

**Legislative Assembly,***Wednesday, 22nd November, 1899.*

Absence of the Speaker (temporary)—Question: Mr. Weiss, Arbitration Award—Mineral Lands Act Amendment Bill, first reading—Cottesloe Lighting and Power Bill (private), Legislative Council's Amendment—Supplementary Estimates, resumed, reported—Loan Bill, second reading, debate resumed, adjourned—Land Act Amendment Bill, in Committee, new clause, progress—Adjournment.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER** (in the absence of the Speaker, visiting Bridgetown) took the Chair at 4:30 o'clock, p.m.

**PRAYERS.**

**QUESTION—MR. WEISS, ARBITRATION AWARD.**

**MR. ILLINGWORTH**, for Mr. George, asked the Attorney General whether the award of the arbitrator in the case of F. Lyon Weiss against the Education Department had been taken up by the Government. If not, why?

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL** replied:—No. The department, being defendant in the action, is not called upon to take up the award.

**MINERAL LANDS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.**

Introduced by the **PREMIER**, for the Minister of Mines, and read a first time.

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

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S AMENDMENT.**

Amendment (one) by the Legislative Council, in the schedule, now considered.

**MR. JAMES** (in charge of the Bill) moved that the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported, and the report adopted.

**SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES.**

**IN COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY.**

Consideration resumed from previous sitting.

Vote, *Departmental Additions*, total £24,861 19s. 6d.:

**MR. A. FORREST** asked the Treasurer whether he intended to provide a sum of £300 for a water supply at Derby, as promised.

**THE PREMIER**: If the promise had been made, the Government would carry it out.

**MR. KINGSMILL**: Was the amount proposed in these estimates for the Fisheries Department the best that the Government could do? He had put the case pretty fully before the Committee on a previous occasion.

**THE PREMIER**: This was all that had been asked for by the department.

**MR. KINGSMILL**: Then he could only express his regret that more had not been done by the department.

**THE PREMIER**: There was an amount on the principal Estimates.

**MR. KINGSMILL**: Very little.

**MR. A. FORREST** asked whether the Government intended to make provision for the family of the late Conservator of Forests, Mr. Ednie Browne. The family were totally unprovided for, and it was usual to place a sum, say £250, on the Estimates for the family of a deceased public servant. The late Conservator had done good work in this country, and a sum of money should be provided for the family.

**THE PREMIER**: This case had not been brought under the notice of the Government so far as he could remember. The case was a very distressing one, and in these matters there seemed to be no regular rule. Officers of the public service not being contributors to any fund, and the Superannuation Act being limited to pensions to officers while alive only, there was no provision in any statute for those depending on an officer when the officer died. That was unsatisfactory, because unfortunately people found themselves suddenly cast from a sufficiency to absolute penury. That might be said in regard to everyone else who was not a public officer, and he hoped some means would be devised by which something could be done to obviate the difficulty to some extent. In the police force constables contributed to a benefit fund, and if a constable, up to the rank of sub-inspector, died, the widow received what the man would have been entitled to under the regulations; but there was no such provision in the civil service. There were other cases he knew of which required consideration, but he was not aware that the case of the late Conservator of Forests had been brought under

the notice of the Government. Many applications were made to the Government by widows of officers, and the rule the Government made was that in the case of officers who had died, and whose families were fairly well provided for, no recommendation was made to Parliament; but where the widow was left absolutely or almost penniless, the Government made a recommendation. He had a case in his mind at the present time, and he thought he should have moved in the matter but it had escaped his notice. If representations were made in the case of the late Conservator of Forests, he would be glad to look into the matter, but the Estimates could not be altered now.

**MR. A. FORREST:** They could be added to.

**THE PREMIER:** It was inconvenient to add to them. The Government might move a resolution with the Governor's approval, which would have the same effect; but those who were interested in this poor lady, or those acting for her, might place the matter fairly before the Government.

**MR. LOCKE:** This case deserved the consideration of the Government. The public had lost one of the ablest officers in the service, and one did not think the officer could be replaced in Australia. The late Mr. Ednie Browne had done good work in forwarding the interests of the timber trade of the colony. His family were now left without any provision, and he thought it was the duty of Parliament to grant a sum of money to the widow and family.

**MR. VOSPER** sympathised with what had been said by hon. members in regard to provision being made for the widow and family of the late Conservator of Forests. What he wished to call particular attention to was the item "Mary-Ann harbour, survey £200." This harbour was on the South-West coast, between Albany and Esperance, and there were no inhabitants near the proposed harbour, except a few persons on a pastoral station in the neighbourhood.

**THE PREMIER:** The amount was intended for the survey of Mary-Ann cove, which was the nearest means of access to the new goldfield at Phillips River. Provisions for the goldfield were landed at this cove or harbour.

**MR. VOSPER:** It was not a harbour at all.

**THE PREMIER:** It was called Mary-Ann cove, and there was shelter for shipping.

**MR. VOSPER:** Very little. As to calling it a "harbour," it was simply one tangle of rocks. He had been into this cove in the mail steamer "Herbert," and it took six hours to get in and out again. Breakers and rocks were visible on all sides. It required the utmost skill on the part of a navigator to get in, and still greater skill to get out again. He did not think there was any shelter there. Not far away was Bremer Bay, where there was a certain amount of shelter, and the £200 might be devoted to surveying this bay.

**THE PREMIER:** Bremer Bay was much further away.

**MR. VOSPER:** There was not much chance of making a harbour at Mary-Ann cove.

**THE PREMIER:** The rocks could be surveyed.

**MR. VOSPER:** It would want more than £200 to even catalogue the rocks, they were so numerous. If any attempt was made to develop a harbour in this part of the country, it should be done at Bremer Bay. The £200 to be spent on Mary-Ann cove would be sheer waste of money.

**THE PREMIER** said he had not visited Mary-Ann cove, but he knew it was a place where wool had been shipped for years, and it was the nearest place to the new discovery of gold in the Ravens-thorpe Ranges near the Phillips River. The prospects were good, and an offer had been made to survey the river, by a person who was competent to do the work, and it would not cost more than £200. The money would be well spent.

**MR. VOSPER:** It would cost more than that. Reefs ran out for 16 miles.

**THE PREMIER:** It would not be possible to map the rocks a long way off shore. The cove only would be surveyed.

**MR. SOLOMON:** Was no provision to be made for extending the railway at Fremantle from Owen's Anchorage to the Racecourse? This would be an extension in a direction which the railway must ultimately take, and the work was desirable at the present time.

**THE PREMIER:** A deputation waited on him recently, and he afterwards submitted the matter to the Railway Department without putting any obstacles in the way; but the General Manager reported that this extension would not pay at the present time, and that the work had better stand over. He (the Premier) hoped the time was not far distant when the railway could be extended in this direction, not only for accommodating those who used the Racecourse, but to assist those small landowners who were producers in that locality. The matter would not be lost sight of.

**MR. HIGHAM:** As to this small extension of railway not paying, only a mile in length, it would not cost more than £1,000 to construct, and would be a great encouragement to the race club, who would be put in a flourishing condition for carrying out improvements. Bunbury having a railway connecting with the racecourse there, why should not Fremantle also have railway connection with its racecourse? He objected to the dictum of the Railway Department in saying this extension would not pay.

**MR. VOSPER:** Referring again to the item of £200 for a survey of Mary-Ann cove, he urged the Government to take the opinion of navigators who used harbours along the South-West coast as to the practicability of making a harbour at this cove. This expenditure would be absolutely useless, for there were reefs running out 16 miles, and as thick as they could be. Breakers surrounded a ship on all sides in attempting to enter that place, and it would be impossible to make a harbour there that would be of use. If the Phillips River goldfield developed satisfactorily, the Government should endeavour to provide a harbour on that coast at some other point, say at Bremer Bay. By taking the opinion of ship-captains who knew the coast, the Government would discover that his contention was correct. The cost of a sufficient survey would be £2,000 at least, and the Government should inquire before entering on any expenditure at that place.

**MR. MORGANS:** The hon. member (Mr. Vosper) was mistaken in regard to this harbour.

**MR. VOSPER:** Having been there, he knew the place and was not mistaken.

**MR. MORGAN:** Yes; the hon. member was mistaken, for he (Mr. Morgans) had also been there, and knew that one of the steamers of the Adelaide Steamship Company went there recently to put off some men and material for the new goldfield. He had been informed by officers of the Adelaide Company, and by others who knew the coast, that it was only a question of putting buoys there to enable steamers to enter under ordinary circumstances nearly the whole year round. The steamers of the Adelaide Company intended to go in regularly, and something should be done to make the entrance safe. It would be an injustice to the new goldfield springing up in that locality, if the hon. member's views were indorsed. One buoy put there would be sufficient to enable steamers to enter safely in most conditions of weather.

**MR. VOSPER:** Four hundred buoys would be wanted there.

**MR. MORGANS:** No; one would be sufficient. Bremer Bay would not be convenient for the Phillips River goldfield; that bay was about 100 miles distant.

**MR. MORAN,** referring to item "Boulder School additions, £1,000," said the accommodation at Boulder was so much behind the requirements, that by the time this vote was expended the attendance of children would have increased so much that a further extension would be necessary. He would like to see £3,000 or £4,000 on the Estimates for a good school, instead of tinkering with this necessary work.

**THE PREMIER:** About £1,400 was on the Estimates-in-chief.

**MR. MORAN:** But the item on the Supplementary Estimates was to start a new school, whereas the other item was for additions to existing buildings.

**MR. SOLOMON:** An item had appeared in the old Estimates for £4,000 to be expended on a school at Fremantle, that sum appearing year after year for an infants' school at Fremantle. Only £1,500 appeared on the Estimates for this year in connection with this work. What did the Government intend to do?

**THE PREMIER:** The cost of the whole work was estimated at £4,000, and the amount put down on the Estimates to be expended during this year was £1,500,

this being as much as was expected to be required during the year.

**MR. SOLOMON:** The present school was inadequate, and he hoped something would be done this year to provide better accommodation.

**MR. HIGHAM:** Seven years ago the Fremantle municipality gave certain land to the Education Department for the erection of a school, and if the work was necessary then it was still more necessary now. There were two school-rooms in the present building, estimated to accommodate 125 children in each room. In the girls' school the attendance was 191 with 221 on the roll, and in the infants' school the attendance was 174 with a roll of 204. The congestion of these children had been so great that a portion of them had been removed, at great inconvenience, to the old Military Barracks. The time had arrived for a proper school to be built at once. He did not know why it was that Fremantle members were so complacent in these matters. [Interjections by several members.] This was an urgent work, and the whole of the building should be undertaken at once, instead of the small provision which the Government had made for this year. Children were being turned away from this school for want of accommodation, and the Government should build a complete school with ample accommodation.

**THE PREMIER:** The hon. member's wishes were being complied with. The work, when completed, would cost £4,000, and during this financial year £1,500 would be spent. If the building proceeded more quickly than was anticipated, the work would not be stopped. The contract was for the complete building.

**MR. HIGHAM:** If the whole of the work was to be undertaken he was satisfied.

**THE PREMIER:** Certainly, that was the intention.

**MR. WALLACE,** referring to item, "Forest ranger, Coolgardie," said the Government had previously announced their intention of striking out this item.

**THE PREMIER:** This was a new appointment. The office of ranger at Coolgardie had been abolished some time ago, but had been reinstated in deference to urgent representations. In that district were many licensed timber-cutters, and the reserve must be supervised

**MR. VOSPER:** A ranger was necessary. The services of the previous officer, Mr. White, had been most valuable, and the salary was money well spent.

**MR. MORAN:** A stricter supervision in the past would have prevented that total destruction of timber which made such districts a wilderness without a speck of verdure.

**MR. VOSPER,** referring to the item "Geological, field assistant," said this department possessed a museum, and there was also a geological collection at Perth Museum, which however was too crowded. Economy would result from combining the two collections. The same might be said of the museum of the department of agriculture.

**THE PREMIER:** The geological department's officers had work to do in their museum.

**MR. VOSPER:** Specimens, after being dealt with, could be forwarded to the public museum for exhibition.

**THE MINISTER OF MINES:** The museum of the Geological department was open to public inspection.

**MR. VOSPER:** The public did not know its whereabouts.

**THE MINISTER OF MINES:** Surely every mining man knew it was in the old Government school, St. George's Terrace. There was a big enough placard. All the exhibits from the Coolgardie Exhibition were now in that museum for public examination, and were much more conveniently situated than if placed in the Beaufort Street building. Besides, visitors to the collection had the advantage of the personal attendance of the Government Geologist. After this explanation, probably the hon. member would be satisfied. It would be a good thing to have the two collections together, but as the Geological department could not be attached to the Museum, it would be better to have the little collection attached to the department than have all the specimens in the public Museum.

**MR. VOSPER:** No doubt the collection of specimens in the public Museum was good, but there was no one there to attend to the public and point out the specimens to them. There were some thousands of specimens in the Perth Museum, some classified and some not, while for some there was not room. The

geological specimens might be removed to the Geological department, and the space now taken up by the geological specimens could be devoted to ethnological and botanical purposes. In the Perth Museum there was a large number of imitations of precious stones and sections which had been obtained from various parts of the world, that had to be purchased at great cost. If there were two places where specimens were exhibited both departments might be purchasing similar specimens. Now that the Geological department was located in the old school-house in St. George's Terrace it would be desirable to have the whole of the geological specimens at that place, and if there was not room enough in the present building a small wooden structure could be erected to accommodate the specimens.

**THE MINISTER OF MINES :** It was desirable for the department to have specimens at the Geological Department for classification purposes, and there was a geologist there who could give information to the public. If a person called at the Mines Department for information as to specimens, he was sent to the Geological Department.

**MR. LEAKE,** referring to item "Land Titles," said the Attorney General was getting some increases for this department. Was Mr. Sayer Commissioner of Titles as well as Secretary to the Law Department?

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL :** Mr. Sayer would not hold both positions.

**MR. LEAKE :** Mr. Sayer was not to get the dual position?

**THE PREMIER :** Not permanently.

**MR. MITCHELL,** referring to item "Medical," said that on the Estimates-in-chief there was an item of £150 for a medical officer for Northampton, but only £50 a year was spent. He had received a letter from Northampton saying that the late resident medical officer had stated that he had not been appointed for Northampton, and could not go there, and a man whose child was ill could not get a doctor to go to Northampton from Geraldton unless he paid 15 guineas. One would like to know what the position was in regard to the medical officer at Northampton.

**THE PREMIER :** There had been no change, so far as he knew.

**MR. MITCHELL :** Dr. Elliott was applied to a short time ago, and stated that he had not been instructed to go to Northampton, as there was some difficulty in regard to his travelling expenses. A place like Northampton should not be without a medical officer. Fifty pounds were paid last year.

**THE PREMIER :** The amount was paid to Dr. Elliott.

**MR. MITCHELL :** A larger sum ought to be placed on the Estimates to get a doctor for Northampton permanently.

**THE PREMIER :** This arrangement had existed for many years. The medical officer at Geraldton received £50 a year to visit Northampton, but it was not intended that the doctor should go there specially to see anyone who was ill. The doctor visited the locality periodically and people then visited him.

**MR. MITCHELL :** What good was that?

**THE PREMIER :** The doctor did not charge for going to Northampton. The present arrangement was not good, but it had been in existence for many years. It was not possible to get a medical officer to go to Northampton for the ordinary salary of £150 a year. Northampton was such a healthy place that there was not enough private practice there; but he would look into the matter and see if he could not make some better arrangement, or get some medical officer to reside at Northampton. It was a great disability to a town not to have a medical officer within easy reach, and it could not be expected that poor people could pay £20 for medical advice. The medical officer at Geraldton had a large practice and could not get away. One did not know whether the medical officer at Geraldton paid weekly or monthly visits to Northampton.

**MR. MITCHELL :** The medical officer went to Northampton when called upon; sometimes he was not called upon for two or three months together.

**THE PREMIER** said he would look into the matter and see if another arrangement could be entered into.

**MR. MITCHELL :** The £50 a year was paid to the medical officer, one thought, so that he should go to Northampton when called upon by people; but latterly it appeared the Government had made some different arrangement as to travelling expenses, which caused the

difficulty. If £200 a year was offered, a medical officer might be got to reside at Northampton.

MR. WALLACE : There were just as important places as Northampton without medical officers. There was an item on the Estimates-in-chief of £150 for a medical officer at Northampton.

THE PREMIER : Was that so ?

MR. MITCHELL : Year after year £150 had been voted, but only £50 of that amount had been spent.

THE PREMIER : A medical officer could not be obtained for the £150 ?

MR. MITCHELL : No.

MR. WALLACE : There was no objection to a medical officer residing at Northampton, but there were other places further away from medical assistance than Northampton without resident medical officers. The Premier having admitted that Northampton deserved a doctor, it would be only fair that Yalgoo also should be provided for in the same way.

THE PREMIER : An important place like Yalgoo had not a doctor !

MR. MITCHELL : Not long ago Yalgoo had a doctor, and the daily train from Geraldton was available for Yalgoo. In the case of Northampton he wanted something done, because it was too much to expect that a working man should be called on to pay £15 when having to send a long distance for a doctor to visit him, as occurred last week.

MR. VOSPER : It was hard to understand why Northampton should require a doctor, as it was supposed to be a disgustingly healthy place.

MR. SOLOMON, referring to item "Warders for Lunatic Asylum, Fremantle, (each) £5," protested against the small increase in salaries provided for these warders. Not an officer in the service received a less increase than £10 a year to his salary, and some of them £30 increase ; yet these warders at Fremantle, some of them having been there 30 years, were allotted a paltry £5 as addition to their salary. For years past there had been a promise that these men should have £5 a year added to their salary, but it had not been paid ; and now provision had been made in the Estimates, he expected to see £10 each at least allowed for these warders.

MR. WOOD : The Government must find a difficulty in providing a total of

£35 as increases for seven warders at £5 each ! Some of these men had been engaged in the work for 30 years, and this was all the consideration they were to get ! It was the most disgraceful item in the whole Estimates, and was beyond his comprehension, but he hoped that next year some more liberal provision would be made for these men.

THE PREMIER : After the discussion on this subject the other evening, he tried to do what he could for these warders, and suggested to the department that an increase of £10 a year should be made. He found, however, that to do this would upset the whole of the salaries in the prison department. The usual plan was to give to prison warders an increase of £5 a year ; and if that practice were departed from and an exception made in this case, there were objections made to it on behalf of the department. Therefore he had reluctantly to fall in with the usage, and to increase these salaries only £5 a year for each warder. He had pointed out to the department that these officers had to perform arduous and unpleasant duties, and were perhaps entitled to more consideration on that account ; but, in reply, he was informed that warders engaged in the prison preferred to get appointments at the asylum if they could, as they regarded the asylum as a better position to them. He did not want to make an innovation and cause dissatisfaction amongst the officers of the prison, although he must admit the increase seemed to be small.

MR. MOORHEAD, referring to item "District medical officer at Coolgardie, house £50," said that, without opposing this item, he would call attention to a state of facts already alluded to by the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran). This item called for explanation from the Premier, in view of the statement made by the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) in reference to medical attendance at hospitals and the medical system on the goldfields. An extraordinary state of affairs appeared to exist, and whether the same system was practised at Coolgardie as had been described in connection with Kalgoorlie, he did not know, but the sooner the system was done away with the better. By this system a medical officer appointed to a Government hospital, by some arrange-

ment with the Government, drew his salary and received grants of money from owners of mines, who deducted so much a week compulsorily from the earnings of their workmen. As to the practice at Kalgoorlie, he had introduced to the Colonial Secretary a deputation representing friendly societies, and the deputation stated that the medical officer at Coolgardie hospital had some arrangement with the Government by which out of his own pocket he paid the expenses of patients while in the hospital. If that were so, the practice might lead to abuse; and although he (Mr. Moorhead) did not accuse the doctor at Kalgoorlie of any abuse, yet if that doctor were superseded and a more grasping doctor took his place, the doctor's interest being that any patient admitted to the hospital should stop as short a time as possible, the consequence might be that patients would be turned out before they were cured. As a matter of fact, men had been turned out from hospitals on the goldfields before they were cured, and the tendency of the system he had described would be to bring about that result. One felt sure that it would be only necessary to call the Premier's attention to this matter in order to obtain a remedy against the evil. He (Mr. Moorhead), in making these statements, did not charge any particular medical officer on the goldfields with having either a grasping spirit or being inhumane; but what he was advocating was the principle which ought to govern the practice. Working miners were compelled to contribute 1s. and in some cases 1s. 6d. a week towards the medical fund, and this compulsion was in violation of the principles of an enactment (Truck Act) passed this session. A man might have been subscribing to this medical fund for years, and when he ceased his connection with the particular mine he would have no further claim on the fund. In several instances doctors on the goldfields were receiving huge endowments from the mines, and were "farming out" their practice to men of less experience and at a lower rate of pay. At Kalgoorlie, a man eminent in his profession was farming out to a doctor of less experience, if not less ability, the practice of attending on patients. The Colonial Secretary's attention had been called to this, and in several instances men who had received injuries

refused to go to these junior practitioners, preferring to go to some practitioner in whom they had more confidence. Thus they did not get value for their compulsory subscriptions towards the medical fund in connection with mines. This practice was against the principles of British justice and fair-play, the money deducted from the men being expended in such a manner that they had no voice in regard to it. Something like £3,000 a year was going to one doctor for medical attendance, and that doctor undertook to defray out of his own funds the cost of patients while in the hospital. This practice should not be allowed to continue. All persons would be willing to assist the friendly societies, and this system of compulsory contributions to the medical fund in connection with mines was operating detrimentally to these societies. Whether a miner belonged to a friendly society or not, he was compelled to pay this shilling a week to the medical fund of the mine, and thus had to subscribe to two institutions, though the friendly society's subscription gave him all the benefits conferred by the sick and accident fund of the mine, over which he had no control. In consequence, the membership of the friendly societies was falling off exceedingly. All must view these circumstances with some alarm, for ultimately they would produce a pauper population; and therefore friendly societies should be encouraged by the putting down of the present system of forced contributions in vogue on mines. No doubt the Premier, on considering the requests of the recent deputation, would recognise that to encourage this system was to deal a fatal blow at friendly and benefit societies. Would the Premier state in what circumstances or under what sort of contract the medical officers carried on the goldfields hospitals? In the Truck Act, which aimed at doing away with deductions from wages, a proviso forbidding such forced contributions had been omitted, apparently by inadvertence.

MR. VOSPER: The omission was no oversight, but had been insisted on.

MR. MOORHEAD said he regretted to hear it.

THE PREMIER: This point had never been brought before the House.

MR. VOSPER: No; that was true.

**MR. MOORHEAD:** With the assistance of the Colonial Secretary and the Government Actuary he (Mr. Moorhead) had drafted an amendment to the Friendly Societies Act, aiming at the abolition of this evil. Possibly the Premier could see his way to allow the Bill to be brought down this session.

**MR. VOSPER:** The same system obtained in the Coolgardie hospital as at Kalgoorlie, though not to the same extent, because at Coolgardie there were not so many mines or miners. He had been informed that a man who had suffered a severe fracture of the leg had been sent to a Government hospital under the auspices of a so-called benefit society on a mine; he was treated by the hospital doctor, in whom the patient and his friends had no great confidence; the friends tried to remove the man, both the hospital and the mine authorities objecting; and finally the man consented to remain. His leg was set, and he remained till in a state of convalescence. The doctor then said the leg had not set properly, and, after several inspections, decided that it must be amputated; and, despite the protest made, the leg was amputated. After this the patient's friends again interfered; but, in order to secure the man's withdrawal from the hospital, had to threaten legal proceedings. On having the leg examined by a competent surgeon, it was found that the bone had knitted and had been in a very satisfactory condition at the time the amputation took place. This circumstance, he believed, would be the subject of an action in the Supreme Court. This showed that perhaps not the most skilful men were employed in Government hospitals.

**THE PREMIER:** The Government were responsible for only two goldfields hospitals, Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie.

**MR. MORAN:** This circumstance occurred at the Coolgardie hospital.

**MR. VOSPER** said he had also been so informed. If this were true, hon. members should be careful in spending any further money on that particular medical officer. The story was mere hearsay, but it had been confirmed by other hon. members, and should form the subject of a departmental inquiry before further funds were voted, for

nothing could be more likely to undermine public confidence.

**MR. WALLACE:** Speaking of the Coolgardie hospital on the Estimates-in-chief, he had mentioned this case.

**THE PREMIER** said he had not heard the hon. member.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** The statement was clear enough.

**THE PREMIER** asked why he was not informed of these matters. Why did complaints go to private members? This was probably a cock-and-bull story.

**MR. WALLACE** said he had mentioned two cases; and it was the last-mentioned man who had refused to allow himself to be treated by the medical officer.

**THE PREMIER:** Which officer—the house surgeon?

**MR. WALLACE:** The story as he heard it exactly coincided with that of the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper). Patients should be allowed to select their own doctors, and more doctors should have the right of entry to the hospitals.

**MR. MORAN:** While on the Estimates-in-chief he had spoken on the same subject, concerning which, for something like 12 months, he had been in communication with the Colonial Secretary, and which he had brought under the Premier's notice over a year ago. Forced contributions were a great evil, and were bitterly resented by the Amalgamated Workers' Association, especially now when in places like Kalgoorlie, first-class medical attendance was obtainable, there being two large hospitals, the Government institution and the hospital of St. John of God, while there were many private practitioners. The system of compulsory contribution might have had some advantages in the early days, but was now unjustifiable. This was not the first occasion of a public scandal in respect of the Coolgardie hospital, and the matter deserved investigation; moreover the Kalgoorlie Government hospital was not altogether perfect. This compulsory contribution by miners of 1s. a week was a most legitimate grievance.

**THE PREMIER:** If it were not for those contributions the Government would get nothing towards hospital maintenance. Trade unions would not pay for hospitals.



**MR. MOORHEAD:** They said they were perfectly willing to give the 1s. a week to the hospitals direct; besides, most miners belonged to friendly societies.

**THE PREMIER:** Then they would not go to the hospitals at all?

**MR. MOORHEAD:** No.

**MR. MORAN:** If the Government wished to insist on everyone subscribing to hospitals, do not let that be done through mine managers, but do it by Act of Parliament. Impose a general tax. At present the contributions got into the hands of cliques. All must sympathise with a patient who, when in the Coolgardie hospital, had been refused permission to leave, if the story told to-night were true. The question of forced contributions, however, was a matter of greater importance, and should at once be settled.

**THE PREMIER** agreed with the last speaker. In the district of Kalgoorlie miners were now well able to look after themselves without compulsion. He had spoken to the member for North Murchison (Mr. Moorhead), and had read the hon. member's draft Bill, which was now under consideration, a little more information being required; but he fully agreed that if men contributed from their wages for any purpose, they should certainly have a voice in the expenditure of the money. In regard to the system in Kalgoorlie, it might have done well at one time, but it would not do to-day. The system was not good at all, as far as he understood it. Mine managers had some arrangement with a medical officer, by which they gave him so much to attend to the men in their employ when ill, and also to provide hospital accommodation when the men required it. Although he (the Premier) had not had the management of the medical department recently, he believed that when any of these men went into the Kalgoorlie hospital the medical officer had to pay the ordinary fee to the hospital so long as the patient was there. It was not a good arrangement, and he was glad to know that it had been brought to an end. There was another plan adopted in the hospitals, which he approved of a year or two ago, which had some more justification, perhaps; that was that the medical officer—he did not know whether it was in force

now—received a percentage of what the paying patients paid. When he (the Premier) approved of that system, the object was to give the medical officer an interest in collecting the amounts due when persons entered the hospital. It seemed to be unfair, in Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie, where every man, when sick or seriously ill, went into the hospital, that the medical officer should attend to them free. Therefore some portion of the amount received from these patients was paid to the medical officer. In Perth patients were attended in their own homes; but on the goldfields, no matter how rich a man might be, he went to the hospital if he was sick.

**MR. MORAN:** The wealthy class of people did not go to the public hospital, but to private hospitals.

**THE PREMIER:** If that was the case, it altered the argument, but it was not the case previously. Private hospitals had now been built, and things had changed. Everybody went to the public hospitals, in the beginning, because there was nowhere else to go. As to the house allowance for the district medical officer at Coolgardie, this had been pressed upon him. The district medical officer at Coolgardie received £250 a year, and the house physician there received £350: £250 seemed to be a small salary for a man charged with the management of the hospital.

**MR. KINGSMILL:** He was allowed private practice too.

**THE PREMIER:** That was so, whereas the house physician was not allowed private practice. A good deal of pressure had been brought to bear upon him (the Premier) to get this house allowance: £100 a year was suggested, but he knocked the amount down to £50, and he did not think it unreasonable to give £50 a year at Coolgardie for a house, as the medical officer only received £250. Most medical officers received house allowance, but there were exceptions. The Coolgardie private practice was not so good as the private practice in Kalgoorlie. There was not a large private practice for a district medical officer, and the position was not a very good one financially. He (the Premier) would promise the member for North Murchison (Mr. Moorhead) that he would deal with the matter he had mentioned; he hoped to introduce

a Bill to put a stop to amounts being deducted from miners' wages. He had thought that this was dealt with in the Truck Act, but there were exceptions in the last section which seemed to undo, to some extent, the intention of the Act, that all wages should be paid in full. That was clearly stated in one of the earlier clauses; whether the exceptions applied he was not prepared to say, but it was not intended that they should apply to cases of this sort.

MR. VOSPER: This was pointed out when the Truck Act was before the House.

THE PREMIER: If the hon. member had pointed this out clearly he would have been listened to. Perhaps the hon. member would point out in *Hansard* what he did say about this matter; but the hon. member talked at such great length that one got wearied. The Truck Act was intended to deal principally with timber stations, and there was a provision that if medicines were supplied to workmen the owners of stations could charge for the medicines; but it was not intended to go further than that. In New Zealand and England, where a similar Act was in force, it was never intended to apply to cases of weekly deductions being made from miners' wages.

MR. MOORHEAD: The repeal of one section of the Truck Act would meet the case.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Before the Truck Act came into existence, the evil existed.

MR. MOORHEAD: The Truck Act said that payment must be made in cash; and if a mine manager handed over to a miner 48s., less 1s. a week, that was not paying in cash. In Queensland, 1s. 6d. a week was deducted if a man had a wife, no matter where the wife lived.

THE PREMIER: The proposal of the member for North Murchison might meet the case. It might be advisable to strike out the words "in medicine or medical attendance."

MR. VOSPER: It was not in order for a member to quote from *Hansard* of this session, but he would like to draw the Premier's attention to page 843 of No. 4 of *Hansard* of this session, and the Premier would find that this matter was distinctly mentioned, and a direct question was put to the Government by himself on the point. He wished to show that he did not neglect his duty in this respect.

THE PREMIER: Was that on the exception clause?

MR. VOSPER: On the second reading of the Truck Bill. He simply desired to explain that he had not been guilty of neglecting his duty, and he did not want it to go forth to the public that he had done so.

Vote put and passed.

The Supplementary Estimates having been completed, the resolutions passed in Committee of Supply was reported.

At 6:30 the CHAIRMAN left the Chair.

At 7:30, Chair resumed.

# LOAN BILL, £750,000.

## SECOND READING—AMENDMENT.

Debate resumed from the previous day, on motion by the Premier for second reading.

MR. LEAKE (Albany): It is my intention to move, as an amendment to the motion,

That the Bill be read a second time this day six months.

In doing so, I am only carrying out the wishes of the Premier himself, who two years ago, when he propounded his then financial policy, was in favour of no further loans being raised until the existing authorisations were exhausted. That announcement was made with the approval of all hon. members at the time, and circumstances have not changed in such a way as to allow this House to interfere with that policy. From this side of the House arguments have always been against over-borrowing as well as against reckless expenditure; and, as the Premier now interjects that if they (the Government) had listened to me they would have been in a fine hole, I say that since the right hon. gentleman did not listen to me they are in a finer hole. We had a most alarming announcement from the financial head of the Government last night, to the effect that if we did not pass this Loan Bill the public works must stop. What does that mean?

THE PREMIER: Is that what I said?

MR. LEAKE: What the right hon. gentleman did say was that if this Loan Bill was not approved, we must stop the works in hand. That is an admission that his previous loan policy was sug-

gested and adopted without due regard for the conditions of the day, and without a proper estimate of the future. I have pointed out at an earlier stage of this session that we are liable, and if we include the present contemplated authorisation, which really amounts to £1,000,000 under this Bill, we shall be committed to raise a loan of not less than £6,000,000. Of that sum of £6,000,000 there will only be about one and a half millions available for what we may call current expenses. The whole of the balance, about four and a half millions, when raised will go to pay off our debts—the Treasury bills, the reappropriations, and the deficits. That is the position we are in to-day; and in fact without this new Loan Bill we have only a margin of about half a million with which to carry on this country. It is painful to reflect that we should have been led into such a financial position as this, at a time too when we are told the country was never so prosperous as it is to-day; nor was it ever so prosperous as it was last year or the year before, if we may accept the public utterances of the Treasurer in this Chamber. Perhaps, however, a better test of our prosperity, in preference to the assertions of the Treasurer, would be to ask the trading and commercial community generally what they think about our present position, and also to examine the condition of the securities which are held throughout the colony. And the trouble is that there must be a still further depression unless the public are convinced that some sound financial course is not only suggested but adopted by the Administration. The deduction which I drew from the remarks of the Treasurer last night was that the country was so prosperous that we need not trouble about paying our debts; that is about the paradoxical position in which we find ourselves. But I think we should improve our position if we could see our way to pay our debts; and unfortunately we cannot pay off these liabilities until we raise by way of loan this sum of four and a half millions. Yet on top of that this House is asked to commit itself to another million of money under this Loan Bill. It is true the schedule to the Bill only discloses the fact that £750,000 is asked for; but that £750,000 is asked in respect to certain public works, for a portion of which an

instalment only is to be raised. Coolgardie to Norseman railway, for instance, has allotted to it £60,000 out of an ultimate estimated cost of £290,000.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Yes; but you must take into consideration that we provide for the rails and fastenings, rolling-stock, etcetera, by another item.

MR. LEAKE: The Menzies to Malcolm railway has allotted to it as a first instalment £60,000 out of an ultimate cost of £165,000.

THE PREMIER: That is absolutely incorrect, as you would know if you studied the figures.

MR. LEAKE: I am reading from the schedule of a Bill intituled "An Act to authorise the raising of a sum of £750,000 by loan for the construction of certain public works, and other purposes"—a Bill which, I believe, was introduced by the Premier a short time ago.

THE PREMIER: Yes; but that is not the point.

MR. LEAKE: I will repeat what I said, because it seems to me that I do not make myself heard; perhaps I do not make myself understood; or perhaps I do not understand the language in which this Bill is couched. Perhaps I have got a wrong copy of the Bill; but my copy says this: "Coolgardie to Norseman, first instalment, construction £60,000; Menzies to Malcolm, first instalment, construction £60,000; Northam towards Goomalling, £20,000; Coolgardie to Bonnie Vale, construction £10,000." Of course I wish it to be distinctly understood that I do not vouch for the accuracy of the data of which I am making use: these are only Governmental reports; and I really must not be too severe on the Administration. Mind, I am only taking the figures from the reports before the House.

THE PREMIER: Why cannot you do without acting? Why can you not be serious on a serious question?

MR. LEAKE: The Premier need not take it seriously if he does not wish to do so. He need not regard his own reports as serious: I am not asking him to do that. All these reports, which are furnished by Mr. Muir—I think that is the gentleman's name, in the department of the Commissioner of Railways—may be one huge joke; but I have not

regarded them as such, I have thought they were serious; and Mr. Muir tells us that the Coolgardie to Bonnie Vale Railway, to which £10,000 is here allotted, is to cost £20,000.

**THE PREMIER:** There are rails and rolling-stock.

**MR. LEAKE:** Also that the Coolgardie to Norseman railway, for which the first instalment is £60,000, is to cost £290,000; that the Menzies to Malcolm line, for which £60,000 is required, will cost £165,000; that the Northam towards Goomalling line, for which £20,000 is required, will cost £52,000. It is evident the department wish to believe that other items are to help to swell those amounts. Quite possibly there may be a little more than that; and in rails and fastenings, railway workshops and rolling-stock, something may be added to these items. But the department are very careful not to let us know in what proportion those sums are to be added to the cost of construction; and indeed, if I understood the Premier when he was moving this Bill, it was necessary to get a vote for rolling-stock, not for the proposed new railways, but for the railways already in existence; and that, too, is apparent from the remarks of the Commissioner of Railways and the reports of his subordinate officers. The Minister the other evening gave us a long list of rolling-stock which had been indented for; and we know perfectly well that the department have no other means of paying for that rolling-stock, except out of a loan. I still say that before the works mentioned in the schedule to this Bill can be completed, we shall find ourselves forced to increase this present borrowing up to at least £1,000,000. That is the position.

**MR. MORAN:** Surely £1,000,000 will not do it.

**MR. LEAKE:** Well, I do not believe it will.

**MR. MORAN:** If you add the figures together you will see that it is a million and a half, taking these figures only.

**MR. LEAKE:** I am trying to be fair. I appreciate what the hon. member says, because he himself took a very proper and statesmanlike view of the situation the other evening in the debate on the Railway Estimates, when he then, as he admitted, made what was practically a

speech against this present Loan Bill. I am entirely in accord with what the hon. member said on that occasion. It is a curious circumstance—of course it may be another of the jokes we have heard referred to on the Government side, which are so frequently made by the Railway Department—it is a curious circumstance that in the schedule to this Bill before the House, information similar to that given to the House in the Loan Bill of 1896 is not forthcoming. We cannot dissect these items in the present Loan Bill, and we cannot tell how much of this intended vote for rolling-stock, rails, fastenings, etcetera, is meant for the new railways. If members will glance at the Loan Bill for 1896 they will see that instead of a lump sum being set opposite each proposed railway, like Norseman £60,000, Malcolm £60,000, Goomalling £20,000—we find in the schedule to that Bill no less than four columns which give us information. Referring to that schedule, take the item “Menzies railway”: £270,000 was the amount required, and it was thus made up, as appears from the Bill itself: Construction, £114,000; rails and fastenings, £92,000; rolling-stock, £50,000; departmental, £14,000. There we have information; and that, I submit to the House, was the proper way to have brought down this Bill. But there is no doubt that behind this is the intention not to apply all this money to the new railways, but to feed the existing lines, which up to the present moment, on the admission of the Commissioner of Railways, have been and are being starved, particularly with regard to rolling-stock.

**THE PREMIER:** That is provided for in other items.

**MR. LEAKE:** I say that there is an intention to feed the present railways, which have hitherto been starved; and it will be interesting to know why the system adopted in 1896 of giving full information has not been followed on this occasion. It is also interesting to notice another new departure: we are now asked to vote money by way of loan for works which have hitherto been constructed or commenced out of revenue—an entirely new departure. Over and over again we were told, and this when the revenue was booming, and the Premier and his colleagues had more money than

they could waste—we were told then that it was their intention to construct works as far as possible out of revenue. But those works which were started as revenue works have now been changed into loan works.

**THE PREMIER :** Some of them were so changed last session.

**MR. LEAKE :** Some of them?

**THE PREMIER :** Yes.

**MR. LEAKE :** There is a fresh start made this session. Loan moneys are applied to works—

**THE PREMIER :** What item is that?

**MR. LEAKE :** Oh! If I am doubted, I suppose I must give the particulars. I mentioned the railway, "Northam towards Goomalling," which is to cost £52,000. I will read what was said in October, 1897, and the extract is printed in *Hansard*, page 107. I mention this so that hon. members can see that I am not misquoting. I was then quoting the Premier's words from his Budget speech delivered in October, 1897, and this is what the Premier said in regard to the Goomalling railway :

With regard to these projected railways to Marrudong and Goomalling, I may say these lines have not yet been submitted to this House for approval, except as to the surveys; and the Government do not propose to make provision this year for proceeding with the construction of these two railways, but only for the surveys. I do not think it is reasonable, or within our financial arrangements, for us at the present time to undertake the construction of these works; and all along it has been intended that these two railways—certainly the one from Northam to Goomalling—should be constructed out of revenue. I am sorry I am not able to make any further promise to my friends in regard to these lines, as there is no room on the Estimates for the works.

Two years ago there was a declaration that this railway to Goomalling should be constructed out of revenue.

**THE PREMIER :** We did very well out of revenue.

**MR. LEAKE :** Of course we did very well out of revenue. That was the time when the hon. member had money to waste, but he has not got it now unless he can raise this loan. But why this sudden new departure for constructing works out of loan which he refused to construct out of loan two years ago, when we were in a sounder financial position than we are to-day? That is what I

cannot understand. About the same time the right hon. gentleman voiced these views :

In regard to the borrowing of money for new projects, and to the demands made upon the Consolidated Revenue Fund, hon. members must recognise every day, and as the people of this colony ought to recognise, and must recognise, that work which will not pay must, for the present, stand aside. Unless hon. members are prepared to say, in regard to new works, that they will be remunerative and will pay, such works must stand aside for the present.

**THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS :**  
"For the present."

**THE PREMIER :** How long ago was that?

**MR. LEAKE :** Here we have that happy phrase for which hon. members opposite are always ready. This is the only excuse for keeping up that damaging policy of excessive borrowing; and I am perfectly certain I do not voice the opinions only of members on this side, but also of members on the other side of the House. I have an opportunity of going about the country with my eyes and ears open, and of discussing public matters with members opposite; and, in their hearts, we know perfectly well they are opposed to this borrowing policy. I regret extremely that those who have the power should not exercise it by formally stating to the Administration that they will have no more of this; and if hon. members do that they can insure the withdrawal of the Bill and the prevention of further indebtedness on behalf of this already over-pledged country. This is not merely an isolated expression of opinion of the Treasurer, but in 1897, I think it was in the Governor's Speech then, we find him saying :

Taking into consideration the numerous public works already in progress, and the immense public expenditure that is going on, my Ministers are of opinion that it would be unwise just now to incur any large new obligations.

**THE PREMIER :** Two years ago, that was.

**MR. LEAKE :** Two years ago, when the country was in a more prosperous condition.

**THE PREMIER :** I do not think so.

**MR. LEAKE :** I do, and so does everybody who knows anything about the material welfare of the country. Before

this, in his famous Bunbury speech in March, 1897, the Premier said:

I have no intention at the present time of asking Parliament to increase the burden of the loan taxation. I think that we have enough. When we have spent what we have it will be time enough to review the condition of affairs of the colony, and see what population has come here. Certainly, until population increases to a large extent, I do not think I will be found advocating a further loan. Our future policy in regard to things will be exactly the same as in the past.

THE PREMIER: We were building a dozen railways at that time.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: And the money is not raised yet.

MR. LEAKE: There was a declaration as emphatic as anyone could make it that the Premier disapproved of further loan authorisations until the existing loan authorisations had been exhausted; these loan authorisations have not been exhausted, because we find the Premier has yet to raise, in one sum, four and a half millions of money to pay off Treasury bills and his real indebtedness.

MR. MORAN: That has to be borrowed yet.

MR. LEAKE: I can give details if hon. members want them. I am speaking of the time at the opening of Parliament. Considering the reappropriations of 1897-8, the deficit, the stores treated as cash, and the Treasury bills that have been issued, all of which will have to be repaid, as the Commissioner of Railways said, some day and somehow—

THE PREMIER: Stores have to be repaid, have they?

MR. LEAKE: They do not have to be repaid, but we know perfectly well we cannot realise on our stores, and it is one of those happy fictions in finance which are so attractive to those who administer our affairs, to treat railway rails as cash. I have treated of that matter *ad nauseam* before, and I do not now wish to repeat what I have said. Again in October, 1897, the Treasurer was found to say:

Some necessary work, such as hospitals and other like institutions, were not intended to pay; but railways and works of that character are on a different footing; and even if it can be shown that these works are likely to pay, it may not always be convenient, financially, that they should be commenced.

I do not suppose these remarks which I have read were meant for jokes, which seem to be appreciated by members

opposite. I do not find the Premier, as a rule, in a jocular mood. I regard these statements as serious utterances, and they fairly show what line of policy the Premier had sketched out for himself and his colleagues in this House. This was two years ago, and I say again the circumstances of this colony have not so altered as to justify a departure from that policy, yet we are asked to commit ourselves to an immediate loan of £750,000 which, in my opinion, for the reasons I have given, involves at least a million, and in the opinion of some hon. members, two millions.

MR. MORAN: £1,850,000. That is my estimate.

MR. LEAKE: I think the hon. member is right, but I have to be careful and allow a big margin when I speak. The great inducement which the Government had in introducing the big loan policy of 1896 and the Coolgardie water scheme was the assumption that population was advancing by enormous strides.

MR. KINGSMILL: Leaps and bounds.

MR. LEAKE: Hon. members might not think that expression original if I used it, therefore I avoid it. The reason for the loans at that time was that the population was estimated to be—within three years, which is the present date—250,000. That was said in this House as justification for the loan policy, but instead of that—

THE PREMIER: I said when it was all spent, when all the works were completed.

MR. LEAKE: The right hon. gentleman said nothing of the kind.

THE PREMIER: I absolutely did say so.

MR. LEAKE: Then the Premier did say it: anything for the sake of argument and peace and quietness. There is no doubt about this: the Premier based his estimate on the assumption that 250,000 people would be here, and the right hon. gentleman said, when it was all spent. When the Coolgardie water scheme was proposed in 1896, it was to be completed in three years, that is in 1899; and yet it has hardly been commenced to-day. That is the position.

THE PREMIER: You blocked it as much as you could.

MR. LEAKE: I would block it to-day, if I could. There is nothing I deplore more than the passing of that

scheme, which will be known as the Forrest-Hackett curse.

MR. A. FORREST: You offered to take it up yourself.

MR. LEAKE: So many thanks for the hon. gentleman's information.

THE PREMIER: To get two or three votes, you promised to take it on your back, but you did not get the votes.

MR. LEAKE: There is a difference in the estimate of population.

THE PREMIER: It is true, though.

MR. LEAKE: That is the way in which the hon. member justifies his estimate of the population. I am not responsible for these lines: I opposed them, if I remember rightly; I certainly opposed the Coolgardie water scheme. I am only trying to show what a magnificent financier the Treasurer of the colony is.

THE PREMIER: I want to show what sort of a man you are, politically.

MR. LEAKE: On what sound basis did the Premier make his calculation? That is what I am trying to show, and if I cannot convince hon. members, that is my misfortune. Time after time, taking the Budgets for the last several years, the right hon. gentleman has said, when population was increasing, that population was the basis of wealth and prosperity. In that I entirely agree with him, and the converse of the proposition holds good: if population is not increasing according to a reasonable ratio, we must be careful in our financial arrangements. There is no doubt about that, and had the right hon. gentleman's prediction about the population being in 1899 250,000 people come about, perhaps there would not have been the same objection. His predictions, made when the revenue is booming, are falsified when the revenue is falling—that is the position; and the only argument which I can see which was made fairly in support of this measure was to the effect that we must assist the goldfields and only build railways that will pay. On the question of paying railways, we know perfectly well that the Goomalling railway will not pay. There is no doubt about that. The published returns show that the only railway which is paying is the goldfields line and that portion of the Eastern line that is part and parcel of the goldfields railway system; all the other lines are

not paying; yet we are asked to add to these lines another non-paying line. In the face of those opinions which I have quoted, and the assertion of a night or two ago that we should only build railways that will pay, it is of interest to notice the intense desire and feeling of friendliness exhibited towards the goldfields on this question of the loan, which is disregarded when a question like federation crops up. I do not know exactly how the argument bore on the Loan Bill, but we were favoured with a dissertation about tailings and the method of extraction of gold; that is a matter I do not propose to deal with. To show that our loans are not favoured in such a manner as to justify a further authorisation, I shall quote from a published book, the *Australian Handbook* for 1899, which shows the prices at which the allotment of our loans was made, and I am taking only the 3 per cent. loans. In April, 1896, the allotment was made for £750,000 at £100 11s.: that was good, no one can deny, but from that time to the present, instead of maintaining the figures on allotment, there was a depreciation, for in January, 1897, £1,100,000 was put off at £98, as against £2 11s. more.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: That was the £1,100,000 in connection with the Great Southern line.

MR. LEAKE: But it is a fact. The next allotment was in May, 1897, of a million at £95, in January, 1898, a million at £96 4s.; a slight improvement there. In July of 1898 there was a loan at £94.

THE PREMIER: Are we singular in that respect?

MR. LEAKE: No; and I regret it. Is that any justification for the right hon. gentleman's financial policy of to-day?

THE PREMIER: Money was dearer; that was all.

MR. LEAKE: The right hon. gentleman has attempted to justify the introduction of the Loan Bill, and I am trying to convince the House that it is not justified, and I hope we will not increase our liabilities in the way suggested for the moment, but wait until we have exhausted our present loan authorisations and cleared off our ledger account in regard to loans. That is what I ask, and is it not reasonable?

MR. A. FORREST: Have a rest for three years.

MR. LEAKE: Since the allotment of £94, which I have mentioned, we find we have had to borrow another million at 5 per cent. That was the last, and 5 per cent. is the absolute minimum, and it will more likely turn out to be  $5\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. before we have done with it. That is the last million raised by the issue of Treasury bills.

THE PREMIER: Only temporarily.

MR. LEAKE: But it was 5 per cent. all the same, and it shows how the credit of this country is appreciated in London. You got 4 per cent. for a million pounds at 98.

THE PREMIER: There was a 5 per cent. bank rate in London at the time.

MR. LEAKE: I do not care.

THE PREMIER: I do, though.

MR. LEAKE: I regret it, and it shows that this country is not in a position to go into the money market.

THE PREMIER: It had nothing to do with the condition of this country.

MR. LEAKE: We cannot afford to borrow money from the Jews. That is my opinion. If the right hon. gentleman is of opinion that we should, I regret it. When they come to pay off the 4 per cent. Treasury bills they will find their loan will overlap the payment, and for a short period they will be pledged to the payment of a double interest; that is the payment of interest on Treasury bills, in addition to payment on the loan itself, which of course must be raised well within the currency of the Treasury bills.

THE PREMIER: We can renew, if we like.

MR. LEAKE: I trust these Treasury bills are not to be renewed, at 5 per cent. certainly. When we were booming, the idea was that we could always get money at 3 per cent.

THE PREMIER: Three per cent. is very low.

MR. LEAKE: I do not think the right hon. gentleman thoroughly appreciates the difference between fact and fiction, although his calculations are based more commonly on fiction than on fact. I do not mean to say that railway construction is not to the advantage of the country, but I do say it is justified only when we can properly and fairly finance the work. That is all I am saying. I am in favour,

in principle, of a railway say to Leonora, or to any other important centre; but I am not prepared to rush into the money market blindfolded, to borrow money just to gratify the whim of those in power, or to start a loan which is used as an excuse for purposes which are really foreign to the Bill.

THE PREMIER: I do not think you are justified in saying that.

MR. LEAKE: I say this Bill is brought down and was mentioned in the Governor's Speech as a Loan Bill for the authorisation of certain railways; and now we find that the money is to be devoted to works which were originally conceived with the idea that they should be paid for out of revenue.

THE PREMIER: They were named in the Governor's Speech.

MR. LEAKE: Yes; railway matters, but not the additional improvements to opened lines, also lighthouses, improvements to harbours and rivers, jetties, etc.—these were not mentioned in the Governor's Speech. The Bunbury harbour works were to be constructed out of revenue.

THE PREMIER: £73,000 out of revenue was paid for that work, and that is very well too, out of revenue.

MR. LEAKE: I do not know how much has already been spent on that work.

THE PREMIER: £100,000.

MR. LEAKE: Therefore hon. members will see the value of the estimate which was made by the Treasurer, for in 1896, when this work was proposed—

THE PREMIER: A long time ago, that.

MR. LEAKE: Yes; a long time ago, I am sorry to say. When that work was proposed it was stated that not more than £100,000 should be spent on it.

THE PREMIER: I said we could not ask for more than that.

MR. LEAKE: And we find that estimate has not only been exceeded, but we are asked now to approve of another £40,000 for that work. The amount originally contemplated, £100,000, has been spent, and now we are asked to vote £40,000 more, and it was then the intention of the Government to construct the work out of revenue. This is what the Premier of the day—it may not be the present Premier, but the Premier of the



day when that work was proposed—said:

He wished the House to agree to an expenditure of £40,000 out of revenue for that year, and for the continuation of the work to the extent of £60,000 more later on. Hon. members would notice the Government were trying to do this work out of revenue instead of out of loan.

Then, lower down, the Premier of the day said:

He had lived all his youth at Bunbury, and knew the place very well.

THE PREMIER: There is no harm in that.

MR. LEAKE: No; we are all victims to circumstances at times. These are my reasons for objecting to this Bill; and I do not think I can do fairer than remind the House of the dicta of the right hon. gentleman opposite, and say that we are not justified in to-day asking the country to commit itself to this new loan. When it is raised it will increase our indebtedness to about £15,000,000, which means a liability of about £88 a head of the population.

THE PREMIER: Nonsense! Absolutely incorrect!

MR. LEAKE: It is absolute fact, there is no doubt about it. Including this loan authorisation and the reappropriation and the deficit, these make up the present liability; and I am well within the mark when I say it means about £88 a head, which is too much to ask this country at the present juncture to undertake, and it is too big a liability to incur. The trump card last night was that we were justified in incurring this extra responsibility because, while it was admitted there was a liability practically of £88 a head, as I say, yet we had been liable to no extra taxation, as the right hon. gentleman told us. That may be so at the moment, and perhaps there has been no absolute direct taxation proposed by way of tariff and so forth; but we must admit we are taxed indirectly in the falling off of trade and so forth, which must injuriously affect the community. But perhaps the right hon. gentleman may be literally correct, or almost correct, on that head. If this policy is continued under existing circumstances, when neither the population nor the revenue is increasing at a proper ratio, we know that extra taxation is the inevitable result, and that, too, in the immediate future. It is true

that taxation did not result whilst the revenue was booming; but that booming no longer exists, and we are down to the dead level of financial commonplace. That is about the position.

THE PREMIER: There is another block of traffic coming on, and very fast, too.

MR. LEAKE: In addition to the reasons I have given to the House, there is another which may not weigh with everybody, but it seems to me there is something in it. We must consider who has the spending of this money. It is the Railway Department; that department which, if I can gauge public opinion at all, has not the confidence of the colony, although it can command the support of hon. members in this House.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: The Railway Department does not spend the money, except for improvements and additions to opened lines. It is all done from Public Works.

MR. LEAKE: Well, we will concede that point to the hon. gentleman, and say the Minister of Works and Railways has the spending of the money. I may remind hon. members that this money is to be spent or controlled by the Minister who rules the Railways and the Works—that is fair, is it not? And that department has been told by the Auditor General that it has been guilty of misappropriating the funds, and of hoodwinking the Auditor General. That is the channel, therefore, through which this money is to be spent, and we really should pause before we authorise this department to handle the public funds to such an extent again. I submit to the House that this loan is not justified, and there are times when it seems to me that hon. members should endeavour to rise above the level of politicians, and study what is due from the statesman; and in so doing we should regard the interests of the colony as a whole, and not the interests of individual members or constituencies. I regret to find that in the schedule to this Bill there have been thrown out what appear to me to be baits to catch hon. members. There is £10,000 down for Albany, to begin with.

THE PREMIER: We are spending that, and you know it. The work is nearly finished.

MR. LEAKE: If they thought they were going to catch me with that bait,

they are mistaken. The work there was to be constructed out of revenue.

**THE PREMIER:** No; never!

**MR. LEAKE:** Then how can it have been done? It has never been authorised.

**THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS:** It has been carried out through the vote for harbours and rivers improvements.

**MR. LEAKE:** Oh, yes; any excuse is better than none. How the hon. gentleman can be so regardless of the interests of the country and of constitutional principles as to do what he has done is past my understanding, and I really cannot understand how the House for so long has put up with it. I say again, this is a time when we should all consider the interests of the country at large, and should sink the interests of any particular district or individual, and say whether or not, under all the circumstances, this increase to our loan authorisation is justified. In my opinion there has been no argument advanced from the other side of the House to justify the raising of a single penny of this money. It may be that our circumstances will so improve as to justify the raising of this money later on, and I sincerely trust we shall not have many months to wait; but I do implore hon. members to consider the present financial position of the colony, its prospects with regard to the raising of money, the amount it is pledged to already, and what may be the barrenness of the next loan, the money from which must be applied for the payment of our debts; and in voting this money for the proposed new railways, if it is intended merely to keep the pot boiling, so to speak, it is a dangerous policy for this or any other Government to adopt. We cannot shut our eyes to what has taken place in a neighbouring colony, showing that the danger of committing the country to a loan policy is found in the difficulty of stopping that loan, or ascertaining when we have gone too far. That moment has, I believed, arrived in this colony, and if hon. members will reject this Bill and force the Administration to discover some other means of paying off our liabilities than by borrowing money for the purpose, I believe the best interests of the country will be served.

**MR. MORAN (East Coolgardie):** In rising to speak on this question—

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Do you intend to second the amendment?

**MR. MORAN:** Yes; I will second it. I must premise my remarks by saying that what I have to state on this Loan Bill must be looked on in rather a different light from what has been said by the leader of the Opposition. It can scarcely be expected that the leader of the Opposition could miss the opportunity on this great occasion, as I believe it is, of lending a certain political colour to his remarks. That is allowable, I suppose. It can scarcely be expected that I will view this Loan Bill with the same political hostility as the leader of the Opposition does. I wish to place the position before the House in its true colours. If there be a policy to which the leader of the present Opposition has in the past faithfully clung, it has been his insistence on the limitation of our borrowing. Before I go further, I want to say that the positions of certain hon. members in this House who are closely allied to their chief will not be found altogether in line with the actions and the beliefs, and especially with the present action, of their chief. I maintain that on an occasion like this, more clearly than on any other occasion, the curse of party politics will be clearly seen in this House; and added to it will be the still greater curse of every member of Parliament being more or less pledged and afraid to go against the interests of his own little constituency or locality, whatever it is.

**MR. ILLINGWORTH:** I hope not.

**MR. MORAN:** I say it will be seen plainly.

**THE PREMIER:** I do not think that is a fair remark.

**MR. MORAN:** I wish to say nothing unfair. I say we shall see that on occasions like this, parties in this House are scarcely solid; and that will be seen clearly. It must be borne in mind that my allegiance to the Premier for the past five or six years cannot be doubted, and probably it is still undoubted. But does not the Premier know I am absolutely and actually convinced that on this occasion we are on the wrong track? Does he not know that as a goldfields member—almost, as he termed me, the apostle of spending money on the goldfields—

**THE PREMIER:** How can you get the improvements you want at Kalgoorlie

without money? You talk about the railways being blocked, and you will not give the money to improve them!

MR. MORAN: I must be allowed to work out my own redemption. In voting against this Loan Bill, be it clearly understood that I recognise to-day that if the last Bill had been brought down before this House for £750,000, the absolute necessity of getting more rolling-stock for this colony would have induced me to vote for it, for improvements to opened lines and for rolling-stock.

THE PREMIER: Why not improve this Bill in Committee?

MR. MORAN: But I am making a protest against the construction of new railways, and I propose to do so on two grounds; and let me at once admit that my principal ground—although one grave reason for objecting to the Bill is that we are going too deeply into debt—my principal ground is that we are going to borrow money to-day to do work which we cannot start for two years. In this matter I am absolutely and entirely disinterested. I am giving my opinions honestly and sincerely, and with the added displeasure of having to go against the Premier for the first time on a loan policy. First of all, my objection is that the Bill commits this country to a loan policy of £1,600,000 odd, say a million and a-half.

THE PREMIER: No, no.

MR. MORAN: I will give every figure. The Premier knows I have no desire to make figures look bad, but merely to arrive at the truth as nearly as possible. We are inevitably committing this country to a loan of one-and-a-half millions at least; and further than that, we are committing the country to a loan of one-and-a-half millions at a time when the credit of the country is not good, when the credit of no part of the world is good: the market is not favourable; it is less favourable than it ever was, almost, for us; and besides that, what is the use of borrowing to build railways we cannot start until we first spend half a million in rolling stock? In all that I say to-night I bear in mind that the Commissioner of Railways knows the condition of his own department, and knows I am telling the truth. [THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: No, no!] He knows that I am hitting the nail pretty nearly on the head

when I say that he has first to make straight the ways he has already built before he can undertake the gigantic task of constructing four or five other railway lines. I was about to conclude this branch of my subject by saying that the House will meet again this time twelve months, or say next June: we meet again in six months.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Then the war will be over.

MR. MORAN: The war will be over for one thing; we hope the market will be better; but more important still than that, the present outcry of the public for more accommodation and better management of the railway lines—I am not going to say who is to blame or whether I blame anybody—but it will be seen then how we are going to get on with the Coolgardie water scheme; it will be seen what position we are in. Surely a delay of six months is not vital to Leonora: I believe in Leonora just as much as anybody in this House. Surely a delay of six months is not vital to Goomalling, that rich agricultural district which deserves a railway when we can afford to build it. Surely such a delay is not vital to the Coolgardie-Bonnie Vale line; because, after all, the life of Bonnie Vale does not depend on being connected by railway with Coolgardie, only six miles away? And next year shall we not be in a better position to say how we are? Will not the Commissioner have had six months in which to finish the Herculean work he is now doing in getting his department in good order? Should not good common sense and prudence in the present position of affairs have indicated to the Premier that the fag end of the session is not the time to bring in a new railway policy to this House, but that he ought rather to confine himself to what is absolutely necessary, namely the supplying money for making perfect the lines already thrown open.

THE PREMIER: You want to throw out the whole schedule?

MR. MORAN: I am necessitated to do that; though I know that the whole lot will not be thrown out, simply because it will be found that the political principles of this House are fairly elastic, and that there will not be that solidity on the pronounced policies of either side which one ought to expect on a great national occasion like this.

**THE PREMIER:** I do not think you are justified in saying that, you know.

**MR. MORAN:** I am not saying anything unfair. Far be it from me to single out anybody in this House and to say that he is less "game," less independent in going against the interests of his own constituency, than anybody else. I say that every member of Parliament is subject to a certain amount of craven fear of his own electors, and that is one of the reasons why I am going to ask the kind permission of the House to allow me to add a clause at the end of this Bill, if the Bill goes through its second reading, to institute a new principle in this colony in which I believe and for which I will fight, that not one penny of loan money shall ever be spent on any new public work in Western Australia until a standing Public Works Committee in this House shall have reported on that work. I do not know whether this Bill is a fit and proper place to put such a clause, but it may be an expression of opinion which will relieve hon. members from a difficulty. The difficulty is there. Their own electors are crying out for public works, like the electors of the member for North Coolgardie (Mr. Gregory). How can he vote against this Loan Bill? How can the member for Dundas (Mr. Conolly) vote against the Loan Bill? He knows he cannot vote against it. Those two members know that they will have to desert their party on this occasion, and go back to the party they have left before. They will have to go back and take shelter under the wing of the old hen they left a little while ago. Yes, sir, the chickens will have to go back again. I maintain that we are, in this second Loan Bill, committing the country to a new expenditure of £1,500,000.

**THE PREMIER:** I do not think so: not by this Bill.

**MR. MORAN:** I am about to give you now, with your kind permission, the exact figures. I do not care whether they are right or wrong: I am saying what I consider to be true; and I shall be pleased if the figures are over the mark. If hon. members will turn to that Loan Schedule and bear with me a little while, I will take paragraph number 2—railways. We are committed by this Bill ostensibly to an expenditure of £750,000; but we positively cannot carry

out the construction of the Leonora railway line, cannot do the cutting, cannot run the railway along an open cutting without rails, and cannot leave it in the middle of the bush, or build one side of the line and leave the other unladen. If hon. members will kindly look at the item, "Boulder railway extension and duplication," they will find that £20,000 is down for that. I know I am understating the figures, when I consider all the interlocking and making the cuttings, because it is rugged country. I am putting down an extra £10,000 for that. These are the first instalments of what must be done.

**THE PREMIER:** The schedule does not say so.

**MR. MORAN:** That is not a fair argument.

**THE PREMIER:** But it does not say that is the first instalment.

**MR. MORAN:** I say it does. The report of the Premier's own department tells me that that work has been estimated at £30,000. The Commissioner of Railways will tell this House that he cannot do it for £50,000; but I am only taking an extra £10,000.

**THE PREMIER:** But the rails for that work are in the next item.

**MR. MORAN:** There is £10,000 extra for that item. In the Coolgardie to Bonnie Vale line £20,000 is the estimated cost of construction, and there is there an extra £10,000.

**THE PREMIER:** No; the other £10,000 is for the rails and fastenings and rolling-stock.

**THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS:** The amount for the Bonnie Vale line is £20,000.

**THE PREMIER:** Including the rails and fastenings.

**MR. MORAN:** Twenty thousand pounds. I will go ahead again. There is £10,000 extra in all for that railway line.

**THE PREMIER:** We give you nothing extra.

**MR. MORAN:** But I have not given the rails and fastenings yet. The total amount of rails and fastenings for these railway lines is £172,000. Then the rolling-stock—I will take off nothing.

**THE PREMIER:** That is not necessitated by this work.

**MR. MORAN:** I am talking about the Loan Bill.

MR. LEAKE: Hear, hear.

MR. MORAN: The Commissioner of Railways said: "I shall require half-a-million for rolling-stock to equip my railway lines." The Premier said: "I am not sure that we shall not have to increase that very considerably"; and it would not be overstepping the mark, looking two years ahead, if I said £750,000 for rolling-stock and improvements to opened railways.

THE PREMIER: That shows we are doing well.

MR. MORAN: Of course it does: it shows we will be doing well when we get the rolling-stock, but not before.

THE PREMIER: It shows our progress necessitates new stock.

MR. MORAN: The Coolgardie to Norseman railway I put down at £300,000.

THE PREMIER: I do not think you ought to do that.

MR. MORAN: I think I would be safe in saying—

THE PREMIER: You have no data for that.

MR. MORAN: I have the very best of data.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: There is an item of £50,000 for water supply, which expenditure I do not think will be required.

MR. MORAN: Is there a single drop of water on the line?

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Yes; there are three 3,000,000 gallon tanks full of water.

MR. MORAN: They are full now; but surely the Minister knows that inside of 12 months he cannot reach the first tank with the construction work.

MR. MORGANS: There will be some rains in the meantime.

MR. MORAN: There you are! Trusting in Providence again! There is nothing certain.

MR. MORGANS: We are now splitting hairs.

MR. MORAN: I heard of a split rabbit being found on the road to Norseman. I think it will be a long time before the train to that place splits hairs or anything else.

THE PREMIER: We are not dealing with these details now.

MR. MORAN: I really must reinform the Premier—

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: It will run into about £906,000 without the rolling-stock. The rolling-stock has nothing to do with this Bill.

MR. MORAN: That is exactly what my figures show. If we add to £906,000, half a million pounds, that is very nearly a million and a half. Therefore, are we not committing this country to a new Loan Bill of one and a half millions?

MR. MORGANS: No.

THE PREMIER: But these items tell you we will not want the half-million.

MR. MORAN: I have asked the Commissioner of Railways, and he says the cost will be £906,000 without rolling-stock: half a million extra for rolling-stock is roughly one and a half millions. The member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans) says "No." Who is the better authority—the Minister or the hon. member? Surely we are committing the country to a new loan venture of one and a half millions?

MR. VOSPER: One million four hundred and six thousand pounds.

MR. MORAN: One-and-a-half millions, in round figures. I wish to devote a few minutes to my second proposition, that we are running this country into a debt that it is not fair to ask the people to bear at the present time. We are getting beyond the limits of safety; and bear this in mind: it is not fair for the Premier to pledge the population of this colony two years ahead on the basis that it is going to increase. That is the point. Why? I have seen the population of this colony go down 6,000 and 7,000 in a year. We remember the time when we had 170,000 people before, and we went down to 164,000: may not that occur again? Who says that we are going to have 175,000 or 180,000 people in another two years? I am justified in saying that perhaps the numbers will come down to 165,000. The probabilities are that they will not; but we have no right to pledge the present population to an indebtedness of £80 a head—I am taking it at less than the member for Albany (Mr. Leake).

THE PREMIER: You know perfectly well that a great portion of the loan works is self-supporting, and is no tax at all.

MR. MORAN: I know that.

THE PREMIER: Then why not say so?

MR. MORAN: Heaven and earth! If I had seventeen mouths and as many

tongues, I could not state all these things at once.

THE PREMIER: You say "£80 indebtedness per head."

MR. MORAN: And I am going to prove that from your figures. We have the Auditor General's report here. It is headed, "Statement of particulars of the public debt of Western Australia." The amount of loan authorisation up to date —

THE PREMIER: We want to know how much is the indebtedness.

MR. MORAN: Oh, well! I waited for that question, because when this House—

THE PREMIER: Let us have the authorisation.

MR. MORAN: Let me give it to you. When this House authorises any Ministry to borrow a certain amount of money, the country is indebted for the money as far as this House is concerned: this House holds the purse-strings: if we give the authorisation, have we then power to stop the Government from borrowing money?

THE PREMIER: Let us have the figures.

MR. MORAN: No; I will clear the ground as I go. It is fair for me to say that the loan authorisation has to be considered.

THE PREMIER: I agree with that.

MR. MORAN: The total loan authorisation is £11,870,000. Will hon. members kindly add to that the new authorisation proposed of one-and-a-half millions? I am not taking any of the figures that the leader of the Opposition (Mr. Leake) took, namely the debts the Government have got into, and have got to find from somewhere the money to pay, by reappropriation: I am taking the loan authorisation. Add to the existing authorisation one-and-a-half millions: I make it £1,584,000.

MR. MORGANS: How many years are you anticipating?

MR. MORAN: I am taking it as it is here to-night. If this Bill goes through, then the country is practically committed, as far as this Parliament is concerned, to borrowing this sum of money. Added together, these sums come to £13,450,000, say 13½ millions. Besides that, this country also owes £100,000 to the Agricultural Bank: we have authorised

another £100,000. I understand that advance is secured on lands; but still it is a debt. Besides that, we have an agricultural lands purchase authorisation of £200,000: that is an authorisation of £400,000; and most of it is spent.

THE PREMIER: No, no; I beg your pardon. The amount spent is nothing like that.

MR. MORAN: Let me correct myself. I will not say "most of it is spent." I will say none of it is spent.

THE PREMIER: Very little of it.

MR. MORAN: This House has authorised the present Administration to go into debt to the extent of £400,000, but we have to put a sum against that of £310,000 for sinking fund, so let us say these two amounts balance each other.

THE PREMIER: There is the security of the lands; is that nothing?

MR. MORAN: I say that we owe the debt. If I am asked what I owe I give the amount, I do not give the security which I hold against it. Our loans are fairly well secured if we put against them the Colony of Western Australia. I work it out that if this Loan Bill passes the House to-night, then Parliament will have committed Western Australia and every person in it to the extent of £80; perhaps £79 would be nearer the mark; some say it will be £81.

THE PREMIER: Do you think it fair to count money before it is spent?

MR. MORAN: I ask the Premier this: to what has Parliament committed the country? And I say that if this Loan Bill passes there will be an indebtedness of £80 per head of the population. Of course the population may go on increasing, and in two years we may have more people here.

THE PREMIER: What about the seven or eight million pounds spent on railways?

MR. MORAN: I am coming to that. Who ever heard of the indebtedness of any Australian colony being divided into reproductive and non-reproductive works?

THE PREMIER: Do you not think it is fair to do it?

MR. MORAN: The bald figures are stated in our own returns. We say South Australia owes £70,000,000; Queensland £68,000,000; New South Wales, so much; and Western Australia's present authori-

sations amount to £80 per head of the present population.

THE PREMIER: You cannot count prospective debts; I have never heard it done before.

MR. LEAKE: Then why bring in a Loan Bill if you do not want the money?

MR. MORAN: If the money is borrowed, will the railway lines be started?

THE PREMIER: The lines at Kalgoorlie will, I expect.

MR. MORAN: You had better take a month's takings of the railway lines; I fancy you can spend current revenue.

THE PREMIER: Only when appropriated. I do not think it good for the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) to ask us to spend money without it being authorised.

MR. MORAN: Have I not said before that in a young country like this we must have unauthorised expenditure. We must have it in sudden crises. Was not a sum of money spent in keeping the road open for water?

THE PREMIER: Why not give us a chance of doing something for the gold-fields?

MR. MORAN: I have given the actualities, and against them have to be stated the probabilities. By the time the money has been spent the population may have increased; but do not forget this, that our population is like a thermometer on a summer day, it goes up and down just like the share market. Because there are many thousands of men on the fields now, it does not follow there will be the same number to-morrow. There was a time when Kanowna had its 20,000 people; Kanowna now has 3,000 people. There are thousands of men in Western Australia to-day who are not absolutely keeping body and soul together with what they are earning. There are thousands of men on the Eastern Goldfields—

THE PREMIER: You would make them worse by your policy. Destroy this Bill and they will get less.

MR. MORAN: It is just as well that I should state it, that I shall never consent to be a member of a party, or to vote for the labour vote by stating that I will agree to loan works being started to keep poverty away from the colony.

THE PREMIER: We do not suggest that.

MR. MORAN: We have a migratory population, largely composed of alluvial diggers and prospectors. They are not permanent settlers. The alluvial digger is not a permanent settler; he is the vanguard for the opening up of gold mines, and if the alluvial digger cannot find gold here to-day he will go to some other country in search of alluvial gold. The Premier said, the other night, that when the Government had plenty of money to spend population came here to get their share of it. Where the carcase is, there do the crows and the harpies gather around it. When the loan money is spent these people will go away again.

THE PREMIER: If we do not do any work we will get no more population to come here.

MR. MORAN: To come back to my point: the loan authorisations mean an indebtedness of £80 per head of the population if it does not increase in two years, and if the money is spent within that time. It is not a certainty that we are going to have an increased population, and let this be said, if it must be said, that if you take the Kalgoorlie goldfields out of Western Australia you have nothing phenomenal in the way of goldfields in this country. You take the one centre away and you have as many failures on the goldfields of Western Australia as there have been in any colony of Australia, and a few more.

THE PREMIER: How are you going to take them away?

MR. MORAN: The development at Kalgoorlie to-day was not going very much along the line of reef. The paying portion of the mines in the Kalgoorlie centre was fairly well circumscribed.

THE PREMIER: The gold will give out, you think.

MR. MORAN: I do not say that; it will probably give in. The point is this: there are nearly as many men employed in mines to-day as can get in there; I speak of the small mines. What is the use of my constantly blowing about the claims of Western Australia if I do not believe what I am saying myself. Taking the ordinary life of goldfields in any part of the world, it is not wise to rush into too heavy an expenditure, because the gold industry is an evanescent one; every ounce that you take out of the ground cannot be taken out again.

**THE PREMIER:** You are a croaker; I had better go home; I cannot stand you much longer.

**MR. MORAN:** These are wholesome truths, and I must be truthful and true to the colony of Western Australia as a whole and not look at the goldfields only. I say while we are pledging the country to this great amount of debt, we are absolutely unable, if we had the money, to start building the railway lines without paralysing the trade of the people on the goldfields already. Does the Commissioner of Railways not think he is going to have serious trouble in carrying those 90,000 tons of Coolgardie water-pipes and the fittings, and the increased traffic which he sees coming; on the top of that he cannot have his rolling-stock here under 18 months?

**THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS:** I said I should have some rolling-stock here in February next.

**MR. MORAN:** How much of it?

**THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS:** three hundred wagons.

**MR. MORAN:** The rails for the Leonora railway cannot be landed here under another 12 months—I say 18 months—and we shall have sat in Parliament and completed our last session of this Parliament before the rails for that line are landed in this country.

**MR. MORGANS:** Supposing they have been landed in this country already.

**MR. MORAN:** They have not. This will be a serious handicap to the traffic, because the officers in the Railway Department have not that which they ought to have: the proper accommodation to handle the traffic of the country. Every day the Commissioner of Railways must be taking up the 45lb. rails and substituting heavier rails for them. Every day 200 miles of lines will have to be relaid with heavy rails before the Commissioner can undertake to carry the heavy traffic over the lines. There will be the Coolgardie water-pipes and the fastenings to be carried; on the top of that there are rails for the Norseman railway, the rails for the Goomalling line, and the rails for the Leonora line. I say that I am a faithful follower of the Forrest Government. The Premier knows that I am still a believer in him, but I think he is absolutely misguided to-day. The star of his past prosperity cannot go on shining

always, as it has done. It cannot be denied that the Premier has been a good man to this country; he has given a great deal to this country in the time of its necessities. He had a big heart and faith in the country, and he led the country into works which have done good for this country. But there never was a career which could always go on in the same course of success; checks must come. The most successful statesman must do wrong sometimes, and the followers of that statesman ought to tell him so. I have often said before that the Premier is on the wrong track, and I say now that the Premier is on the wrong track, and I say so as a faithful follower. I do not want to see the Premier crush himself out before the great Coolgardie water scheme is completed. Are we forgetting that the Government are undertaking the most awe-inspiring work, in the Coolgardie Water Scheme, that any country ever undertook? Are we forgetting that this work is in its initiatory stage? It is a huge experiment, and God only knows whether it will be a success when completed. We are undertaking in the Coolgardie water scheme a work such as has never been undertaken in any part of the world, in ancient or modern history. Never has any country attempted to run water 400 miles up-hill.

**MR. MORGANS:** It will run down, though.

**MR. MORAN:** It will run down in its ordinary course, but man has to force it up-hill, and never before has a scheme of this magnitude been attempted; and we are not true to our position in the House if we forget that this gigantic work is still hanging in the balance.

**THE PREMIER:** It is not.

**MR. MORAN:** How much have we spent on that work at the present time?

**THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS:** About £180,000 in addition to the plates coming to hand.

**MR. MORAN:** I want to know what our liability is to date.

**THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS:** About £400,000.

**MR. MORAN:** I will give the Minister another £100,000 and say £500,000. We are liable for £500,000 on the Coolgardie water scheme which at the lowest cost will amount to £2,500,000, although



I think it will cost more by the time the pipes reach Bulla Bulling, 40 miles from the seat of consumption. When the pipes get to Coolgardie, if the people have not gone, the pipes will go to Kalgoorlie, and when the pipes have reached Kalgoorlie there will have to be the reticulation works and certain dams constructed. Had the pipes been there two years ago, Kanowna would have taken a 2-inch pipe to supply 20,000 people with water, and those pipes to-day would have been lying in the ground as old iron. I know the condition of the goldfields. The centre will almost take the whole of the water; but we must not forget the possibilities. We have spent £500,000 already on the Coolgardie water scheme; how much more have we got to spend at the lowest estimate? Two millions. I am speaking fairly when I take the loan authorisations as the debt of the country; £2,000,000 have yet to be spent on the Coolgardie water scheme, and inside what time? By next September 12 months the Commissioner of Public Works of this colony will have signed his name to the expenditure of two millions of money. Let us take one year, and we will give the Commissioner £1,000,000 to spend next year; let us see how much more money the Government will have to spend that year. According to the Premier's Budget Speech we spent in this country last year, out of Loan Funds, £1,023,000 and we spent out of current account £2,500,000; therefore, we spent in Western Australia last year £3,563,000. Now we come to what we propose to spend this year. Suppose we say that £1,000,000 is spent on the Coolgardie water scheme, and that amount must be spent, or the Engineer-in-Chief is handling the possibilities of the future in a reckless manner.

THE PREMIER: I do not think we shall spend any more this year, and I think I know more about it than you do.

MR. MORAN: I admit that. I know that I get the truth from the Premier. We are going to spend out of revenue £2,155,000; that is £600,000 less than what the revenue will be. Where is the rest going to? To pay off the deficit and other things I hope. Suppose we say £2,500,000 will be spent out of revenue, and suppose another million is spent on the Coolgardie water scheme, that comes to £3,250,000. If we spend no more, is

that not enough for the country to spend next year? Is it not a good thing for the country to spend £3,250,000 next year?

THE PREMIER: What do you include for rolling-stock?

MR. MORAN: I have not included that at all.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: If we spent £250,000 next year it is as much as we shall.

MR. MORAN: That brings my figures up to £2,000,000. If the Commissioner spends £500,000 in rolling-stock, then we shall be doing nobly.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: I said all along that it would take two and a half years to get all the rolling-stock it was intended to get.

MR. MORAN: I thank the Commissioner because he always gives us the correct figures in connection with his department, and the Commissioner of Railways has my deepest gratitude because he never hides anything. I say that also of the Premier, because he is frankness itself; otherwise I and the leader of the Opposition could not get up and make a case out of the Premier's own mouth; therefore, I have no fault to find with him whatever. What is the position? We have to relay our Eastern railway line at once, and we should undertake that urgent work before anything else.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: As I pointed out, we are relaying a portion of the line with heavier rails, and we can go on for some time carrying our goods on the present rails, and relay the remainder when the country is in a position to undertake the work.

MR. MORAN: Yes; and what does that mean? As soon as they get absolute breathing time for relaying the remainder with heavier rails, and getting the additional new traffic over that line, they will do it. It will take them all their time to carry the goods over that line, and relay it as well—absolutely with all the attention and devotion which the Commissioner gives to his department. Set aside your new railway policy, and you have a great work ahead of you in putting that line into proper condition for carrying the traffic, and to bring it up to a sound commercial basis, so that the owner of a lot of spuds, when he gets them to a siding, can depend on their being taken away

promptly, and the receiver of those spuds can rely on getting them next day. The great work you have before you is to put your railway in such a condition that you can bring the producer into quicker touch with the consumer on the goldfields, and when you have done that you will have done a great work for this country; whereas at present you are running your traffic over a line that is too weak for the traffic, and at a speed which makes it unsafe for travelling. The great work stands before us of binding together the threads of our policy. This country has done what no other colony has done in its palmiest days, and we owe the Premier of this country the greatest thanks, and I am particularly thankful to him, for what he has done; but at the same time I am not going to see him go wrong, while yet owing him allegiance, and remain silent. I believe it is my duty to oppose this reckless expenditure, and that is what I am doing at the present time. I want to ask the Premier, will he agree to retire his railway policy for the present? Will he agree to listen to the noises all round, to listen to the dissatisfaction in regard to the railway traffic, listen to the fact that the money market is calling out that we are borrowing too much money, listen to the fact that the world is crying out and watching for the completion of the great goldfields water scheme, and is watching every movement of this colony? Will he retire his railway policy for one twelvemonth? What can it matter? Surely it will be a wise course to retire that policy for the next two sessions, and go to the country after next session and ask the people: are they content with the progress we have made, and are they satisfied with the great work he has done? He can also tell them that his nostrils are still breathing with a desire to go on with the great work of promoting the prosperity and development of this country, and that he is willing to go in for more expenditure. He has spent the money well in the past, and I do not see that we have made any failures in this country in our public works, as we know has been the case elsewhere. Our railways have been nearly all great successes, nearly all. Let him ask the people: shall we take a breathing space? Shall we wait till those people in the country are living harmoniously together, the one-half pro-

ducing, and the other half consuming? Shall we pause and say there is only one great work we can take in hand next year, and that is the railway to Leonora? Railways are not absolutely necessary to a goldfield. There are mining centres in this colony which are making great strides, and have progressed and got equipped with machinery without the aid of railway communication. The railways did not make those goldfields, and the fields will not perish for the want of a railway. The place is dotted with mines, and buildings, and machinery, and cyanide plants, and how were all these things got there? The railway did not take them. It is the same with your public batteries, for I say, put a battery on a site where it can be useful, and the railway after all is a very secondary consideration. Look at the mining fields all over Queensland and all over Victoria: they have lived and flourished, they have blazed forth in all their glory and have died away, and all this without railway communication. A railway will not put gold into the stone.

**THE PREMIER:** Would you stop the Fremantle harbour works?

**MR. MORAN:** No; I am not going to stop that, unless it is necessary in the interests of the country. I must accept some blame as to the action I am taking, and if I am to have any credit for opposing this Loan Bill, I must put up also with the little disabilities attaching to my action. Let the Premier retire his railway policy for the present.

**THE PREMIER:** And let the public batteries go too?

**MR. MORAN:** Why should we rush ahead with public batteries? Why should we rush ahead with an experiment? We have done well with public batteries up to the present, and nobody has praised the department more than I have for this policy of public batteries; while some of the batteries are now standing idle, and there is not an ounce of gold inside them. The department are not to blame for that. Australia is full of places which have promised to be good centres of mining activity, and now many of them are deserted.

**THE PREMIER:** Where are public batteries lying idle, as you say?

**MR. MORAN:** In more than one place. The member for North Cool-

gardie (Mr. Gregory) can tell you of one place at least, and perhaps of another. Public batteries are a great and good work; but let us go steadily in extending that principle, and not rush in and build a lot more public batteries. Those which have been put up have done their work in proving the districts where they are placed. Let your £30,000 for public batteries be expended first and prove its usefulness, and if you can afford to build more, then build them.

THE PREMIER: We have some money in hand for that.

MR. MORAN: Well, do it steadily and surely and slowly. I am not in favour of building public batteries merely because people are asking for them. We know you will have to shift some of them which were started even under favourable circumstances. There are some works on this Loan Bill that must be done, but amongst them I do not think there is urgent necessity for many of those coastal works that are put down: they certainly can stand over for one year at least.

THE PREMIER: What about the railway sheds at Fremantle?

MR. MORAN: If you bind sheds at Fremantle on to railways that are not to be built, then you can sink them at the same time that you stop your railway building. We must have half a million pounds' worth of rolling-stock, and half a million of money to bring up the railway traffic to a satisfactory basis, without any extension of the existing system. I know I am deliberately throwing out this Loan Bill, and I am making a protest against the bad policy of committing the country to any further loan at present, and against promising railways in districts which can well wait till a later period; for when you once promise to construct a railway, people will say the railway is passed, that it is all right and they ought to have it at once. I will vote for the rolling-stock, for continuance of the Fremantle harbour works, and for every item on the Bill, knowing that we cannot do these things at present, and I will withdraw my opposition to the Bill, if the Premier will retire his railway policy for 12 months. In asking for this promise from the Premier and making a promise on my own behalf, I say on whom does the onus lie? Give me your promise, and I will give you

mine. I will be honest and straightforward, and I will certainly stand to it. I will withdraw my opposition to this Loan Bill, and will be —

THE PREMIER: The usual way is to deal with that in Committee.

MR. MORAN: If the Premier will say he will retire his railway policy, he will be hurting nobody, because none of these railways are really urgent, and the only work that is urgent is the Coolgardie water scheme and the putting of the railway traffic into good order. The Fremantle harbour works are not urgent in a sense, and they can wait. I do not want any undue odium in regard to the Fremantle harbour works, and I will not have it. I am sorry that the Government party, we who have pulled together so well in the past, did not see fit to come together and consider this policy before the Bill came into the House. That is advocating caucuses, which may be good things sometimes. A good leader should not ride a willing horse to a fall. It would not have hurt the Premier to have known the opinions of his supporters before bringing in this Bill. Now I ask him (pointing to Ministerial benches), where are the faithful followers of the Government?

THE PREMIER: You have driven them all away.

MR. MORAN: If I have, I have done a good work. I ask the Director of Public Works, does he believe it is a wise thing in the interests of Western Australia to go on with the new railways now? Cast aside party allegiance on this question, for this is not going to be a party vote. The leader of the team is going to pull one way, and the off-side bullock puncher is going to pull another way. "Perish everything, and let us have no more indebtedness!" says the leader of the Opposition. That is his policy. His party have never had occasion to raise their voice in this House before.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: They have raised it on every occasion.

MR. MORAN: That is what I say. Their policy is that of borrowing for no more loan works than those we have in hand, and that is the policy they have, if they have a policy at all, and it is not a barren policy, after all. The public works policy of the Government, which is a good one, has turned out trumps in every

case. So far as the policy of the Opposition is concerned, the leader cannot say they have always had a united policy on their side of the House; but to-day they are supposed to be a united party, and their policy is said to be one of social legislation, also building up the traffic of the railways, and above all they say, no more loan money until we have finished the works we have in hand. If that be so, who ought to vote for it more than the whip of the Opposition; who more than the man who left the very seat I occupy, for what I considered at the time a fanciful grievance? If he studies the interests of his constituents, he will come back to those who have given him all he has had in the past; but if he prefers the Opposition and its policy which he has the duty of keeping together, and the whip of which he swishes so successfully, then there is no doubt he will remain where he is. I have given an honest and fearless expression of my belief in the financial position, after considering it carefully and well, and knowing also that some of my constituents are always singing out, I may say howling, about "injustice to the goldfields" because not enough public money has been spent there, and who want more spent there in spite of the great cost of the Coolgardie water scheme, and are howling for still more expenditure of public money—

MR. MOORHEAD: I think you are not going back to that constituency.

MR. MORAN: I am responsible for my own actions, and I hope everybody else is responsible for his. I am going back there, and will say there what I have said here. It was only during the last election that the goldfields were clamouring for what they called a "free breakfast table." I did not go in for that policy. I stood there and beat down opposition in a fair and honest way. I said, "I do not believe in depleting the Treasury, because you rob the Treasury of the money it requires by demanding public works." I was returned in spite of that; and there is no man in Western Australia who has been more unpopular in his own electorate than I have been, and the hon. member can take that statement if it gives him any pleasure; and further, there is nobody who cares less for that

unpopularity, and nobody who, at the present moment, does not feel just as independent in this House, and who would speak with just as much sense of responsibility if there were not one of his constituents behind him. I have Western Australia to legislate for as well as my own constituents. I do not care what my constituents think, and I have never crawled to them. I shall never sign any document pledging myself to my electorate, and shall never sign any document against the interests of Western Australia. I aspire to be looked upon as a Western Australian, and I hope I shall be broad enough in the back, and thick enough in the skin, to be able to withstand all the opprobrium that may be heaped upon me by my own constituents, if they choose to do so. I am here for 12 months, at any rate, and it is rather too soon to say what I am going to do in 12 months' time: that must be left to the future. I thank the House for having listened to me so patiently, and I do hope and trust finally that the Premier will see that in this matter I am in deadly earnest, and that he will withdraw his railway policy, and will give his faithful Commissioner of Railways a chance to put the railways of this colony in a satisfactory position; and then let us gather up the reins and go ahead once more with a policy of progress, which progress, after all, I admit the Premier has been responsible for in the past: but he may be a little intoxicated with past success; he may see that the political atmosphere is a little foul, and that it is necessary to throw a public works policy before the electors again. Do not throw the bait too soon. Gratitude is the anticipation of favours to come: and as the election is not over yet, I say even in a political sense, it is better to get the opinion of the country and then see what follows. At all events, the Government will not be in disfavour with those parts of the colony to which they propose to give new railways.

MR. MORGANS (Coolgardie): I am bound to say I have been rather struck with the dismal speech of the member for East Coolgardie.

MR. MORAN: I hope it has not hit you in a vital place.

MR. MORGANS: After listening to the hon. member when speaking on pub-

lic works in years gone by, and especially with regard to the construction of railways and the development of facilities on the goldfields for working our mines, I am bound to say the hon. member's tone has completely changed.

MR. MORAN: I have never supported a certain railway that is in this schedule. You know that well.

THE PREMIER: You have supported the goldfields railways generally.

MR. MORAN: Only my railway line is paying: the rest are not. I do not require to tell you that: you have learned that.

MR. MORGANS: At all events, the tone of the hon. member is not what it was in reference to the policy of the Government; and although I should be the last in this House to attempt to quarrel with him for having changed his opinions and his views in regard to the policy of the Government, I am bound to say that his speech to-night has not brought conviction to my mind that the position he has taken up is the correct one. If there was anybody in this House who strongly supported the Coolgardie water scheme, it was the member for East Coolgardie.

MR. MORAN: And I am still supporting it.

MR. MORGANS: I do not for a moment say the hon. member does not still give his support to the water scheme.

MR. MORAN: You heard me, did you not?

MR. MORGANS: But he certainly drew a very dismal picture of what was likely to happen to that water scheme. He described it as one of the most gigantic undertakings that had ever been commenced in any part of the world.

MR. MORAN: I say so still.

MR. MORGANS: With regard to that statement I join issue. I say it is an important undertaking; but as to its being one of the biggest and most important undertakings ever initiated in any part of the world, why, the hon. member is entirely mistaken.

MR. MORAN: I say, for the population it is the greatest by far.

MR. MORGANS: That was not stated at the time.

MR. MORAN: I was talking to sensible men.

MR. MORGANS: But the question of population has nothing to do with the

question of carrying out that work—absolutely nothing. The hon. member pointed out that there were certain difficulties which might arise with regard to the safe conduct of this matter, and its successful issue. Well, I suppose this must have been present to the mind of the hon. member at the time the scheme was discussed in the House, and when he gave it his support.

MR. MORAN: You will find every one of the difficulties mentioned in the reports of my speeches.

MR. MORGANS: And if the hon. member then looked upon the scheme in the same light as he looks upon it now—that is to say, having regard to the difficulties he supposes will result in carrying out the work—I wonder why he gave it his support so cheerfully.

MR. MORAN: I was not so cheerful about it all the time.

MR. MORGANS: The hon. member, at any rate, admits that he saw difficulties in the way; and notwithstanding that fact, he gave his support to the scheme.

MR. MORAN: My statements will be found in *Hansard*, in language just as plain as I used to-night, and more so.

MR. MORGANS: At any rate, with regard to this water scheme so much has been said in this House that I do not think it worth while bringing up the question again. But I will say that, as regards the carrying out of this scheme, it is the opinion of all practical men who have gone into the question that the scheme is not surrounded by any serious difficulties at all. It was said at one time that there would be a difficulty in constructing the pipes: now we see that there is no such difficulty. We see that the construction of the pipes has been carried out most successfully at Falkirk and at Midland Junction by the two contractors.

MR. MORAN: You are altogether off the track. There is no question of the pipes, or anything of that sort.

MR. MORGANS: I say the possibility of their construction has been questioned.

MR. MORAN: By whom?

MR. MORGANS: By various members of this House. Then questions have arisen about the joints, and the carrying of the plant by rail. All kinds of objections have been raised.

MR. VOSPER: This is all "small beer," and very flat at that. The objections of the hon. member (Mr. Moran) were all financial and not technical.

MR. MORGANS: That is quite true; but the hon. member referred to the difficulty of carrying out this work; and I am endeavouring to point out that such difficulty does not exist. With regard to the difficulties to which the hon. member called attention, I say these difficulties do not exist; and the arguments he used to-night with regard to this water scheme must tend to throw doubt and discredit upon that scheme.

MR. MORAN: Let them, if they do.

MR. MORGANS: Very well; they certainly do. Now with regard to the construction of the new railways: apparently the hon. member's principal reason for objecting to the construction of these lines is that there is already too much traffic on the existing railways; and that if the new lines be constructed, it will be practically impossible to do the extra work which will be thrown on the existing lines.

MR. MORAN: I never mentioned that once.

THE PREMIER: I think you did.

MR. MORAN: I said it was impossible to construct them. I said not a syllable about any lines that were constructed: I say you cannot construct new lines; that is all. Do not mistake the question: you cannot carry the material to construct them with.

MR. MORGANS: My point is that they can be constructed. I say that the existing railways, notwithstanding the fact that there is a large amount of traffic upon them at the present time—that the existing railway line to the goldfields is quite good enough and is quite capable of carrying any amount of material necessary for the construction of these new lines.

MR. MORAN: The Commissioner of Railways said it was not.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: I did not say that.

MR. MORGANS: I did not hear the Commissioner say anything of the kind. I think in stating that, the hon. member is misrepresenting the Commissioner.

MR. MORAN: Read his officers' reports.

MR. MORGANS: I have done so. As far as I remember, the Commissioner said nothing of the kind. Does any one in

this House doubt for a moment that the goldfields railway system, if it have sufficient rolling-stock, is quite capable of carrying double the amount of traffic it carries at the present time? It is really more a question of rolling stock than of anything else; and if the Government carry out the proposal to increase the rolling-stock, there is no doubt these railways will be able to cope with all the traffic that exists, and also with the problem of delivering 70,000 tons of pipes along that railway; and they will also be able easily to cope with the despatch of the construction material necessary for the new railways which it is proposed to build. I am making these remarks in the presence of the Commissioner of Railways, and if they are not true, or if I am mistaken, the Commissioner will tell me so.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: To carry those pipes only means hauling 800 tons per week.

MR. MORGANS: Quite so. Well, that is really a very small amount.

MR. MORAN: You do not say how far you can carry them per week. They must be carried 300 miles altogether.

MR. MORGANS: The point I desire to make is that it is a mistake to suppose these railways are not capable of carrying this supposed increase of traffic of which the hon. member (Mr. Moran) spoke; and I think, in laying the case before us as he has done, there is a tendency to mislead not only this House but the public as to the true position of the railway with regard to traffic at the present time. If I understand the position rightly, the greatest difficulty with which the department is at present confronted is the shortness of rolling-stock, and that difficulty the department is taking steps to remedy.

MR. VOSPER: How?

MR. MORGANS: By getting more rolling-stock.

MR. VOSPER: With borrowed money.

MR. MORGANS: It does not matter how they get the money. I say that these railways, and especially the Eastern railway, are profitable undertakings to the Government, and it will pay the Government to increase their rolling-stock, and they must increase it in order to cope with the traffic running over the lines. With regard to the point made by the hon. member (Mr. Moran) concerning the

financial position, is it not clear to everyone that the investment in the Eastern railway is a good one for this country?

MR. MORAN: I think so.

MR. MORGANS: Very well. I say the goldfields railway is no burden to the colony; and as we have seen from the published accounts of the Railway Department, it is a very profitable undertaking. The capital invested in our railways has been well invested, for the reason that it is not only returning interest on the outlay, but it is also providing for the sinking fund to repay the capital; and it is earning a profit besides that.

THE PREMIER: Hear, hear; but the hon. member (Mr. Moran) will not listen to that.

MR. MORGANS: If this is the case, how can any hon. member raise an objection to the Government constructing new railways if they can show this House and the country that such lines will pay?

MR. MORAN: They are in debt half a million for rolling-stock already.

MR. MORGANS: At the present time I am taking my stand upon the published figures of the railway department with regard to the working of the railways; and I repeat the statement that those accounts as presented to the House show that the railways are paying a very handsome profit upon the outlay. If that be so, I say there is no reason for any hon. member raising any doubt as to the policy of the Government in regard to further borrowings for developing the railways on the goldfields.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Is there no limit?

MR. MORGANS: No; there is no limit as long as we are building railways which are certain to yield a good return upon the outlay. There is no necessity for any limit at all. The danger in any Government expending money is when that money is invested in unproductive works: there is a danger in that kind of expenditure; but when the Government ask this House for money to be spent on the construction of railways which aid in the development of the goldfields, and if at the same time it be shown that these railways will pay a good return upon the outlay, that they will not only pay interest but will pay a sinking fund and will leave a good profit, then I say the Government are justified in asking

this House to pass this Loan Bill which they have now brought down.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Go and buy all the Great Boulder shares to-morrow morning, if they will pay.

MR. MORGANS: Oh, no. We are speaking about the construction of Government railways on the goldfields; we are not talking about the Great Boulder shares at all.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: We are talking about finding the money.

MR. MORGANS: What we are now talking about is whether it is safe or otherwise for the Government to invest this money.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Not at all: the question is whether it is wise to borrow this money.

MR. MORGANS: Yes; for the purpose we now have under discussion.

MR. LEAKE: Do you justify the Bonnie Vale railway?

MR. MORGANS: I do not think it would be at all a bad investment.

MR. LEAKE: No?

MR. MORGANS: I do not think so. However, I am not now speaking of the Bonnie Vale line: I am speaking generally of the principle. Something has been said with regard to the cost. We have heard these estimates; and we are told it is proposed with regard to the railways to spend at the present time upon the Boulder railway extension and duplication, £20,000. The member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) criticises this statement; but I think the explanation of the Commissioner of Railways cleared up the difficulty raised. Then this Coolgardie to Bonnie Vale line, about which so much has been said, is put down at £10,000 for construction. We are told that it will cost £20,000; but the necessary additions to make up £20,000 are included in the other items mentioned below in the Bill; and, therefore, I take it that the estimate we have here is correct. Now with regard to the justification of this railway, I may say it is a work which is desired by the people of Coolgardie and of the surrounding mines. The other night an hon. member opposite, by innuendo, stated something about some personal interest of my own in Bonnie Vale, and it was said that was my reason for supporting the construction of the Bonnie Vale railway. The

construction of the Bonnie Vale railway will not make a difference of 6d. a year to me so far as my interest is concerned. It has been shown to the Government that the construction of this short line will go into an important mining district.

MR. LEAKE: A deserted mining district, did you say?

MR. MORGANS: It is not deserted: mining is going on there; the district is developing slowly but surely; at the same time the Government have satisfied themselves, from information, that this short line of railway will pay, if constructed. However, I am not going to labour the question of the construction of the railway: as far as I am concerned personally it will be of no benefit to me, but the inhabitants of Coolgardie think that the Government are justified in carrying out this line. I come now to the Norseman-Norseman railway, which is a larger matter, involving a larger expenditure. Is there any hon. gentleman in the House who doubts that the Government are justified in making this railway? Look at the importance of the Norseman goldfield. I do not think anyone who has studied the position of the Norseman goldfield at the present time would doubt that the Government are justified, and it is their duty to make every possible effort to connect that important goldfield with the railway system of the colony. The development of the mines at Norseman is going on in a satisfactory manner, but it is not necessary for me to advocate the construction of a railway to the Norseman goldfield, because the member for Dundas (Mr. Conolly) is no doubt prepared to do that; but I know enough to be able to say that this line is likely to increase the output of gold on that goldfield.

MR. MORAN: What is the output?

MR. MORGANS: About 4,000oz. a month.

MR. ROBSON: What will the member for Esperance say?

MR. MORGANS: I do not know the exact figures at the present time, but in any case it is not entirely a question of the gold to be found at Norseman and Dundas, but the opening of the very important mineral district between Coolgardie and Norseman. I know very well the member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) was a strong advocate for

the construction of this railway at one time.

MR. VOSPER: I was a strong advocate for the construction of the Esperance-Coolgardie railway, and I am so still.

MR. MORGANS: That is part of this line. At any rate I will leave it to the member for Dundas to support the construction of the Norseman railway. I only say that as far as I am concerned I shall give this proposal all my support and assist the Government in every way possible to get the line constructed. With regard to the Menzies-Malcolm railway, that will go into one of the great mining districts of the country. At the present time Mount Margaret district is paying more revenue to the Government than any other goldfield in the colony.

MR. MORAN: That is not so by a long chalk. What kind of revenue?

MR. MORGANS: Mining revenue.

MR. MORAN: That may be so.

MR. MORGANS: That is a very good test for a district. I say you can have no better index of the material development of the mining resources of any particular part of the colony than by the revenue obtained from it. I consider it is the crucial test of the development of mines in a district, and at the present time the Mount Margaret goldfield is producing more revenue than any other goldfield in the colony. In addition to that I suppose at the present time outside Kalgoorlie there is three times as much machinery, in quantity and value, being erected on the Mount Margaret goldfield as on any other goldfield in the colony.

MR. VOSPER: What are the returns?

MR. MORGANS: About 13,000oz. a month.

MR. MORAN: We all know that.

MR. MORGANS: The hon. member for East Coolgardie has given a wholesale denunciation of the construction of these proposed railways.

MR. MORAN: No; I only mentioned one, and I said it was a most desirable line to construct.

MR. MORGANS: I know the hon. member spoke more favourably of this line than of other lines, which he denounced absolutely.

MR. MORAN: I beg your pardon.

MR. MORGANS: As far as I understand, the hon. member absolutely refuses



to support the Government in these railway proposals at the present time.

MR. MORAN: Yes; I am opposing any at the present time.

MR. MORGANS: I am giving reasons to show that the position the hon. member took up was not the correct one, and I am attempting to show that the railways should be constructed at once, as they will be a great improvement. As far as the Leonora railway is concerned I do not think the hon. member can doubt that the line would not be a vast advantage to the country, after having heard the remarks which have been made.

MR. MORAN: If you show me how it is to be done I am with you.

MR. MORGANS: This Loan Bill shows how it is to be done, and no doubt the result will be that the Bill will be carried. This old bogey has been trotted out in the House so many times, probably by the member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) more than anyone else: I refer to the old bogey of the population.

MR. MORAN: It is a bit of a bogey just now.

MR. MORGANS: There is no bogey. There is no colony in Australia to-day that is producing the amount of wealth which Western Australia is producing. If we come to the question of the population basis to show the position of the colony, it would be only fair at the same time to point out that the population of Western Australia is producing to-day twice as much wealth as any other colony in Australia, and that should have some weight in considering the question of the financial position. It is all very fine for the hon. member to say, "Here, you have a debt of 13½ millions"; he does not say in what time. I know the hon. member was anticipating the position of the country any time between now and the next 10 years.

THE PREMIER: A long way ahead, anyhow.

MR. MORGANS: Taking the hon. member's figures, he says that 13½ millions work out about £80 per head of the population.

MR. MORAN: Is it going to take 10 years to carry out these works?

MR. MORGANS: No; as far as I can understand the hon. member anticipated the position of the country for 10

years, and that is not a fair way of putting the matter before the House. It is not quite a fair way to put before the House and the country the financial position of the colony, by saying that you have 170,000 inhabitants and a debt of 13½ millions, which shows a debt of £80 per head of the population. I put it in this way, that this population of 170,000 persons produces twice as much wealth as any other colony of Australia.

MR. MORAN: Where is it going to?

MR. MORGANS: It does not matter where it is going. Where does the wool which is grown in New South Wales go to? Does it not go to some other country?

MR. VOSPER: It goes to pay the debts.

MR. MORGANS: So does the gold produced here go to pay our debts. It is unfair to take as the basis of comparison the debt per head of a country like this.

THE PREMIER: There are six or seven millions which are paying for themselves.

MR. MORGANS: It is simply the old style of bringing the financial condition of the country before the public. As far as Western Australia is concerned it looks like presenting a bogey to the public to talk about £80 per head of the population. The prosperity of the country depends at present to a large extent on the production of gold.

MR. MORAN: I do not think so.

MR. MORGANS: Yes.

MR. MORAN: We differ materially then.

MR. MORGANS: It is the duty of the Government to do all they can to facilitate the production of gold, and one of the best ways to facilitate the production is to extend the system of railways into the goldfields, and no one has believed in that theory more than the member for East Coolgardie himself. I would like to know what the goldfield of Kalgoorlie would be to-day but for the railway to that field.

MR. MORAN: The gold-mines would be there.

MR. MORGANS: But the mines would not be producing one-third of what they are producing to-day.

MR. MORAN: Mount Morgan went on producing.

MR. MORGANS: Mount Morgan was a very rich mine. The railways have

been the means of rapidly developing the gold-mining industry, and without the railways the industry would not have been developed to the extent it has been. If that is so, the Government are justified in continuing the policy of extending the railway system into the goldfields. What will be the effect of this loan supposing it is carried out? It will simply be this, that it will involve the country in an expenditure of £30,000 per year for redemption and interest charges.

MR. MORAN: That is the old style.

MR. MORGANS: I do not care how old the style is; it is a fact, and I say it is absurd to try to block the extension of these important railways to the goldfields because the hon. member wants to avoid the expenditure of £30,000 a year. The question before the House is the discussion of the Loan Bill for £750,000.

MR. MORAN: It is not. Does the hon. member think it only means £750,000?

MR. MORGANS: I am confining my attention to the question before the House, and that is the Loan Bill for £750,000, and I say that so far as the Bill affects the immediate financial position of the Government, it will involve this colony in an expenditure of about £30,000 per annum to pay interest and sinking fund upon the amount which is now asked for. I am stating to the House these facts with regard to the financial position. What will result if this Loan Bill is passed and accepted by the country? The member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) spoke about Kalgoorlie being practically the only gold producer in the country. I am sure he would not wish to mislead the House by that statement.

MR. MORAN: I hope you will not mislead them either. I never said any such thing.

MR. MORGANS: He said that if Kalgoorlie were cut out there would be very little left in Western Australia.

MR. MORAN: I said, if you take Kalgoorlie away, where will there be any extraordinary production of gold?

MR. MORGANS: I will take the hon. member's own word for it, and it is this: the hon. member wishes to convey to the House that if Kalgoorlie were removed from this colony as a gold producer there would not be much left.

MR. MORAN: Not at all; but there would be a terrible lot gone.

MR. MORGANS: The position is this, that Kalgoorlie undoubtedly is producing to-day about half the total of the gold produced in the colony.

MR. MORAN: A bit more.

MR. MORGANS: Last month there were 205,000oz., of which, I suppose, Kalgoorlie produced 102,000 or 103,000oz., so that my figures are very nearly correct. What is the position of the colony as a gold producer, if you take away all that Kalgoorlie is producing to-day? The colony is still producing more than any other colony in Australasia.

MR. MORAN: So it should.

MR. MORGANS: Leaving out that produced at Kalgoorlie, it is producing 100,000oz. per month.

MR. MORAN: Is it producing as much as Victoria in its best days?

MR. MORGANS: That was alluvial.

MR. MORAN: It was gold, all right.

MR. MORGANS: The position is that even taking out this great yield at Kalgoorlie, of which we are all proud, Western Australia is still the greatest gold producer of the Australasian colonies. Taking away the yield at Kalgoorlie, this colony is producing at the present time 50 per cent. more gold than any other colony in Australasia, so that the inference the hon. member wished to draw with regard to the position of the colony as a gold producer is not quite correct. I am surprised at the hon. member speaking in these terms of the production of gold in this colony. He appeared to me to desire to instil into the minds of hon. members, and, through the Press, of the country, that there was grave doubt as to the permanency of these mines in Western Australia.

MR. MORAN: Some of them are not very permanent.

MR. MORGANS: Seeing that the hon. member is a goldfields member, I do not think it is a very desirable position to take up, because all goldfields men believe that these mines are in their infancy. All practical men believe that this goldfield has only entered upon its period of prosperity. That is the view of practical mining men, and I do not think it is necessary for any member of this House to throw any doubt upon

the probable future of the gold-mining industry in this colony. When I arrived here about four years ago, the production of gold was about 30,000oz. a month. In these four years—less than four years—the production of gold has increased to 200,000oz. per month.

MR. MORAN: Hear, hear: there is so much the less left.

MR. MORGANS: If this be so, surely there is not very much reason for the dismal croaking of the hon. member with regard to the probable future of the goldfields of Western Australia. I repeat that I do not think it is necessary for him to throw any doubt upon what the chances will be with regard to their further development. I am prepared to admit that he knows a great deal about the goldfields, for he has travelled through them, and has been allied with their development from the beginning; but at the same time the opinion of practical men who have visited those fields, practical men who are now living there and who have been interested in the development of the mines for the last five or six years, is that the gold-mining industry in Western Australia has only just begun. That, I assert, is the opinion of men who understand the position.

[MR. ILLINGWORTH called attention to the state of the House. Bells rung, quorum formed, and the debate proceeded.]

MR. MORGANS: It is the usual tactics of the Opposition in this House, when under criticism with regard to their position, to fall back upon that very undignified plan of counting out the House. It would be very refreshing if the hon. gentleman who is such a strict parliamentarian would take a little interest in keeping the members on his side of the House in their places.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I am not leader.

MR. MORGANS: But at any rate he occupies a very important position on that side of the House, and I take it he might get members on that side to be present in order to avoid these scenes, which, to say the least, are not dignified. I was remarking (and I was about to finish under that heading) that there is no doubt as to the future prosperity of the gold-mining industry in this colony, and I am sure my friend, the member for East Coolgardie (Mr. Moran) is the last

man who really believes or could be made to believe that there is any doubt. No one believes in the gold-mining industry more than he does himself; and knowing what I do of him, I cannot understand the attitude he has taken up to-night with regard to the doubts he has cast upon the future of the gold-mining industry in this colony. It is so unlike him, so unlike what he has done in the past, and I am perfectly certain it is not in accordance with the opinions which he generally holds on this matter. I say, in opposition to what the hon. member has said, that there is no financial reason existing in the colony at the present time why this Loan Bill should not pass, nor is there now any financial reason in the colony why these railways should not be built. I do not agree with the statements made by the hon. member, and I do not think the House or the country will agree with them. With regard to the difficulty of getting material up for the construction of the railways, that is not worth a moment's consideration. As to the financial difficulty as he would have us believe, so far as I can see, there is no reason for any doubt at all. Even if borrowed money cost 4 per cent., if the Government are in a position to invest that money, and get a return of 5 or 6 per cent. for it, as they can and will do in the case of the construction of these railways, or at any rate most of them, there can be no reason given by any sensible man why the Government should not incur that outlay.

A MEMBER: What about Leonora?

MR. MORGANS: The construction of the Leonora railway and the railway to Norseman—

MR. MORAN: Do you put the two together on the same basis?

MR. MORGANS: No; I do not. I consider the Leonora will pay far better than the Norseman; but I am prepared to say, from my knowledge of the goldfields and the country, that the construction of the Norseman railway will result in a profit to the Government and the country.

MR. MORAN: Impossible.

MR. MORGANS: I say it will pay interest on the outlay, and pay the sinking fund, and besides that leave a profit to the Government. That is the Norseman railway. As far as the Leonora

railway is concerned, not only will it pay interest and sinking fund, but I will stake my reputation upon the assertion that it will, if constructed, pay this country a return of 10 per cent. upon the outlay. I am stating these facts from a knowledge of the traffic now going on from Menzies to the north-east goldfields; and not only will there be the present traffic, but as soon as the Leonora railway is constructed there will be an enormous outlay and expenditure on the part of mine owners in bringing timber up from the coast for timbering their mines. In that district alone there are at least 20 mines at the present time unable to carry out their operations in a proper manner on account of the scarcity of mining timber. As a matter of fact, if you take the district of Leonora and the eastern part of the Mount Margaret goldfield, it is perfectly safe to say there is no mining timber within a distance of 15 or 20 miles of any of the mines there. Look at the importance of these goldfields, and at the large yield of gold there at the present time; look at the future, and the enormous amount of machinery that has been erected. On one mine alone, the Sons of Gwalia, at the present time a 50-stamp battery has been erected. Looking at the enormous amount of production of gold which will take place on that goldfield, looking at the importance of the industry of that goldfield, at the miners employed, and the impossibility of working that mine properly on account of the scarcity of timber, I say that with all these facts before us, and seeing at the same time that this railway will be an investment that will yield a handsome return to the Government, it is the duty of this House and the country not to hesitate to incur this expenditure upon the construction of that railway. I am not prepared to say with regard to the Bonnie Vale railway that it will yield a handsome return to the Government. I am not prepared to force my views on the House in regard to this particular short bit of railway, but I do assert, with regard to the other railways, that it is the duty of the Government, and the duty of this House, to authorise their construction at the earliest possible moment; and in view of the fact that these railways can be constructed without any loss to the colony, and will return sufficient

revenue to pay for the outlay, and provide a sinking fund, there is no reason why hon. members should raise any objection. It is not for me to discuss the items relating to the expenditure on harbour works, jetties, and approaches, but I have no doubt these works are necessary. I have not gone into details of these items so much as I have into those connected with the construction of the railways; but there is an expenditure proposed of £154,000, of which £70,000, or nearly half, is for the harbour at Fremantle. Will any hon. member question the desirability or the good policy of continuing that work?

THE PREMIER: Hear, hear.

MR. MORGANS: Let hon. members throw this item out if they like, but I am very doubtful if any on the Opposition side, or at least any of the Fremantle members, will have the courage to question the advisability of this expenditure. At any rate, we will see what these members do in Committee.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Log-rolling.

MR. MORGANS: Whether it be log-rolling or not, we shall see whether the Fremantle members will have the courage to request the Government to throw out this item of £70,000; and it will be very interesting to observe the attitude of these members.

MR. VOSPER: Drag the trawl, as usual, and catch them all.

MR. MORGANS: Not at all; because it will be interesting to observe the attitude of the Fremantle members, and what their opposition amounts to, when this item is in Committee. With regard to public batteries, it is the consensus of opinion on the goldfields that the policy of the Government is a good one. I do not know what the result of the establishment of these batteries has been financially, but probably, up to the present, the Government have not received a very good return on the outlay. At any rate, the batteries have had one good effect, which is sufficient to justify any loss that may have arisen in consequence of their erection, inasmuch as they have enabled working men and prospectors on the fields to continue working their claims.

MR. MORAN: In some cases the batteries have enabled men to "chuck" up their claims.

MR. MORGANS: No doubt the batteries have in some cases assisted in proving to miners that their claims were no good.

MR. MORAN: That is what I mean.

MR. MORGANS: But in any case, the general result of the establishment of these public batteries has been satisfactory; and, looking at the class of people who have been assisted, and to the fact that employment has been given to a large number of men on small claims, we may very well be prepared to face a small annual loss. I do not desire to say more, except that so far as the financial aspect is concerned, I have heard no argument which carries conviction to my mind that it is a bad policy to go on developing the great resources of the colony. I have heard no argument which carries conviction to my mind that the Government are doing wrong in going on with this forward policy. A rest-a-while policy is not suitable to a young country like this; and I sincerely hope that, as a result of this debate, the Government will receive the support of a large majority, in carrying out the great work of developing the colony, which is one of the greatest objects any Government can have in view.

On motion by MR. QUINLAN, debate adjourned until the next Monday.

#### LAND ACT AMENDMENT BILL (MINING). IN COMMITTEE.

Consideration in Committee resumed from 20th November.

##### New Clause:

THE PREMIER moved that the following new clause be added to the Bill:

*Leases and other holdings granted within timber leases to be subject to rights of timber lessees. Amendment of Sec. 124 of the principal Act.*—Section one hundred and twenty-four of the principal Act is amended by inserting at the commencement thereof the following words:—"Every timber lease shall be subject to the provisions of any Acts relating to mining for gold or other minerals so far as those Acts create rights which may be exercised over Crown Lands: Provided that every lease granted under any of the said Acts of lands comprised within a timber lease, shall be granted, subject to the right of the proprietor of the timber lease to cut and carry away timber, and, with the approval of the Minister for Mines, to construct and maintain roads, railways, and tramways thereon: Provided also that, notwithstanding anything contained in any of the said Acts, a gold-mining or mining lease, a miner's right or a mining

license shall not confer upon the lessee or holder thereof the right of cutting or removing timber on land comprised in a timber lease, except on payment to the lessee of the value thereof, nor the right of stripping bark on such land."

That clause went as far as it was possible to go, because there could not be two titles. The timber lessee must be protected as far as possible, but while the gold-mining lessee could not be given the timber, he ought to have what timber he required on payment to the timber lessee, and though the price was not provided for, it would be impossible for the timber lessee to charge more than a fair value. The mining lessee had the right to take timber, and the clause would probably lead to a good understanding between the two. No doubt the timber lessee would cut the timber and sell it to the mining lessee, and there ought not to be any difficulty, because both had their rights, and were protected as far as it was possible to protect them by law.

HON. H. W. VENN: Their interests were antagonistic.

THE PREMIER: No doubt, and therefore it was desirable to make an arrangement fair to both parties. The proposed new clause might be put into print, and looked more closely into, and could be altered if it did not meet the views of himself or the member for the Canning (Mr. Wilson).

MR. WILSON: The only objection to the Premier's amendment was that it provided that the approval of the Minister of Mines must be obtained by the timber lessee. Why was that necessary, seeing that such lessee had an undoubted right to cross the land for which he was paying rent?

THE PREMIER: But the line across the mining ground might interfere with raising the ore.

MR. WILSON said that by his amendment it was provided that the timber lessee should not interfere with the miner's workings.

THE PREMIER: The miner had a tenure, too.

MR. WILSON: Why not let the appeal be to the Minister of Lands?

THE PREMIER said he did not care which Minister it was.

MR. WILSON: It should not be necessary to apply to any Minister.

THE PREMIER: But the miner would hold his tenure under the Minister of Mines.

MR. WILSON: The timber lessee had an undoubted right to cross the land.

THE PREMIER: But the miner had also a right.

MR. WILSON: Then there must be compensation if the timber lessee were prevented from carrying his railways through the miner's lease.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: By this Bill a large concession was granted to the timber lessee. Under the present Goldfields Act any miner could go on a timber lease, take what timber he liked, and do as he liked within the four corners of his lease.

On motion by the PREMIER, progress reported and leave given to sit again.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

At 8 minutes to 11 o'clock, the House adjourned until the next day.

### Legislative Council,

Thursday, 23rd November, 1899.

Paper presented.—Land Act Amendment Bill (private), third reading; Cemeteries Bill, third reading; Petition of Federal League; Motion to Affirm Amendment (moved), Division, adjourned.—Bank Holidays Amendment Bill, in Committee, reported.—Adjournment.

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

#### PRAYERS.

#### PAPER PRESENTED.

By the COLONIAL SECRETARY: By-laws, Municipality of Northam, under Width of Tires Act.

Ordered to lie on the table.

#### LAND ACT AMENDMENT BILL (PRIVATE).

Read a third time, on motion by HON. F. M. STONE, and passed.

#### CEMETERIES BILL.

Read a third time, and passed.

#### PETITION OF FEDERAL LEAGUE.

##### MOTION TO APPROVE—AMENDMENT.

Debate resumed from 15th November, on motion by Hon. A. P. Matheson to approve of petition of Federal League that the Draft Commonwealth Bill be referred to the people without further amendment, in time to allow Western Australia to join the union as an original State.

HON. F. T. CROWDER (South-East): I have no desire to say anything in regard to the matter.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE (Central): I beg to move the following amendment:

That all the words after "that" in first line be struck out, with a view of inserting, "at the present juncture it is not desirable to submit the question of federation to the electors of this colony."

It appears to me that if the motion were carried, we should be lending ourselves to a form of procedure which has hitherto been unrecognised, and for which there is no precedent in the political history of this colony, at any rate. It has never been adopted here, and there is no power in the colony to allow a referendum. There is no machinery provided for anything of the kind, and I think that on a question of so great importance as that of federation it would not be satisfactory to the colony as a whole, but would be a most dangerous precedent to allow the principle of the referendum to be adopted. With the exception of colonies or countries where special provision has been made and special machinery provided to enable the referendum to be carried into effect, there is no system of an occasional referendum when a matter of considerable importance crops up between one general election and another. If there is a great desire on the part of Parliament that this matter shall be referred to the people, the proper course is—particularly in the case of a question on which the electors of the colony have not yet expressed an opinion—for the Government to dissolve Parlia-