

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 6th December, 1899.

Question: Civil Servants, Retirement and Promotion—Sluicing and Dredging for Gold Bill, third reading—Bills of Sale Bill, Legislative Council's Amendments further considered—Metropolitan Waterworks Act Amendment Bill, postponement—Sunday Labour in Mines Bill, in Committee, Division, reported—Mineral Lands Act Amendment Bill, in Committee, third reading—Mining on Private Property Amendment Bill, in Committee, reported—Police Act Amendment Bill, in Committee (resumed), progress—Totalisator Act Amendment Bill, second reading—Motion: Banking Institutions, Assets and Liabilities; debate resumed, Division (negative)—Fremantle Water Supply Bill, second reading—Motion: Pilbarra Goldfield Railway, order discharged—Pearl Dealers Licensing Bill, second reading—Bank Note Protection Bill, Legislative Council's Amendments—Motion: Supreme Court-house Site, Joint Committee—Motion: Railway ticket collecting at Pinjarrah—Motion: Boyanup Railway Station Accommodation (withdrawn)—Motion: Railways, Inquiry as to Oil-spraying—Motion: Perth Water, Bridge to South Perth (amendment passed)—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

QUESTION—CIVIL SERVANTS, RETIREMENT AND PROMOTION.

MR. HALL asked the Premier:—1, Whether he was aware that there were a number of officers in the public service drawing good salaries, who were in receipt of private incomes sufficiently large to make them independent of their official salaries. 2, Whether the Government was of opinion those officers rendered as good service as they would do if they were dependent only on their official salary. 3, If so, whether the Government would consider the advisability of retiring such officers with a view of allowing junior officers of equal ability, and who were solely dependent on their official salaries, to rise in the service.

THE PREMIER replied:—1, No.; 2, Yes; 3, The retirement of officers is regulated by the exigencies of the service, and by the provisions of the Superannuation Act.

SLUICING AND DREDGING FOR GOLD BILL.

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

BILLS OF SALE BILL.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S MESSAGE.

The Assembly having disagreed to certain amendments made by the Council,

also having amended one amendment, and the Council having insisted on four of the amendments, the Council's message was considered.

IN COMMITTEE.

MR. JAMES moved that the Committee do not further insist on the Assembly's amendments. Three of the amendments which the Council insisted upon dealt with the question of notice, which was certainly an innovation in this colony, and the Legislative Council were opposed to it; therefore it would be well to accept the Bill as it stood, and see how the legislation worked. The fourth amendment which the Council insisted upon dealt with the clause under which a judgment creditor had the right to sell the interest of the mortgagor under a bill of sale. The objection was that a sale could be held by the sheriff, and although the mortgagor had his security, there was no trust or confidence in him, and the new mortgagor would have to insist on the powers contained in the bill of sale and close up the matter.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported, the report adopted, and a message accordingly transmitted to the Legislative Council.

METROPOLITAN WATERWORKS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

POSTPONEMENT OF ORDER.

Order read, for consideration in Committee.

MR. A. FORREST moved that the order be postponed till to-morrow, as the City Council were taking steps to go through the Bill. There were some important changes in the measure that would affect the citizens of Perth.

THE PREMIER: The Bill had been on the table quite long enough for people to read it through, and the Town Clerk of Perth could have looked into the Bill in half an hour. There was nothing in the Bill prejudicial to the interests of the citizens, and he did not see how the City Council were concerned.

MR. A. FORREST: They had to make up the roll for £50.

THE PREMIER: They made it up for nothing now. The Bill was in the interests of the city. Last session an Act was passed without demur, and the provisions of that Act were modified by

this Bill. He had no objection to postponing the order, but plenty of time had been given for persons affected to consider the measure.

Motion put and passed, and the order postponed.

SUNDAY LABOUR IN MINES BILL. IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 1—Short title:

THE MINISTER OF MINES moved that the word "January" be struck out and "March" inserted in lieu thereof. This would bring the enactment into force on the 1st March instead of the 1st January.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Make it April, as Easter would be a convenient time to make the change.

THE MINISTER OF MINES consented.

Amendment (April) put and passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Penalty:

MR. GREGORY: The penalty provided was £5 for every man employed; and there being no minimum penalty, he suggested that the fine should not be less than £2.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It would be advisable to say "not exceeding £5."

MR. GREGORY: That would meet his view. He moved that in line 3 the words "fine of" be struck out, and "a penalty not exceeding" inserted in lieu thereof.

Amendment put and passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 4—Exceptions:

THE MINISTER OF MINES moved that in line 1 the word "for" be struck out and "engaged in" inserted in lieu thereof.

Amendment put and passed.

THE MINISTER OF MINES further moved that in Sub-clause (a) before the word "smelting" there be inserted "in connection with."

Amendment put and passed.

THE MINISTER OF MINES further moved that after "smelting," the words "or roasting furnaces" be added.

Amendment put and passed.

MR. MORGANS moved to add the further words: "or the working of batteries or cyanide plants."

MR. GREGORY protested against a proposal which would allow the working of batteries or cyanide plants on Sunday. It was necessary to overhaul the machinery of a battery at short periods, but power should not be given to employ labour on Sunday for purposes that were not really necessary. It might be necessary to have one man attending to a cyanide plant, and that should be sufficient; but work of a heavy kind in connection with the cyanide process should not be allowed on Sunday.

HON. H. W. VENN: Having observed the cyaniding process on goldfields, it appeared to him to be an almost continuous process which would require some labour even on Sundays; and Parliament should not interfere unduly with mining as our chief industry, by placing restrictions on the working of a cyanide plant, because that should be allowed so far as work on Sunday was really necessary; though it was not likely the liberty to work on Sunday would be used unnecessarily. Persons in other occupations had to work on Sundays occasionally, or to a small extent, as in the case of dairying, where cows must be milked on Sunday; but the general practice in all branches of labour was to avoid all work on Sunday.

MR. VOSPER opposed the amendment, because Sunday labour was not necessary for the working of batteries or the cyanide process. Managers could take care to have a fresh charge in the cyanide vats so as to avoid Sunday labour, and that should easily be done; whereas to make this exemption would encourage the use of Sunday labour, and the heaviest portion of the work might be done on that day if labour were allowed. The process of cyaniding was unhealthy for those engaged in it, and there should be at least one day in the seven free from an occupation which was not conducive to health. There was certainly no necessity to work batteries on Sunday; but in the case of machinery used for roasting ore, it was necessary to keep up the heat on Sunday, and some labour might reasonably be employed for that purpose.

THE PREMIER: Why was this Bill necessary at all on the goldfields, in a free country, where working men had so much to say in regard to matters affecting their interests? Why did those men work on Sunday if they did not desire to do so,

when the regulation of Sunday labour was practically in their own hands? With labour organisations scattered throughout the country, why did some men work on Sundays against their will? Were the mineowners more powerful than the Workers' Associations?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: At present they were.

THE PREMIER: Had the men ever attempted to put down Sunday labour? There was no law in this colony preventing Sunday work, yet in the great timber industry, public opinion and the men's wishes were strong enough to prevent work on Sunday.

MR. VOSPER: There was a law to prevent it.

THE PREMIER: An old law, applying only to towns.

MR. MOORHEAD: But still on the statute book.

THE PREMIER: According to newspaper articles and hon. members' speeches, all persons, whether mine managers or miners, were anxious to avoid Sunday work; therefore why did they do it? If these persons really desired not to work on Sunday, they could easily accomplish their object without legislation. Yet in this free country we were told that everything must be done by Act of Parliament, and that a statutory enactment was needed to prevent Sunday labour!

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Was there not an Early Closing Act?

THE PREMIER: Early closing was different from the observance of a day of rest. Like other interjections of the hon. member, this one was not "on the spot."

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Hotels were compelled to close.

THE PREMIER: Apparently only the goldfields workers, the cream of the men from Eastern Australia, men overflowing with notions of freedom, wanted this coercive Bill passed.

MR. GREGORY: Passed by the House, not by the Premier apparently.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: This was a Government Bill.

THE PREMIER said he was not opposing the Bill, but he could not understand the necessity for it, although introduced by the Government. It had been introduced by request; and believing as he did that as little labour as possible should be done on the seventh

day, he agreed to bring in the Bill; but why such a measure should be necessary to meet the wishes of the goldfields population, who came from Eastern Australia brimful of ideas as to freedom and the rights of humanity, and of their own rights, was not clear. Why should the miners require an Act of Parliament to secure this rest on the seventh day, which was an inherent principle of the British race all the world over? Such Acts only loaded up the statute book unnecessarily, and should not be passed unless urgently required. Why should not this matter be regulated on the goldfields, as in the case of the timber and coal industries, by spontaneous action on the part of the workers? Why could not miners, who were said to be the freest men that ever lived, exercise their own discretion, and say they would not work on Sunday?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: There was not much Sunday labour on the Murchison.

THE PREMIER: The observance of the Sabbath was a British institution.

MR. VOSPER: Enforced by two statutes of Charles II. and George IV.

THE PREMIER: Surely these statutes were obsolete. When had they been enforced in this colony?

MR. MOORHEAD: To prevent football playing on the Esplanade.

THE PREMIER: That had to do, not with work, but with sport.

MR. MOORHEAD: A man desiring to unload a boat on Sunday in any port must obtain the sanction of the resident magistrate.

THE PREMIER: That must be under the Customs Act. At all events, if the existing law were sufficient, why pass this Bill? Evidently existing Acts were not sufficient to compel the people to do what they should do of their own accord; and the necessity for such a Bill was very regrettable.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Nevertheless, the Bill was necessary.

THE PREMIER: Then that was the men's own fault.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Entirely their own fault.

MR. MORGANS: The Bill was undoubtedly unnecessary. True, in other colonies batteries were not worked on Sundays; but that was through custom, and not in compliance with law. Why, in this colony, was the mining industry

always selected for harassing legislation? When discussing the dividend tax, it was actually proposed that it should apply to mining dividends only. Here the same principle was sought to be applied. If the Bill were necessary, why not apply it to all industries? Why not prevent the running of trains and the printing of newspapers on Sundays? There was misapprehension on the question of battery work. The number of men engaged on batteries was small indeed compared with the total number employed on a mine. It seemed to be taken for granted that mine owners and managers desired Sunday work. That was not so. The member for North Coolgardie (Mr. Gregory) had stated that a man refusing to work on Sunday would be dismissed.

MR. GREGORY: From certain works.

MR. MORGANS said he had never heard of an instance.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: How many dare refuse to work?

MR. MORGANS: All, if they chose.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Then why did they not refuse?

MR. GREGORY: If an engine-driver refused, what would happen?

MR. MORGANS: It would be easy to put another man in his place.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That was just the point.

MR. MORGANS: The point was that the great majority had no objection to Sunday work. The objection was in the minds of hon. members, and not in the miners. A substitute could easily be found for any man objecting to Sunday work for physical or conscientious reasons. If this Bill were carried, then all Sunday work should be stopped.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The Bill did not stop all mining work on Sundays.

MR. MORGANS: It stopped all important work on a mine, all gold-producing work; and it would cause a very serious diminution in the production of gold, to the extent of three-quarters of a million next year. Were the Government prepared to face a reduction in the output of gold to that extent? It was a serious matter. The member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) was not correct as to the filling of cyanide vats. One particular class of tailings treated in cyanide vats might require three days' treatment, another

four days, another six days, and another seven days; it was impossible to control the day when a manager wished to empty or fill a vat. The member for Central Murchison had said that this was not a religious question. It might not entirely be a religious question, but to a large extent it was, and the agitation in reference to this matter was started by religious bodies on the fields. The Workers' Association were not the first to start the agitation. It was first of all started by clergymen, who invoked the aid of the Workers' Association, and that body in turn invoked the aid of others. The religious bodies on the goldfields and in Perth had more important work to perform than agitating on this question. He (Mr. Morgans) had waited to hear the voice of the clergymen on the goldfields raised on the question of the sly-grog selling. It was a scandal to the administration of law in the country that there should be such a number of sly-grog shops on the goldfields. Was it not strange when we knew these dens of vice and iniquity infested Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie and the big towns on the goldfields and every camp on the goldfields, and which brought more misery and more loss to the mining community than all the other evils put together, that not one clergyman had ever raised his voice against this sly-grog selling.

MR. ILLINGWORTH said he had heard clergymen do so.

MR. MORGANS: Further, the clergymen had never attempted to raise any agitation on the goldfields against sly-grog selling, which was a burning disgrace in the colony to-day.

MR. VOSPER: Who was responsible?

MR. MORGANS: The administration of law was responsible. He was using this as an argument to show that clergymen had better work to perform on the goldfields than to agitate for this measure. He (Mr. Morgans) had been informed on the best authority that on the Boulder and around Kalgoorlie there were no less than 600 sly grog-shops, and he knew that statistics had been obtained which showed that around Coolgardie there were not less than 200. In some of the mining camps up North this curse existed, and on one particular mine in which he was interested there were no less than 14 sly grog-shops just outside the boundary of the lease.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The loss of revenue to the Government was about £100,000 a year.

MR. MORGANS: Why did not clergymen interest themselves against this monstrous evil that existed? Why did they not call meetings, as they did in reference to Sunday labour in mines? Why did not clergymen invoke the aid of the Workers' Association and the other associations on the goldfields to put down sly grog-selling? Clergymen could spend their time more profitably in doing this work than in agitating in regard to this Bill. That clergymen did not do so was not a credit to them. If members would only look at the question on fair business lines and from a fair and just standpoint, they would see there was no serious objection to the working of batteries on Sunday. This Bill would interfere seriously with the working of mines. There was no doubt the time would come in the colony when the practice of working the batteries on Sunday would cease: this would come gradually as had occurred in the other colonies. In Victoria working on Sunday in mines was not stopped by Act of Parliament, but by custom amongst the miners and the mine owners. In the early stages of mining in this colony it would be a very serious matter to interfere with the working of batteries and cyanide plants on Sundays. There was no desire on the part of the managers or mine owners to work on a Sunday; perhaps there might be a few, but the percentage was very small.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Who wanted to, then?

MR. MORGANS: The men raised no objection, and many men desired to work on Sunday. In the back country the cessation of work on Sundays would simply mean driving the miners into the sly grog-shops, and this Bill would put more money into the sly grog-sellers' hands than anything else. There were very few miners who worked on a Sunday, and if statistics were taken it would be found that over the whole of the goldfields of Western Australia not 5 per cent. of the total number of miners worked on a Sunday.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That was a good expression of opinion on their part.

MR. MORGANS said he was speaking of the men who actually worked under-

ground and not of the men who worked on batteries. Looking at the large proportion of men employed on the surface and underground in actual mining, there was no reason why the Committee should interfere with the working of batteries on Sunday. At the very most, 10 per cent. of the men employed on a mine worked on Sundays, and for the sake of that small percentage why should the Committee raise serious objection to allowing batteries to work on Sunday? He hoped members would not attempt to inflict, on an industry in its infancy, such a great drawback. The production of gold would be very seriously interfered with, which was a matter worthy of attention. It was unjust to take the mining industry and impose serious burdens upon it, while letting other industries go scot-free. There was a disposition on the part of Parliament to harass the mining industry. That could be seen on all hands. There was the question of railway rates. The people on the goldfields paid higher rates on the railways than people elsewhere, and he thought the Government were too ready to draft Bills on the application of various societies on the fields and various other bodies. It seemed that if men got up an agitation in a part of the colony in favour of a certain thing being done, all they had to do was to send a deputation to Perth and a Bill was drafted at once. He doubted if there was not too much legislation in this colony: by and by people would be unable to live for over-legislation. Soon we should be controlled as to the nature of our Sunday dinner. He expected the member for Central Murchison would want to impose cold mutton and pickled cabbage for a man's Sunday dinner.

MR. ILLINGWORTH said he did not esteem one day more than another.

MR. MORGANS: There was a tendency to over-legislate, and by and by everyone would be legislated out of the colony if Parliament went on in this way.

MR. VOSPER: We were told that the most high-minded and liberal men in this community were the mining speculators. They did not want to work mines seven days a week, and would not do anything at all to increase their dividends: that was the peculiar characteristic of the mining speculator, of whom the hon.

member was the representative and champion in this House.

MR. MORGANS: Not at all. He represented the mining industry, not mining speculators.

MR. VOSPER: The Chamber of Mines at Kalgoorlie, composed of those angelic beings he had referred to, had recently sent out a form of petition to be signed by the workmen, with a view of presenting it to this House in order to prevent this Bill from going through; yet, notwithstanding all the influence and pressure which was used by mine managers, underground bosses, and others to obtain signatures to that petition, it was so scantily signed that the promoters did not think fit to present it to this House. In one mine at Kalgoorlie, employing ten men, the first one signed the petition, but the other nine refused, and it was a singular circumstance that those nine men were dismissed from employment at the next pay-day, while the man who had signed was retained. It was true that clergymen on the goldfields had taken a commendable part in promoting this Bill; and it was also true that the working men generally were in favour of it. As to employers not putting pressure on workmen to work on Sunday, even the hon. member himself (Mr. Morgans) had admitted that if a workman refused to do as he was told, that workman would be removed and another put in his place.

MR. MORGANS: A man who did not want to work on Sunday could be relieved without dismissing him. That was constantly done.

MR. VOSPER: The general way to "relieve" him was to relieve him permanently. As to labour organisations on the goldfields not using moral pressure to prevent Sunday labour, it would be undesirable for such organisations to promote a general strike, and they were not strong enough to stop this practice without a strike. By passing this Bill the tendency would be to maintain industrial peace.

MR. MORGANS: What about the men who set up type on Sunday night?

MR. VOSPER said he would vote for stopping that; and the more so as it would give a better chance to his Sunday journal by stopping the issue of Monday morning newspapers. By refusing to

pass this Bill, a strike might be fomented, or the labour organisations would be driven to the necessity of putting in force those old statutes passed in the reigns of Charles II. and of George IV., for the proper observance of the Sabbath-day. Those old statutes did not provide such exemptions as were proposed in this Bill; therefore if those statutes were put in force here, they would act oppressively by applying to all persons and to all occupations alike. As to the estimated loss of £750,000 by reducing the gold output if Sunday labour were stopped, that appeared to be a wild estimate; and a proper way of looking at the question was that if investors wanted to increase the output of gold, they should do it by providing seven stamps instead of six in every case, and thereby increase the output by one-sixth, so as to make up for the loss of Sunday labour. Clergymen on the goldfields had endeavoured to suppress the sly grog-shops, but in that endeavour they were not sufficiently supported by the working men; whereas on this question of stopping Sunday labour, the clergymen had been more successful because they had the support of working men generally. He would not object to see this Bill applied to other industries, so as to stop Sunday labour wherever it was used unnecessarily.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: In reply to the remark that the Government had introduced this Bill without sufficiently consulting those who were connected with the mining industry, he wished to say that no measure introduced by the Government during this session had been so generally asked for as was this Bill to abolish unnecessary labour in mines on Sunday. A deputation from the goldfields in June last presented a petition to the Government, signed by 4,000 persons, nearly all workers on the goldfields; and the deputation was composed of representatives of different religious bodies, also certain members of Parliament, and certain representatives of the workers. The petition requested that legislation should be introduced next session for preventing unnecessary labour in mines on Sunday.

MR. OLDHAM: A few of those who signed the petition were owners of sly grog-shops, he would guarantee.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: All sections of the community, mine managers and workers, asked for the Bill to be introduced. A circular letter, of which he had a copy, was sent to all mining companies, and the letter ended with these words:

We, therefore, believing that you have only to know of the evil to take steps to remedy it, appeal with confidence to you, as persons in authority, to use your influence to stop all unnecessary work, such as battery work, underground work, and surface work, as can be left without injury to the safety of the mine or plant.

That circular was signed by representatives of the Mine Managers' Association, and by the President of the Chamber of Mines in Kalgoorlie.

MR. MORGANS: He had withdrawn from that position since.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: No representations were made to the Government on the other side in regard to this question, although reports of what was said by the deputation at the interview were published in the newspapers; and it was only after the Bill was introduced in this House that any murmur of dissent was heard from persons engaged in the mining industry. It was the duty of ministers of religion to take up matters of this kind; otherwise they would be a disgrace to their cloth. When all sections of the community joined in demanding such legislation, the Government could not be taunted with yielding to the request of a mere clique. One hon. member said the Bill would reduce the output of gold. That was a mere sum in proportion: "If so many men can take out so much gold in seven days, how many can secure the same output in six?" Undoubtedly the output could be maintained without extra expense.

MR. OLDHAM: But Sunday work was necessary.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Why necessary in this colony more than in Victoria or at Charters Towers, where no batteries worked on Sunday? The *Australian Mining Standard*, which, more than any Australian newspaper, represented the investing public, had recently, in commenting on the introduction of this Bill, congratulated the Government on the step taken. And even if the effect should be to reduce the output of gold, was a national sentiment to be bartered

away for a small pecuniary consideration? As a fact, the very mine-owners would in a few years thank this House for the Bill. With the Premier, he regretted the necessity for its introduction, for the object had been secured in Victoria without legislation; but in New Zealand, owing to the management in one large mining centre having refused to stop Sunday work, an Act had to be passed in deference to public opinion. Here also, public opinion amongst the workers was strong, and was also voiced by those mine managers who were not afraid to speak out. A large English investor in Western Australian mines had, he believed, announced his intention of visiting this colony to conduct a crusade against this unnecessary Sunday labour; and that gentleman was not alone in his opinion amongst English capitalists. The Bill had not been introduced as a fad, but in response to a general request. The agitation had been commenced by the Workers' Association before the Clerical Union took it up, and the latter body should not be blamed for their interference, for they had a right to stop all abuses, including the sly grog-shops; and in the last-mentioned object they would doubtless succeed. In every body there were, of course, some people whose zeal outran their judgment. It was only on strong representations being made that the Government introduced the Bill, and they heartily regretted its necessity.

MR. OLDHAM congratulated the Government on paying such unusual attention to mandates from the gold-fields. In desiring to abolish unnecessary Sunday labour, he gave place to no one; but what work was necessary and what unnecessary? Raising ore would undoubtedly be unnecessary; but some must work on Sunday so that others might work on Monday. Batteries must sometimes work on Sunday to keep the men employed for the remainder of the week. It was not a fair assumption that the only effect of the Bill would be to reduce the output by one-seventh, for it must result in the discharge of one-seventh of the men engaged. Legislative interference between employers and employed was ridden to death. For many years he had been connected with trade unions.

MR. MOORHEAD: What was their object?

MR. OLDHAM: Industrial reform. All the best unionists seriously hesitated before invoking legislative aid for interference with labour.

MR. MOORHEAD: In what country?

MR. OLDHAM: In the greatest country in the world. If a mine manager did not want to work his battery on Sunday, that matter could be arranged.

MR. GREGORY: The directors insisted on Sunday work.

MR. OLDHAM: The Minister spoke of one director who intended to start a crusade against Sunday labour.

MR. GREGORY: An exception which proved the rule.

MR. OLDHAM: As English investors were unaccustomed to Sunday work in the old country, the system here might be allowed to work its own cure. If the amendment left the mine open to be worked on Sunday as during the week, he would oppose it; but the Bill safeguarded the interests of nine-tenths of the men employed. If the Bill became law, either more batteries would have to be erected or mine managers must discharge some of their men; therefore, it was preferable to keep one-tenth of the men working on Sunday, and he supported the amendment.

MR. HALL: If Parliament went on passing legislation of this description, this would cease to be a free country. The mining industry in Victoria was never harassed as the mining industry had been and was being harassed here. In Victoria, notably at Maryborough, mining was carried on at the Duke of Timor, the Working Miners, the New Holland, and other mines on Sunday; and no objection was taken to it, and he doubted if there was a law in Victoria to prevent Sunday labour in mines. The tendency of this Parliament was to over-legislate, and we should soon have legislation as to what we were to eat on Sundays, and how many meals we should take. Was it necessary to run trains on Sunday? Vehicles were employed to take people to church on Sunday, and why did not clergymen object to their parishioners driving to church in vehicles on Sundays, because coachmen and grooms were employed in this way? Clergymen did not object when it was in their own interest. The agitation on the goldfields was started by religious bodies.

MR. GREGORY: It was not.

MR. HALL: The Minister of Mines admitted that the deputation which waited on the Government were chiefly composed of representatives of religious bodies, and the agitation was got up by clergymen, aided and abetted by sly grog-sellers. It seemed to be an unholy alliance. The clergymen thought they would get more people to attend church, and the sly grog-sellers were of opinion that they would sell more liquor on a Sunday. He thought the sly grog-sellers and the hotel-keepers would get the best of it. The measure would do an incalculable amount of harm to the working men. The member for Central Murchison had raised, as one of the objections to the measure, that the noise made by batteries disturbed the church congregations. As a rule, the batteries were erected before the churches, and if the religious bodies dumped down a church as close to a battery as possible, they must bear the consequence. He felt satisfied that, as a rule, miners only worked six days a week. If a miner worked on Sunday he got Saturday off. Mining managers did not go in for more Sunday work than was necessary. The Bill was inexpedient at the present time. Twenty years ago Sunday work obtained on the mines in Victoria, and there was no objection then, yet 20 years ago the mining industry of Victoria was more developed than the mining industry in this country was to-day. He (Mr. Hall) liked to do a bit of gardening on Sunday, and perhaps it did him more good than going to a hot stuffy church. There might be legislation introduced to prevent people watering their gardens on a Sunday.

MR. MOORHEAD: We were all in sympathy with the object of the Bill, to prevent working generally in mines on a Sunday. The main object of the amendment proposed by the member for Coolgardie would mean the retention on mines on Sunday of a very small number of hands engaged in feeding batteries. The feeding of batteries meant the employment of very few men indeed, as the majority of the batteries on the fields were automatic, and it only required two hands to feed 20 head of stampers. On the Murchison fields there was low-grade ore, and the stopping of batteries on a Sunday would mean the knocking

off of about 16·8 per cent. of the output. That was a serious matter. A representative mine manager in the Cue district told him (Mr. Moorhead) that if the Bill was not carried through with this amendment, it would practically mean the closing down of a couple of mines in Cue. If there was such an outcry, as the Minister led members to believe, as to the necessity for this enactment, he (Mr. Moorhead) could not understand why existing enactments were not put into force. There was an interesting little measure which clerical gentlemen could have enforced if they thought they were carrying public opinion with them, the Sunday Observance Act which was passed during the reign of Charles II., and which was still in force in England and in this colony. This Act, which was dated something like 1751, could have been enforced against mine managers, and the miners themselves if they worked on Sundays. If the present Bill was the outcome of popular feeling, why were not mine managers and miners proceeded against by the clergymen for working on Sunday? Although he (Mr. Moorhead) could not go to the extent of supporting the amendment that cyanide plants should be worked on Sunday, because the work was of a poisonous character and men engaged in it should have one day's rest, still as to batteries he must say that when it was found there would be a serious diminution in the output of gold by stopping batteries on Sunday and that mines would be closed down, he was in favour of the amendment.

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

Ayes	9
Noes	11

Majority against ... 2

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Hubble	Hon. S. Burt
Mr. Locke	Mr. Conolly
Mr. Monger	Mr. Gregory
Mr. Moorhead	Mr. Lefroy
Mr. Morgans	Mr. Piesse
Mr. Oldham	Mr. Quinlan
Mr. Phillips	Mr. Rason
Hon. H. W. Venn	Sir J. G. Lee Steers
Mr. Hall (Teller).	Mr. Throssell
	Mr. Vosper
	Mr. Solomon (Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

At 6·30 the CHAIRMAN left the Chair.

At 7·30, Chair resumed.

Clause as amended put and passed.

Clause 5—agreed to.

New Clause:

MR. MORGANS: After the expression of opinion which had been given on this Bill, based largely on religious sentiment and not on sound practical grounds, he desired to put the Committee in a logical position by inviting it to adopt the following as a new clause:

That this Act shall also apply to the Government railways, steamship companies, timber mills, newspapers, and all other industries and factories in the colony of Western Australia.

MR. A. FORREST: That could not be done.

MR. MORGANS: If it were a correct principle that a man should not be allowed to work on Sunday in a goldmine, it must also be correct that a man should not be allowed to work on Sunday in a newspaper office, or drive a locomotive engine, or engage in any occupation or labour. Was there any more sin, any more injustice, in the case of a man in working a battery on Sunday than in driving a locomotive engine on Sunday? Or was there any more sin or injustice in a man working a battery than in setting up type in a newspaper office on Sunday?

MR. A. FORREST: We were not going back to the dark ages.

MR. MORGANS: But this legislation was carrying us back to the dark ages. If it was not wrong to do these things from a religious or social standpoint, in the one case, it was not wrong in the other. The Minister of Mines had brought some religious argument to bear on the question, by defending in strong terms the action taken by the religious bodies on the goldfields in reference to this question. The Minister took a strong socialistic view in supporting the claim set up by the workers' associations, and in so doing the Minister had to some extent trampled on the claims of men who had invested their capital in the mining industry in this colony.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: There had been no expression of opinion from investors, against this Bill.

MR. MORGANS: The two chambers of commerce at Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie had passed resolutions strongly protesting against this proposed legislation; and as

far as the evil on the goldfields generally was concerned, the opinion of mining managers generally on the goldfields was in strong opposition to this measure. Indeed it was a pity such a measure had been brought before this House, without first ascertaining the views of persons interested in it. If the principle would be wrong as applied to other occupations such as working in a newspaper office on a Sunday, or driving a railway engine, or doing other work which was usually considered necessary, the principle must be equally wrong as applied to the mining industry. As over 90 per cent. of the mines in the colony were now working at a loss, the passage of the Bill would mean a great diminution in the labour employed, and such interference with mining would be a serious matter to investors. His new clause was the only logical conclusion at which the Committee could arrive, and he would press for a division.

THE CHAIRMAN said he could not put the new clause, as it did not agree with the title of the Bill.

MR. VOSPER: The title had not yet been passed.

THE CHAIRMAN: The second reading had been agreed to, and the Committee were bound by the action of the House on the second reading. Therefore any new clause proposed must agree with the title, and the hon. member's clause did not so agree.

Title—An Act to prevent unnecessary employment of labour in mines on Sundays:

MR. MORGANS moved that the words "in mines" be struck out.

MR. A. FORREST: Though giving a general support to the hon. member, he could not vote for this last amendment.

MR. MORGANS: The amendment was the logical consequence of what the Committee had done.

MR. A. FORREST: The amendment involved an impossibility, and its passage would make us the laughing-stock of the world; for coasting steamers would then have to stop on Sundays and cast anchor in mid-ocean. No doubt there was too much grandmotherly legislation passed in this House; for instance, the Early Closing Act, prohibiting shaving on Wednesday afternoons; but the amendment would make matters worse, and had better be withdrawn.

MR. VOSPER: The amendment was unnecessary, for the Act 29 Charles II. dealt with the subject in as drastic a manner as the mover could wish.

MR. MORGANS: That Act was obsolete.

MR. VOSPER: No; it could still be enforced.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Offences under that Act were punishable, in default of distress, by imprisonment in the stocks. Where could we find the stocks?

MR. VOSPER: They could soon be procured. The preamble to that Act went as far as this amendment, by enacting that people must not only refrain from working on Sundays, but must go to church; and that any tradesman, artisan, or other person who should do or exercise any worldly labour, business, or work, except works of necessity or charity, if over the age of 14 years, should forfeit the sum of five shillings. All goods exposed for sale on Sundays were also forfeited. Even travellers were prevented from entering an inn on Sunday. Legislation of this kind, from the hon. member's (Mr. Morgans') point of view, required no improvement.

MR. MORGANS: Emphasise it by passing the amendment.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The Bill was not based on any religious sentiment: if it were, it would not be entitled "An Act to prevent the unnecessary employment of labour in mines." The hon. member (Mr. Morgans) in two speeches had made special reference to him on the question of the sanctity of the day, and had told the House that he would expect him (Mr. Illingworth) to support a Bill to compel one to eat cold victuals on Sunday. Let the hon. member be logical sometimes. On the second reading he (Mr. Illingworth) distinctly said he did not consider one day more sacred than another. If there were a sacred day, it was not the first but the seventh day of the week. He was not a Sabbatarian, and did not deal with the question from a religious standpoint. If he did, the Bill must be carried a long way further. If the hon. member were logical, he would have struck out the whole of the exceptions in Clause 4. The object of the Bill was to stop unnecessary Sunday labour in mines. Was the title therefore to be altered to make it apply to everything? The Rail-

way Department refrained from running unnecessary trains.

MR. MORGANS: Which trains were unnecessary?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: There were not so many trains run on Sunday as on Saturday. He declined to deal with the question from the religious standpoint, for to his mind there was no religious standpoint in the matter, and it was unfair for the hon. member to be perpetually charging him with holding Sabbatarian principles with which he had no sympathy. He had worked on a Sunday, and would do so again if necessary. We were not here to deal with religious questions, and if the Bill were to be treated from a religious standpoint, then he would take his stand against this Bill or against any other subject which was to be dealt with from a religious point of view. Parliament had no right to deal with the religious phases of questions. We were proposing something which would be of the greatest good to the greatest number in the community. As to the supposed loss which the member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest) had said the stoppage of battery work on Sunday would mean in the output of gold, the hon. member had admitted that at present miners were not actually taking ore out of the mines on Sunday, and it was only a question as to the working of batteries on Sunday. All that was necessary, if the stone were there to be crushed, would be for the company to find means of crushing it; and this would only mean a few extra stampers and a few more men to feed the batteries for six days a week. If 90 per cent. of the men did not work on a Sunday, and if sufficient stone was raised in six days to keep the battery going seven days, then all that was needed was a few extra head of stampers. Instead of there being fewer men employed, there would be more men employed. The member for Coolgardie wished to throw contempt on the Bill and on those who supported it. He (Mr. Illingworth) knew the Bill originated with the working men themselves, and that the clergy whom the hon. member charged with being the authors took no action until the workers forced action upon them. This question was pressed upon him (Mr. Illingworth) three years ago, and the public feeling in the

district he represented had resulted in the greater proportion of the batteries stopping work on Sunday. At the present time batteries did not work on Sunday in the Murchison district; therefore why should they be worked on the Eastern goldfields. The mines on the Murchison turned out low-grade ore, and managed to pay dividends by only working six days a week. One mine in the Murchison district, with an average of 6dwt. to the ton, paid dividends and only worked six days a week. If it became an established rule in a district to work on a Sunday, it would be difficult for the wage-earner to alter that rule. It was only done by a strike, or adopting other unpleasant means. In other colonies this boon of Sunday rest was obtained by a strike. Was it not better to obtain it by peaceful means? We were not saying that it was a sin to work on Sunday; it was not being said that a commandment was being broken, but that unnecessary work should not be done on Sunday. If men worked on Sunday in the timber mills he would take the same course he was adopting now and vote against unnecessary Sunday labour. If it were the general rule in the community in every industry to work on a Sunday the same reasons that made him support this Bill would make him support a measure in reference to the whole of the industries, but in no industry in the colony but the mining industry did the evil exist.

MR. MORGANS: Why keep engine-drivers at work on the railways on Sunday?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That was answered by saying that it was necessary labour. He was certain the Committee would not follow the hon. member in his desire to extend the scope of the Bill. If the measure was such an evil thing, let the Committee confine it to mines.

Amendment put and negatived, and the title agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments, and the report adopted.

MINERAL LANDS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clauses reconsidered with amendments, embodied *pro forma*.

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

THIRD READING.

Bill read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

MINING ON PRIVATE PROPERTY
AMENDMENT BILL.

On motion by Mr. VOSPER, the House resolved into Committee to consider the Bill.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 1—Short title :

THE MINISTER OF MINES moved that the following be added to the clause: "And shall be incorporated with the Mining on Private Property Act of 1897, hereinafter called the principal Act."

Amendment put and passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 12 of principal Act :

THE MINISTER OF MINES moved that the following be added to the clause :

And by striking out in Sub-section (4) the words "the applicant or claim-holder also paying to the owner and occupier such costs as the Warden shall allow," and by inserting in lieu thereof: "and the applicant or claim-holder shall pay to the owner and occupier such costs and damages as the Warden shall allow. If default in payment or satisfaction of any compensation awarded as aforesaid continues for one month after the determination by the Warden or, in case of appeal, after judgment on the appeal, the application for the lease or the interest in the claim, as the case may be, shall be deemed to have been abandoned as aforesaid."

The object of the amendment was to give some finality, so that if the costs were not paid within a certain time the application should become null and void.

Amendment put and passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

New clause—Repeal of Section 4 of the principal Act :

Section 4 of the principal Act is hereby repealed.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The section which was to be repealed by this amending clause was taken from the Victorian Act, in which the section was declaratory in regard to the Act as a whole, by affirming that all gold found on any land within the colony was to be the property of the Crown until the particular land was brought under the Mining on Private Property Act. This declaratory clause became manifestly inappropriate when embodied in the

Mining on Private Property Act in this colony, because it was not necessary here to declare that the particular land was brought under the Act, as the Act could apply only to land privately owned and not belonging to the Crown. Therefore those words in the principal Act should be struck out.

Clause put and passed.

New Clause :

THE MINISTER OF MINES moved that the following be added, to stand as Clause 3 :

Leases under the repealed Act of 1897 may be registered within three months.—(1.) At any time within three months after the passing of this Act, the grantor or the lessee of any lease granted under the repealed Mining on Private Property Act, 1897, may register the same with the Registrar, at the office of the Department of Mines, by depositing a copy of the said lease with him there.

But if not then registered, may be superseded by leases under the principal Act.—(2.) Where a gold-mining lease is granted under the principal Act, and includes land which is comprised in a lease granted in pursuance of the said repealed Act, but which is not registered in manner and within the time aforesaid, the said land shall pass under the first mentioned lease, and the lease granted in pursuance of the said repealed Act shall be deemed to be superseded in respect of such land.

This clause provided that leases taken out under the Act of 1897, now repealed, might be registered within three months, and if not registered within that time the land would be open to any miner to peg out and occupy. The Act of 1897 had caused a lot of trouble, and one trouble was that under it the private owner of land which was found to be auriferous might lease it for gold-mining purposes, and that lease did not impose the same labour conditions and other conditions which were obligatory under the Mining Act dealing with Crown lands. Therefore, the effect of leasing land without labour conditions, and so on, might be that the land might remain unworked and practically locked up against mining, because an existing lease would be set up as a bar against any one who wished to mine for gold on that land. This applied not only to leases made under that Act, but a pretence might be set up that a lease signed subsequently, but ante-dated, had actually been granted before the repeal of the Act of 1897. Therefore, the effect of this new clause would be that three months were allowed within which any such lease must be

registered, and if not registered, then the land would be opened to miners under the conditions of the Mining on Private Property Act.

Clause put and passed.

New Clause:

THE MINISTER OF MINES moved that the following be added, to stand as Clause 4:

Amendment of Sections 6 and 8 of principal Act.—In Section 6, Sub-section (5) of the principal Act the words, in line 2, "private land on which any," and the words "is situated" in line 4, are hereby struck out, and in Section 8, Sub-section (4) of the principal Act the words "which is situated," in the third line, are hereby struck out, and in place thereof the words "any lands within one hundred yards of" are inserted, and the words "in bona fide occupation or of any land within one hundred yards of the same," in lines 5 and 6 are struck out.

This amendment was found to be necessary, because the particular section in the principal Act prohibited anyone from mining on land within 100 yards of any private land on which was a spring, a building, and so on. A spring might be in the middle of a 5,000-acre run, and the effect of the wording was that no person could mine within 100 yards of the 5,000-acre boundary, whereas the intention was that he should not mine within 100 yards of the particular spring or building. This amendment would remove that difficulty by making the intention clear.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments, and the report adopted.

POLICE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Consideration resumed formally at Clause 2, on which Mr. James had moved an amendment.

MR. ILLINGWORTH said the Attorney General had charge of this Bill, but unfortunately he was not present; and Mr. James, who had moved an amendment, was not present.

HON. S. BURT moved that progress be reported.

MR. WOOD opposed any further delay. This Bill had been postponed time after time—

THE CHAIRMAN: The motion could not be debated.

Motion put and passed.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

TOTALISATOR ACT AMENDMENT BILL. SECOND READING.

MR. MONGER (York): I move the second reading of this Bill with great pleasure, knowing that it will receive the support of practically every member who occupies a seat in this Legislature. This short measure has been introduced to this House for the purpose of legalising certain racing clubs which are recognised by the Western Australian Turf Club, and owing to some little informality which took place—I think I am right in terming it that—some little informality or some little difference between some of these clubs and certain gentlemen residing in the vicinity of Perth, it was decided by the courts of this colony that certain clubs were not privileged to use the totalisator in connection with their racecourses. For the purpose of settling this doubt—I can only term it a doubt, with all due respect to those who presided on that occasion—with a view to dispelling the doubt that may exist, I was asked to introduce this short measure. With these few remarks I have the greatest pleasure in recommending this little Bill to the favourable consideration of hon. members. I beg to move that the Bill be now read a second time.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Central Murchison): I am opposed to the totalisator *in toto*.

MR. VOSPER: Tee-totally.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: But at the present moment I have in mind the question of lotteries, in connection with which numerous amendments appear in the Notice Paper.

MR. MONGER: Those amendments have no reference to this Bill, which is an entirely separate matter.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: My present objection was taken because I was under the impression that the list of amendments with regard to gambling was associated with this Bill.

THE PREMIER: No; they refer to the Police Act Amendment Bill.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That being so, I shall not oppose the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

MOTION—BANKING INSTITUTIONS, ASSETS AND LIABILITIES.

Debate resumed on motion of Mr. Monger, moved 23rd November:

That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable that all banking institutions trading in Western Australia should at all times show assets in the colony equal to their liabilities therein, and that the Government be requested to introduce legislation during this session to this effect.

MR. RASON: The Order of the Day should be postponed until Tuesday next.

MR. VOSPER: Let the matter be discussed and disposed of.

MR. MONGER: Better put the question at once.

Question put, and a division being called for by Mr. MONGER, it was taken with the following result:—

Ayes	6
Noes	11

Majority against	...	5
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AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Connor	Sir John Forrest
Mr. Locke	Mr. A. Forrest
Mr. Monger	Mr. Harper
Mr. Rason	Mr. Illingworth
Mr. Vosper	Mr. Lefroy
Mr. Quinlan (Teller).	Mr. Pennefather
	Mr. Piesse
	Mr. Throssell
	Hon. H. W. Venn
	Mr. Wood
	Mr. Solomon (Teller).

Motion thus negatived.

FREMANTLE WATER SUPPLY BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. F. H. Piesse): In rising to move the second reading of this Bill, I should like to point out that, with the exception of part of Clause 4 and Clauses 8 and 9, the Bill differs but slightly from an Act passed for a similar purpose in 1893, 57 Vict., No. 24. That Act did not include the municipalities of North and East Fremantle, which are provided for by the present measure; and I should also like to point out, in adding Clauses 8 and 9, the Government are desirous of making provision for levying a rate and also for recovering that rate. Under the existing Act, although we have power to make a charge not exceeding one shilling in the pound, we have no provision enabling us to recover that rate or to exercise other functions which we desire to exercise in regard to the levying of rates and to the carrying out of the provisions of the Waterworks Act of 1889, which powers

are provided in Clause 6. Apart from this, there is little for me to say regarding this Bill; and it is not my intention to proceed further with the measure to-night, except to move the second reading, giving the members for Fremantle an opportunity, if the Bill be allowed to proceed to the Committee stage, of considering it in Committee to-morrow. My only desire to-night is to bring the measure fully before the House, and I hope that, during the time which will elapse between this and to-morrow evening, hon. members interested in the Bill will take the opportunity of looking into its provisions, and will assist me, if we reach that stage, in passing it through Committee. Of course there may be objections raised to some provisions in the Bill, and if these appear to be serious, and such as I can entertain, I shall then be glad to deal with them. I therefore have pleasure in moving the second reading.

MR. SOLOMON (South Fremantle): I do not intend to oppose the second reading; but there are one or two clauses differing from the existing Act, to which I should like to call attention. One takes away from ratepayers the power to decide whether they will or will not have water in a certain locality. That clause, I think, the Government might postpone, considering the quality of the water we get at Fremantle, a sample of which I shall endeavour to bring here to-morrow evening for the inspection of hon. members; and if not postponed, some alteration might be made in this particular clause, which is entirely new and foreign to the existing Act. Again, by Clause 8 any vacant land within 60 yards of a main, even if it be worth only a few pounds, is liable to a minimum rate of 10s., which, I think, is scarcely fair. The minimum rate should be considerably less than that sum. However, these are matters which the Government will possibly see their way to deal with when the Bill is in Committee.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

MOTION—PILBARRA GOLDFIELD RAILWAY, CONSTRUCTION.

DISCHARGE OF ORDER.

Order read, for resuming debate on motion moved by Mr. Kingsmill, 23rd November.

THE PREMIER moved that the order be discharged.

Motion put and passed, and the order discharged.

PEARL DEALERS LICENSING BILL.

SECOND READING.

MR. A. FORREST (West Kimberley): I beg to move the second reading of the Bill, which is introduced for the purpose of licensing purchasers of pearlshell in the North-West coastal districts. There are at present grave complaints that the owners of boats engaged in the pearlshell fishery seldom get the pearls, because buyers come from Singapore, stay a few months in this colony while the boats are coming in, and purchase these pearls, which are really stolen from the lawful owners. I believe a similar Bill was passed in this House last session with reference to the sale of gold. The member for the Ashburton (Hon. S. Burt), who drew this measure, is absent from the House, so I would like at this stage to formally move the second reading, and in Committee members can fully debate the different clauses. What the Bill means is that persons shall be licensed by the resident magistrates of towns as those who shall be allowed to buy pearls, and that it shall be illegal for any person to buy pearls except from the holders of licenses. It has been represented to me by the people of Broome that it is now becoming impossible for those engaged in the trade to carry out their operations successfully, unless something is done in the direction of this short Bill. If we pass the Bill through Committee, we shall only be doing an act of justice to those who carry on the pearlshell fishing industry on the north coast.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BANK NOTE PROTECTION BILL.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

The Legislative Council having returned the Bill with three amendments, the same were considered.

IN COMMITTEE.

MR. A. FORREST moved that the amendments be agreed to.

Put and passed, and the Council's amendments agreed to.

Resolution reported, report adopted, and a message accordingly transmitted to the Council.

MOTION—SUPREME COURT-HOUSE SITE.

JOINT COMMITTEE.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS moved:

That a joint select committee of both Houses of Parliament be appointed to consider the question of the selection of a site for the new Supreme Court.

Some time ago he intimated that, in connection with the site of a new building for the Supreme Court-house, it was intended to ask the House to agree to the appointment of a select committee, to sit with a select committee of the Legislative Council, to assist in choosing a site. Already several sites had been mentioned, and the Government were anxious to obtain the opinion of a joint committee as to the site. He had mentioned the matter to several members of the House, including the member for Albany (Mr. Leake), and had discussed the subject with other members.

Question put and passed.

A ballot having been taken, the following members, in addition to the mover, were appointed: Hon. S. Burt, Mr. Leake, Mr. Quinlan, and Mr. Wood.

Ordered, that the committee report to the House on Tuesday, 12th December; also that the resolution be transmitted to the Legislative Council, requesting their concurrence.

MOTION—RAILWAY TICKET COLLECTING, PINJARRAH.

MR. LOCKE (Sussex) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the present system of collecting tickets at Pinjarrah should be abolished, and a system entailing less inconvenience to the travelling public established in its stead.

Travellers on the railway between Perth, Bridgetown, and Busselton experienced inconvenience and discomfort through the present method of collecting and checking tickets at Pinjarrah station. The Bridgetown train left Perth at half-past nine in the morning, and at noon arrived at Pinjarrah, where there was supposed to be a stay of ten minutes for refreshments, but for five of the ten minutes passengers were locked in the train while tickets

were collected and checked, and when they were set at liberty, there was absolutely no time to get refreshments before the bell rang for resuming the journey. Neither at Picton nor Boyanup were refreshments obtainable, though at the latter station, where the train was supposed to stay ten minutes, passengers were kept three-quarters of an hour on one occasion when he travelled through. Bridgetown was reached about half-past seven in the evening; and, unless a passenger provided himself with a well-stocked hamper, he simply had to starve all day. This new idea on the part of the Minister or the Traffic Manager, of locking the railway carriage doors to ensure that every passenger was provided with a ticket, was a most unfortunate innovation for the travelling public, because, besides the inconvenience, there would be considerable danger in case of fire or other accident. The present arrangement was not fair to the lessee of the refreshment room at Pinjarrah, who doubtless paid a high rent, and was prepared to supply first-class meals to passengers. There were none of these inconveniences formerly, when the guard used to travel from carriage to carriage for tickets; and, though the Minister would inform the House that the system of locking the doors was general throughout the colony, that fact in no way added to the comfort of passengers. The difficulty might be got over by stopping the train for the collection of tickets at some point before Pinjarrah was reached, thus allowing passengers the full benefit of the 10 minutes for refreshments.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. F. H. Piesse): No doubt people objected to be locked in the railway carriages when tickets were being checked; but then every man considered himself a born railway manager. The whole difficulty which had been presented by the hon. member could be got over if the public were prepared to sanction the expense of providing barriers at Pinjarrah and other stations in the same way as in Perth; but without barriers, some steps were necessary to prevent people travelling without tickets, or in carriages for which their tickets were not available. Nobody objected more than he himself did to the inconvenience complained of; but, like most

complaints against the Railway department or the Public Works department, this was exaggerated, for he was confident the checking of the tickets at Pinjarrah did not occupy five or six minutes. Endeavours were now being made to carry out a quick service, and the train for Bridgetown did not leave town until a quarter past nine in the morning, thus allowing passengers ample time to breakfast before starting; and, moreover, they reached their destination about an hour and ten minutes earlier than formerly. It must be admitted, however, that the stay for refreshments at Pinjarrah was not long enough, and the advisability of prolonging the time was being considered. The object of the member for Sussex (Mr. Locke) could have been gained without submitting a motion before the House, which was a proceeding something like using a hundred-ton gun in killing a mosquito. All complaints made in newspapers and elsewhere were recorded in a big book in the department, a clerk being kept specially for this work, and every complaint was looked into and efforts made to find a remedy. All possible was being done for the comfort of the travelling public, and he hoped the change contemplated in Pinjarrah would be carried out before long. At one time there used to be similar complaints about stoppages at West Perth, but now that the barrier system had been inaugurated at the Perth Station, the passengers experienced no inconvenience of the kind. Something must be done to protect the revenue, and the only method at present available at such places as Pinjarrah was to stop the train for the purpose of checking tickets.

MR. LOCKE: Could tickets not be checked as the train was travelling?

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Guards were prohibited from travelling along the footboards of carriages in motion, but he promised that every effort would be made to lessen the inconvenience complained of.

MR. A. FORREST (West Kimberley): The member for Sussex (Mr. Locke) had to be thanked for bringing this motion forward, not in the interests of Pinjarrah, but in the interests of the travelling public generally. In goldfields trains, passengers were locked up sometimes for considerable periods while tickets were

being snipped, and this inconvenience had only arisen since the recent innovation. If the Railway Department could not protect the revenue with the staff they now had, all he could say was that he was sorry for the department; indeed, the revenue ought to be well protected, the tickets being snipped so often that by the end of the journey there was little or nothing of them left. The travelling public were subject to many abuses and troubles which they ought not to suffer. At places where passengers were allowed a certain time for refreshment, nothing was so annoying as to find the carriage door locked, but other carriage doors open and travellers alighting when one could not get out. The case instanced about Pinjarrah was nothing compared to the annoyance on the goldfields line. He hoped the Commissioner would take steps to inform the Railway Department that Parliament were masters of the situation, and that the department should carry out the wishes of Parliament. We were not going to be ruled by the Railway Traffic branch. This House represented the people, and the department should try as far as possible to carry out our wishes.

MR. HALL (Perth): The mover deserved credit for bringing this motion forward. It needed a 100-ton gun to move the Railway Department towards making any provision for the convenience of the travelling public. Had he (Mr. Hall) not been in the position he occupied as a supporter of the Government, he would have a great deal to say as to the Railway Department. He had only to instance the railway crossing at William street (Perth). Twelve months or more ago, he brought this matter under the notice of the Commissioner of Railways in this House, and pointed out the great inconvenience people laboured under at the William street crossing. But the difficulty had not been overcome at all. A person going to the crossing with a vehicle had to wait 10 or 15 minutes, the gates being locked, but no trains passing.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member's observations had nothing whatever to do with the motion before the House.

MR. HALL: This instance he had brought forward to show that it needed the 100-ton gun which the Commissioner of Railways had mentioned, to move the

Railway Department. He could give other instances, which he would do at some future time.

MR. WOOD (West Perth): The mover was to be thanked for having brought forward this motion. The Commissioner of Railways did not know the inconvenience that the travelling public were put to on the South-Western line, because the Commissioner did not travel as a member of the public.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: No one knew better.

MR. WOOD: The Commissioner of Railways did not travel as one of the ordinary public; and the Commissioner did not travel to Bunbury last Christmas time, when not a drop of water was to be obtained on the trains between Perth and Bunbury, and it was a very hot day. Passengers had to go without a drink of water. He (Mr. Wood) had to travel second class, but that did not trouble him much; it was the inconvenience of going without a drink of water between Perth and Bunbury, on a blazing hot day, which he complained of. He did not blame the Commissioner of Railways, because the Minister's attention was not drawn to these things as the officers of the department would not draw attention to them: it would appear that the department was run for the Government and for the department, as no consideration was shown to the public. In the other colonies there was a great difference in the attention which passengers received compared to the attention received in this country. A remark was made to him when travelling in a cattle truck to the races a short time ago, and he replied that these trucks were good enough for anyone except a Minister.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS said he had travelled in a truck himself.

MR. WOOD: And the Commissioner did not enjoy it. He hoped that some better provision would be made for the excursionists at Christmas time to Bunbury, and that a plentiful supply of water would be provided along the line.

Question put and passed.

MOTION—BOYANUP RAILWAY STATION ACCOMMODATION.

MR. LOCKE (Sussex) moved:

That, in view of the present inadequate accommodation at Boyanup railway station,

the Government should, in the opinion of this House, consider the advisability of making improvements at that station, so as to obviate the inconvenience to which travellers have so long been subjected.

He had been forced to bring this matter before the House much against his wish, because he had endeavoured unsuccessfully for the last two years to get some small alterations made at the Boyanup station. During last winter there was a dirty old sail put in front of the goods shed, and in rainy weather the people had to get behind it. The travelling public had to wait half an hour or three quarters at this station; they had to cross the railway line, thus running the risk of losing their lives, and then to get into the shed out of the weather. One hotel-keeper, living close to the railway station, twelve months ago offered, through him (Mr. Locke), to provide money for building a refreshment room according to Government specifications, and pay to the Government any rent they chose to charge for occupying the room. That would not have cost the Government a shilling, and the travelling public would have had the convenience of a refreshment room there during the last 12 months. But the Government decided this could not be done, and promised to provide accommodation there; but it had not been built yet. Some small improvement might be arranged, surely. He knew the Government intended making some alterations at this station, which would cost a considerable sum of money; but, in the meantime, a small verandah along the railway platform might be erected at a cost of £20 or £30, which would give shelter to people waiting at the station. His (Mr. Locke's) constituents made it so unpleasant for him when he went home, that he had to show them he was doing something and therefore he brought forward this motion. He had been trying for the past two years to get the Government to make these alterations at Boyanup, and had received a promise, 18 months or two years ago, that the Government intended to build an island platform there, and make other improvements; but the alterations had not been commenced. It was most inconvenient, unpleasant, and unsatisfactory, more particularly as he (Mr. Locke) got the blame for the work not being done.

He wished to know what the Minister had to say about this matter; although he understood that the Minister would say that the Railway Department were going to do this work. That was what the Minister said two years ago. A refreshment room and verandah could be put up for £50, which work could be done in a fortnight. He did not speak only for the travelling public who went to Busselton, but for those who went to Quindalup, Donnybrook, and Greenbushes, as passengers travelling to those places had to stop at Boyanup. He hoped the Commissioner would see that the work would be done right away so that the travelling public on this line would have some little convenience at the Boyanup station.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. F. H. Piesse): But for his friendship for the hon. member (Mr. Locke), he would say that motions of this kind took up a great deal of time, and caused much talk. This was a matter he had discussed with the hon. member, who had seen the plans which had been recently decided upon for the work, which would be put in hand as soon as money was available. He had not the money to carry out the work, no matter how necessary or urgent the improvements were. It was very well to talk about the work being carried out for £50, but we knew how far £50 would go in carrying out such improvements as those asked for. Boyanup was a junction, and if the Government were to obviate or lessen the delays caused there in connection with the trains going on to Busselton and other places, we must construct an island platform and provide other conveniences for the travelling public. Rails would have to be laid, and alterations in the yard effected, which meant an expenditure of a good deal more than £50. This work had not been carried out because he had not the funds with which to do it. If the funds were forthcoming, the work would have been put in hand long since. He was now waiting for the passage of the Loan Bill, so as to be able to commence the work. Although Boyanup might be an important place, there were other places more important which required attention. The work at Boyanup was urgent, but it could not have been done earlier. Like other com-

plaints, this one was no doubt exaggerated. The department were fair game to fly at. Notwithstanding all the kindly feelings entertained towards him and his officers by hon. members, the latter sometimes suffered small personal inconveniences which caused them to say things which, in their calmer moments, they would have left unsaid. He did not take much notice of these remarks. The hon. member, though stating that the department had altogether neglected that district, would doubtless agree that on the whole his constituents were pretty well served. He (the Commissioner) would do his best to have this work put in hand and to meet the public convenience generally, though he fully recognised that it would never be possible to please the public in every particular.

MR. LOCKE said all he wanted was the same conveniences as were enjoyed at other stations.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: The member for the Swan (Mr. Ewing), who had resided in the Eastern colonies, to which he had recently paid a visit, had on his return congratulated him (the Commissioner) on the railway system here; and hon. members would doubtless agree that, though our railways were not perfect, and were a long way from perfection, still the disparaging comparisons made between our system and the railways of other colonies were unjustifiable. No doubt the department did not always succeed in treating the public as well as was desirable, but an endeavour was made to lessen existing inconveniences, and although motions such as this were brought forward, he and his officers were doing their best to try to put necessary works in hand. He assured the hon. member that no delay would take place that could be avoided. Let the motion be withdrawn, and the work would be done as soon as possible.

MR. LOCKE: Having had an assurance from the Minister that the work would be put in hand at once, he would withdraw the motion.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: As soon as funds were available the work would be done.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

MOTION—RAILWAYS AND OIL-SPRAYING.

MR. LOCKE (Sussex) moved:

That in view of the successful results of the experiments lately made in America with respect to the spraying of railroads with oil, the Government should, in the opinion of this House, make inquiries as to the cost and the benefits likely to be derived by the adoption of the idea in this colony.

This rather greasy proposal contained a modicum of common sense, for the plan had been adopted with success in other countries. He had been informed that a tender was fixed to the rear of the train, having a contrivance similar to that of a watercart. As the train proceeded, a cheap crude oil was distributed through sprayers over the permanent way. The line might be oiled two or three times for the first year, and afterwards annually. The result was to prevent dust from rising, thus saving wear and tear, and keeping the road in order by killing vegetation. Friction would be minimised, and engines, he understood, would last twice as long as they did now. The absence of dust would necessitate less cleaning, there being with this system no more dust in summer than in winter. The expense would be slight; a sprayer would only cost a few shillings; and the result of an experiment must be satisfactory, and would doubtless lead to the adoption of the system throughout the Eastern districts, where dust was such an intolerable inconvenience.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. F. H. Piesse): No doubt the hon. member had brought forward the motion with a good intention. The idea of spraying railways with oil had not escaped the attention of the department's engineers. The matter had already been looked into, but required further consideration before it could be even experimentally adopted. It would be inadvisable to experiment until assured that good results had been obtained elsewhere. Inquiries would be continued; the experiment, if it could be tried at a reasonable cost, would be made; and, if results were satisfactory, the system would be adopted.

Motion put and passed.

MOTION—PERTH WATER, BRIDGE TO SOUTH PERTH.

MR. WILSON (Canning) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable that the Government should, at an

early date, take into consideration the construction of a bridge across the river Swan at the Narrows.

Unlike a previous motion, this implied no censure on the Commissioner of Railways. He (Mr. Wilson) did not wish to bind the Government to expend money forthwith on this project, but he wished the matter to be considered and funds provided as early as possible, if the motion were passed. In this matter we should consider not only the population of South Perth and Victoria Park, but of Perth and suburbs generally. The Zoological Gardens were at South Perth, and from Mill Point to the Causeway was a pleasant drive. The bridge would permit of a circular drive round Perth water, which would be of great advantage to all the residents of the metropolis. The manager of the Perth Tramway Company had assured him that, although by the Bill recently passed the Mount Bay road tram-line might be constructed at any time within the next five years, nevertheless if a bridge were thrown across the Narrows, the tramway would immediately be extended to that point, and subsequently through South Perth as far as the Causeway. These considerations should influence the Government in favour of the motion. A light ornamental bridge, provided with a swing to admit of ships passing through and suitable for vehicular traffic, could be constructed, he believed, for £20,000 to £25,000.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: A swing bridge could not be built for £25,000.

MR. WILSON said he thought it could. We recognised that the Government had no money at present to carry out work of this description, but he suggested that if they could not see their way to undertake the work next session, a Bill should be brought in empowering the Perth and South Perth districts to raise a loan to erect this bridge, and also empowering them to levy a toll until the cost of the bridge had been paid off. That was the system adopted over and over again in the old country. Where bridges had been required, the money had been borrowed by the local authority and a toll levied until the sum had been repaid. In his opinion we should be justified in adopting that system here, and in throw-

ing a bridge over the river which would benefit, he might say, at least one-fifth if not one-fourth of the population of the colony. He hoped the Premier would allow the motion to pass, and introduce legislation next session in order to carry out the work.

THE PREMIER: The question was whether it was desirable.

MR. HALL (Perth): It afforded him much pleasure to second this motion, because if the bridge were constructed and a toll charged until the cost was repaid, it would be an extremely good thing for the city, and for the suburbs of South Perth and Victoria Park. It was the duty of the Government to give every facility to make the suburbs as attractive as possible, in order to allow people who worked in the crowded city all day to go out of the town during the evening. Doubtless the trams would go as far as the Narrows, and if the bridge were constructed they would, he felt sure, be continued along the suburban road and Victoria Park, out towards the Canning. He believed that if Parliament would give the right to private persons to construct the bridge and charge a toll, the work could be done privately; but it would be better for the Government to do it, and doubtless the undertaking would repay the expenditure. At present there was no means (except by ferry and by the long route over the Causeway) of getting across to the Zoo, and to the crowded portions along there. That kept back a suburb which ought to be the St. Kilda of Perth. If the bridge were erected, a very large population would flock to that part of Perth—because it was really Perth—which would then be only seven to 10 minutes from the centre of the city. He trusted the Government would take the matter into consideration, and as soon as possible have the bridge constructed.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. F. H. Piessé): This matter had already received some consideration from the Government. Some time ago, at the request of several members, an estimate was prepared of the cost of constructing a bridge across the Narrows. The cost of a bridge without an opening would be about £25,000, whilst the cost of a bridge with a swing opening would be £39,000 or £40,000. It would be

necessary to provide a 60-foot opening for ships to pass. There were any number of amateurs who thought they could do even better than the Government, but we did not find that they succeeded much better in the end. With regard to this matter, we could not at present get further information for members than that already obtained by the department, and he would be pleased to lay that information on the table of the House at the next sitting. To take the matter into consideration any further would really mean that the Government would have to be prepared to come up with an amount sufficient to construct this bridge, because that would be the object in view. Speaking individually, he thought it would be a mistake to build a bridge there. Of course it would be a convenience, but it would obstruct navigation and detract from the appearance of the river. Doubtless in time the Government would have to further consider the question of deepening all that portion of the river. If hon. members got the information the Government had already collected, and the rough plans which had been prepared with the estimate, that was as far as the Government could be expected to go at present.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest): It seemed to him that motions of this sort did not really amount to much. The motion said "take into consideration the construction of a bridge." The Government had already done that. Estimates were made and designs prepared, so the matter had been considered; but the construction of a bridge across the Swan at that point was a great question of policy. As to the building of the bridge, that could soon be managed, if it were thought desirable; but there were many considerations to be taken into account before a bridge should be built at that point. With regard to convenience, of course such a bridge would be a convenience. Every bridge was a convenience to the people, but a convenience to some extent could be obtained without a bridge. A steam ferry would be a great convenience to people. Ferries ran very quickly, as we knew and had seen elsewhere. It would take very little time to traverse that short distance. Whether it was desirable to build a permanent structure with a swing opening was a

question upon which there would be much diversity of opinion. He did not wish to pledge himself to-night as to what he thought about it. He did not think the House wanted to affirm to-night that it had made up its mind to build a bridge at the point referred to. More information would be required before members made up their minds on the subject. If the House passed this motion, it would practically say the bridge should be built.

MR. WILSON: What the motion said was that it was desirable to take the question into consideration, and get the information that was necessary. A select committee could be appointed, if the Premier liked.

THE PREMIER: A select committee could not be obtained now.

MR. WILSON: There could be one next session.

THE PREMIER: Yes. The hon. member might move for the appointment of a select committee, when the House again met. Nothing would be done between now and next session.

MR. WILSON: The matter could be brought up next session.

THE PREMIER: Could not the hon. member move his motion next session?

MR. WILSON: Perhaps he might not be there.

THE PREMIER: It was to be hoped the hon. member would be. If he would alter the motion, and say that during the recess the Government should obtain information with regard to the construction of a bridge over the Swan River at the Narrows, the Government could accept that. The Government could obtain more information, but then there would be the question of policy.

MR. WILSON: There was the question of advisability.

THE PREMIER: As to advisability, who was going to settle that point? It was one of the most important matters with which we had to deal. We did not want to settle the matter between this and next session. The Government would rather have a select committee appointed to take evidence upon the question. He did not think this question was pressing. What was proposed need not be done at the present time. If the hon. member would alter his motion—

MR. WILSON: It was not open to him to move an amendment on his own motion.

THE PREMIER: An amendment could be moved.

MR. WILSON: With the object of appointing a select committee next session?

THE SPEAKER: A motion binding the House next session could not be passed now.

THE PREMIER: A good deal of information might be obtained, and if so the Government would be glad to place it on the table. Doubtless the engineer would make an investigation, but the question of policy was one which the Government must decide. He moved, as an amendment:

That the words "at an early date take into consideration the construction" be struck out of the motion, and that the words "during the recess obtain information as to the cost" be inserted in lieu thereof.

HON. H. W. VENN (Wellington): The amendment of the Premier was one which he should be disposed to support. The question of putting any obstruction at all across the Narrows was a very serious one. If it were decided to erect a bridge across there, rights would be created which it would be very hard to take away afterwards, and the greatest possible care should be exercised in regard to setting up such rights. The time was probably not far distant when we should have a considerable amount of shipping between Fremantle and Perth. We were yet destined to see larger vessels coming close up to the city; and we all recognised that the magnificent sheet of water between Perth and Fremantle would be utilised, if our colony went ahead with leaps and bounds, as we knew it would. Had the prosperity of a year or two ago continued, we should doubtless have had some project of the kind in hand at the present time; but before going into the question of the absolute advisability of the construction of a bridge across the Narrows at present, it would be well to leave the matter in the hands of the Government for the collection of information.

MR. WILSON (in reply): The amendment was all right as far as it went, but in order to be complete it ought to contain the words, "also as to the advis-

ability of the construction of the bridge." The officers of the Public Works Department were the right people to apply to for opinions on the question.

THE PREMIER: Some would report against, and some in favour.

MR. WILSON: Quite so. In other parts of the world, shipping traffic never stopped the road traffic, and bridges were thrown across rivers much more congested with shipping than ever the Swan was likely to be. No doubt shipping would ultimately come up to Perth, and the sooner that was an accomplished fact, the sooner would population be attracted, and the sooner would it be necessary to construct this bridge.

THE PREMIER: Why not have a steam ferry?

MR. WILSON: A steam ferry would not allow trams to cross the river.

THE PREMIER: Whole railway trains were carried on steam ferries in some countries.

MR. WILSON: But never where a bridge could be conveniently built.

THE PREMIER: The advisability of constructing the bridge was a matter of policy.

MR. WILSON: But this was not a political matter.

THE PREMIER: A select committee might be appointed to consider the question, after the cost had been ascertained.

MR. WILSON: If the Premier admitted the bridge would be a convenience to the people of South Perth, he admitted the policy of constructing the bridge; and there could be no harm in having reports from engineers and officers of the department, as to the advisability of proceeding with the work.

THE PREMIER: The motion might provide for the engineers giving an estimate of the cost, and for "reports thereon."

MR. HALL: It was difficult to see any object in ascertaining the cost, without at the same time inquiring whether it was advisable to construct the bridge. As a matter of fact, the Government already had information as to the cost, because some months ago when he himself had an idea of getting such a work carried out by private enterprise, he applied to the Commissioner of Railways for information, and was told that a bridge at the Narrows would cost about £26,000. The

Premier had suggested a steam ferry, and of course if a bridge could not be obtained, by all means let there be a steam ferry, on which vehicles could be conveyed from one side of the bridge to the other.

Amendment (the Premier's) put and passed.

THE PREMIER further moved that the words "also reports thereon" be added to the motion.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10-22 o'clock until the next day.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 7th December, 1899.

Beer Duty Amendment Bill, first reading—Health Act Amendment Bill, first reading—Question: Telephone Service, Perth and Fremantle—Question: Railway Crossing, William street, Perth—Question: Magistrates and their Duty—Question: Government Resident at Roebourne—Mining on Private Property Amendment Bill, third reading—Sunday Labour in Mines Bill, postponement—Land Act Amendment Bill, recommittal, reported—Metropolitan Waterworks Amendment Bill, in Committee, Division, reported—Police Act Amendment Bill, in Committee, Clause 2 to new clauses, Divisious (4), progress—Totalisator Act Amendment Bill, in Committee, Division, progress—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

BEER DUTY AMENDMENT BILL.

Introduced by the PREMIER, by leave, and read a first time.

HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Introduced by the ATTORNEY GENERAL, by leave, and read a first time.

QUESTION—TELEPHONE SERVICE, PERTH AND FREMANTLE.

MR. WOOD asked the Premier:—Whether it is the intention of the Government to do anything in regard to improving the telephone service between Perth and Fremantle.

THE PREMIER replied: Yes; the service referred to has been interfered with by the Electric Tramway system, and the Telephone Department is at present engaged in devising means to improve the telephone system between Perth and Fremantle.

QUESTION—RAILWAY CROSSING, WILLIAM STREET, PERTH.

MR. WOOD asked the Commissioner of Railways:—Whether it is the intention of the Railway Department to give greater facilities to vehicular traffic at the William Street railway crossing, so as to enable carts to cross the line at shorter intervals than at present.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS replied: I regret that greater facilities cannot be afforded under the present conditions, but instructions have been given to lessen the public inconvenience by keeping the gates closed as short a time as possible.

QUESTION—MAGISTRATES AND THEIR DUTY.

MR. VOSPER asked the Premier:—1, Whether his attention has been directed to the statements alleged to have been recently made by the Resident Magistrate at Kalgoorlie, to the effect that the honorary justices in that town were untrue to their oaths and partial in their administration of justice. 2, If so, whether he intends to call upon the Resident Magistrate to either substantiate these charges or to publicly and officially withdraw them.

THE PREMIER replied: My attention has not been so directed, but to-day I have read the report of what took place, and also the subsequent remarks of the Resident Magistrate, as published in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* of 4th instant, and I gather that the Resident Magistrate repudiates any intention of reflecting upon the honour of the justices referred to.