accept that assurance because I believe it is absolutely in the interests of South Australia that this railway should be constructed.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: A good deal more in their interests than ours.

MR. WILSON: The transcontinental railway is sure to come. It is a natural law, and we cannot get away from it, that the most direct routes must be employed in the commerce of a country—I do not care whether it is by river, by sea, or by railway. That natural law will prevail in this instance, and the direct route of the transcontinental railway is from Fremantle to Adelaide. A great point has been made by many speakers that South Australia will immediately go in for constructing a transcontinental railway from Port Darwin. Of course it is very difficult to adduce arguments to show that the people of South Australia never will construct a railway from Port Darwin, or that the railway could not be constructed; but I do not think there is the slightest possibility of that railway being constructed for many, many years to come, and certainly not in competition with the railway between Western Australia and Adelaide. The trend of shipping from the old country, and from Europe, is all this way, is all towards Fremantle, the nearest port; and I can tell members it is no easy matter to divert the shipping trade into a fresh channel. To say you could divert the mail steamers which have been accustomed to come round the southern coast of this colony, up to Port Darwin, this colony being missed altogether, is an absurdity. The great importance of our goldfields alone must cause that shipping traffic to come

our way, and there cannot be the slightest doubt that it must bring the traffic to Fremantle. The travelling public, and the trade of our country, will insist upon it, and to my mind it will not be possible to divert that traffic to Port Darwin and thence by transcontinental railway to Adelaide. I think we may dismiss that argument from our minds altogether. The next recommendation of the committee, which I will deal with briefly, is No. 3, in connection with the sliding scale of duties. I stated, in speaking on this question before, that I saw some objections to the sliding reduction. I said then that reducing our customs tariff 20 per cent. per annum for five years meant disorganisation of trade and commerce each year, and it may cause loss and perhaps increased prices to the country. But rather than we should risk not joining the federal movement, I for one am prepared to see the customs tariff pretty well abolished as far as intercolonial trade is concerned, and I say this after carefully considering the matter. I do not see why we should let this question of the sliding scale interfere with our joining the Commonwealth. If we find the thing is absolutely unworkable, I am quite sure the Federal Parliament will assist us out of the difficulty and place it in a more workable and equitable position. I am quite prepared to leave that matter, as I have said, and accept the Bill as it stands rather than run the risk that we should not enter federation at the present time. I come now to recommendation number four, the last, which is in regard to the Inter-State Commission, and which, of course, is connected with amendment number three. The only thing I wish to point out in regard to this is that several members are rather under a misapprehension as to the effect of this Inter-State Commission. Some of them seem to think the Inter-State Commission can interfere with the rates on the railways, and make us assimilate our rates to the rates of other States. I do not think the Inter-State Commission can do that.

MR. HIGHAM: They can.

MR. WILSON: They can if we insist on carrying our goods in this colony at a cheaper rate than goods which are sent from other States, but they cannot make us reduce our rates to a rate which will

probably be unpayable in this colony in consequence of the difference in the volume of trade.

**THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS:** That is an admission in regard to coal.

**MR. WILSON:** Let us take coal: we would have to carry Newcastle coal, if the Inter-State Commission say so, at the same rate as we carry coal within the boundaries of our own State.

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL:** No differential rates.

**MR. WILSON:** No differential railway rates; but there is no necessity that we should carry Collie coal at the same rate as Newcastle coal is carried in New South Wales. It appears to me that those who are opposed to federation so strongly seem to overlook the fact that we shall have some representation in the Federal Parliament, and that moreover if we joined the Commonwealth as an original State, we shall take part in the framing of the tariff and in controlling the affairs of the Commonwealth. We shall have six senators in the Senate, and we shall have five representatives in the House of Representatives. Surely those members will be there to see the interests of the State of Western Australia are thoroughly conserved; surely they will see there is no injustice done to us. I cannot for one moment believe that if our representatives in the Federal Parliament put any matters affecting the welfare of Western Australia clearly before the Houses of Parliament they will not receive just and equitable consideration at the hands of members.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** The Houses will represent the whole of Australia, not one colony.

**MR. WILSON:** I do not care whether the representatives hail from Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, or from South Australia; I am sure the representatives will be friendly towards Western Australia. They are not going to try and crush Western Australia out of existence; the country which they admit has done such enormous good, and has been such a benefit to them during the past four or five years; the country from which they have derived enormous trade, as can be seen by reading the report of the Collector of Customs each year. These people are not going to crush Western Australia out of exist-

ence, a State from which they will still continue to derive enormous profitable trade. We ought to have some little faith in our own flesh and blood, whether they hail from this colony or from any other colony, and we should believe they will do nothing to injure us, because in injuring us they are bound to injure themselves. I believe strongly in the right of the people of Western Australia to decide this important question of federation, and to decide purely and simply on the Bill which the representatives approved of at the Federal Convention. I believe our people here should have the same rights as the people of the other colonies which I have already mentioned, and who have accepted the Bill, have had. And I take it that they should have the same right of dealing with the Bill as the people of New South Wales had, that is, that they should have the right to reject it and say that we will not have the Bill as drafted by the Convention. Put the Bill before the people of Western Australia; go to the people of Western Australia if you like, and tell them the Bill is no good for this country, and that they must reject it; then you can, if you like, negotiate for fresh terms; but that means to my mind putting off this important question of federation for five or six years. I for one am prepared to recommend the people of Western Australia to accept the Bill as drafted by the delegates at the Federal Convention.

**MR. MORAN:** Not the one altered by the Premiers?

**MR. WILSON:** The Bill which has been accepted by the other colonies I am prepared to recommend the people of Western Australia to accept.

**MR. MORAN:** That is quite a different matter altogether.

**MR. WILSON:** I am prepared to recommend the people to accept the Bill without the amendments, which I consider are calculated to mislead the people, and calculated to divert the people from the true issue. I have said before we cannot expect perfection in any Constitution. I do not care whether the hon. member for North-East Coolgardie himself were to frame that Constitution, hon. members would not consider it perfect when it was done; and no body of men can possibly hope that they can reach perfection in a work of this description.



But we have got a Bill which has as few objections, I venture to state, as any Bill that has ever been framed to the knowledge of the civilised world. I consider we should be doing a wrong and an injury to our country and ourselves if we do not recommend the people of Western Australia to accept the Bill as drafted at the Federal Convention, and (to suit my friend, the member for East Coolgardie, Mr. Moran) as amended at the Premiers' Conference. I object strongly to this constant attempt to balk the question, and I hope now we have the expressed opinion of at least 23,000 electors of Western Australia, that these people too shall have the right to vote on the Bill, if the House decide to send the Bill, and the Bill only, to the people without amendment. And with that object in view, I wish to move as an amendment to the motion of the Premier :

That the words "and the Commonwealth Bill as amended at the Conference of Premiers, with the amendments suggested by the Joint Select Committee of both Houses of Parliament" be struck out.

MR. GREGORY : I second the amendment.

MR. MITCHELL (Murchison) : I am not one of the talking members, yet I claim to have a word to say concerning this important question; not that I expect or even hope to be able to say one word that has not been said concerning federation, but I am always glad to have an opportunity of expressing my disapproval of federation, whether under the present Bill or any other Bill, because I candidly admit I am not a federalist; I never have been, and never shall be. I am a home ruler: I always have been, and always shall be, in my heart. I was among the few who first advocated responsible government for this colony, and after a long fight it was conceded to us. Now we have had a trial of nine years of responsible government, and I think it will be admitted by every hon. member that, from a prosperous and progressive point of view, the result has been a success. We are now asked to give up our right to control our own affairs, and I have never been able to understand that sentiment, unless it be that there are a certain class of people who are always fond of making changes, and to them everything new has a silver tail: they do not inquire

whether the tail has a sting hidden in it, but they will find the sting of federation when too late. By all means let the other colonies federate as much as they like, they can do so on more equal terms than this colony can ever hope to do. Let us stand by, as the member for West Perth (Mr. Wood) said the other night, and see how they get on first. Let us watch their little jealous quarrels, which they are bound to have amongst themselves. It will be better by far to do that, even if we have to pay a penalty for joining later on, than to rush headlong into something now which we know little or nothing about, but which may prove to be our total extinction politically, financially, and perhaps socially. During this long controversy I have been painfully surprised to see how little has been said by those people who pretend to be advocating federation. I cannot account for their silence in any other way than this, that they think, as I do, that the more light there is thrown on the subject, the darker federation will appear. They have never made any endeavour to educate the people to give an intelligent vote on the question, but have adopted a safer plan, and I rather admire their astuteness. They raised the cry of "the Bill to the people!" Yes; irrespective of consequences. There are scores in the colony who do not profess to be federalists, but who are just as much in favour of sending the Bill to the people as those who clamour so loudly for it. But these people want to know whether the community generally have taken such an interest in the Bill as to know what it means, and whether those who are clamouring so loudly are animated by any sinister motive. It is an open secret that those who so clamour, when they have been shouting so loudly, say, "We do not care so much about federation as we do about turning out the Forrest Ministry." If they are going to sacrifice our country and our independence for the sake of trying to turn out the Forrest Ministry or any other Ministry, then we should be very cautious before giving them the power to do so. I have heard many of those who say they are in favour of federation, though I do not know whether they are in favour of federation or not, say that we in this colony ought to trust those high and mighty

politicians in the east. I would be sorry to say I am prepared to trust these politicians, because it is our duty first to secure ourselves, and trust them afterwards. It has been insinuated that the Joint Select Committee was packed, and if there be truth in that, it does not say much for the honour and integrity of the members of either House of Parliament. To my mind this is the old old story "when you have a bad case abuse the other side." The Premier candidly admitted—though, perhaps, I should say the member for Bunbury, because he gave us to understand he was not speaking as Premier—he candidly admitted he was a federalist, and I was sorry to hear it, though all who heard or read his excellent speech will admit he made out a very poor case in favour of federation. He gave us a lot of information, but it all went to show how utterly we would stultify ourselves by federation. The member for Albany (Mr. Leake), speaking on the same occasion, referred to the trans-continental railway, and said that everybody was agreed on that point. If that be so, then there can be no harm in having an agreement or undertaking from South Australia, because, as I say, our first duty is to protect ourselves. The same hon. member later on, when referring to the amendments made in the Bill by the Joint Select Committee, asked the pertinent question, whether it was to be supposed the other colonies, with a population of four millions, would submit to another referendum and thereby jeopardise—I may not be using his exact words—and thereby jeopardise federation, for the sake of this colony with a population of 170,000 people. I do not know that we have asked the other colonies to consent to another referendum, or that it is intended to ask them; but if we had asked them, and they had acceded to the request, it would not, in my opinion, have been a breach of the spirit of what I look on as federation. I venture to go further and say I think that if there was another referendum in New South Wales and Queensland a fortnight hence, the result would be very different from that on the last occasion. Hon. members and others who say they are in favour of federation are afraid of any delay or any investigation, in case the people change their minds; and my belief is that the

longer the question is delayed, the fewer federalists we will have amongst us. I cannot proceed without making some reference to the excellent speech delivered by the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper), though I will not refer to anything he said, my object being to suggest the speech should be printed in pamphlet form and distributed throughout the length and breadth of the colony, when it would, I think, act as an eye-opener.

MR. GREGORY: What about the Premier's speech in St. George's Hall?

MR. MITCHELL: He is a federalist; perhaps not such a federalist as the hon. member, but still a federalist. The member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) also made an excellent speech from his point of view, but he ventured the extraordinary statement that, while it would be better for Western Australia to remain out of federation for ten years, we must join now, cost what it may. I believe those were his exact words.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: No; those were not my words.

MR. MITCHELL: Where the consistency or logic of that statement is, I have been unable to find.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I did not make the statement.

MR. MITCHELL: Then the hon. member was wrongly reported, and I did not hear properly what he said. I feel I am in somewhat of a dilemma, having said that I am not a federalist in any shape, because if I vote for the motion I shall be more or less confirming the principle of federation, and I do not see how I can do that. I am not speaking of the amendment, but of the original motion.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Vote against.

MR. MITCHELL: I will not tell the hon. member exactly what I intend to do: I have not made up my mind. I think the question can be summed up in the words: shall we continue to manage our own affairs, or shall we hand them over to a Government which may be situated 2,000 or 3,000 miles away, and a Government in which we shall be virtually non-existent. If we are precipitated and engulfed in federation, then it will be our duty to put our shoulders to the wheel, and make the best of a bad job.

On motion by MR. HIGHAM, debate adjourned until the next Wednesday.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10-10 o'clock until the next Monday evening.

### Legislative Assembly,

Monday, 30th October, 1899.

Paper presented—Statutory Declarations Amendment Bill, second reading, in Committee, reported—Cottesloe Lighting and Power (private) Bill, second reading, Committee (*pro forma*)—Motion: Railway Administration (Censure), debate resumed and adjourned—Municipal Institutions Bill, in Committee, Clause 344, progress—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 7-30 o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

#### PAPER PRESENTED.

By the COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Fremantle Cemetery Board, balance-sheet for year ended June, 1899.

Ordered to lie on the table.

#### STATUTORY DECLARATIONS AMENDMENT BILL.

##### SECOND READING.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. W. Pennefather) in moving the second reading, said: This Bill consists of one clause only, and its object is to give power to the Registrar of the Department of Mines to take statutory declarations. Such a proviso should have been inserted in the Act passed about 18 months ago, which this Bill seeks to amend; but unfortunately a mistake was made, and the title of this officer was omitted.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### IN COMMITTEE.

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

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

##### SECOND READING.

MR. JAMES (in charge of Bill): I beg to move the second reading of this Bill, which makes provision for the establishment of electric lighting works, for the manufacture of gas, and for the distribution of gas and electric light in the suburban districts of Cottesloe and Peppermint Grove. The local authorities of those districts have conferred with the Select Committee to which this Bill was referred after its first reading, and the amendments desired by those authorities appear in the Select Committee's report. If this second reading be adopted I propose, if the House will permit, to go into Committee *pro forma*, for the purpose of embodying those suggested amendments, and to pass the Bill through its Committee stage at a later period.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### IN COMMITTEE.

Amendments adopted *pro forma*.

Bill reported accordingly; report adopted, and the Bill to be reprinted with amendments.

#### MOTION—RAILWAY ADMINISTRATION.

Debate resumed from 25th October, on motion by Mr. Holmes:

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

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. F. H. Piesse): The reason I had, in moving the adjournment of the debate on the motion by the member for East Fremantle (Mr. Holmes), was that I had not been made acquainted with the details of the charges which the hon. member intended to make against the department. Had I only had some details given me of the serious charges which the hon. member intended to make, I could no doubt have replied to him that evening, instead of having to move the adjournment for the purpose of obtaining further information. I think the hon. member might have taken a course