

another matter. He would however say this—they had had far more information, generally, afforded them this year on these subjects than had ever before been given to the House.

MR. CAREY said he thought it was the late Acting Colonial Secretary (Mr. Lefroy) who once said in the House that it did not matter what the House said about expenditure the Government would spend the money if it was wanted.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. R. T. Goldsworthy): I do not echo that remark.

MR. CAREY believed there was a resolution of the House limiting the overdrafts in any one year to £5,000, yet in the face of that he found that during the past seven years the aggregate amount of excess bills passed by the House was over £100,000. It appeared to him that discussion upon these items of overdraft was perfectly useless. Whatever the Government thought proper to spend, they did so, and then asked the House to confirm the expenditure, which the House invariably did.

The item "Miscellaneous" was then agreed to.

Item: Refunds, £741 6s. 6d.:

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. R. T. Goldsworthy) explained that this amount was principally on account of drawbacks of customs duties.

The item was ordered to stand part of the Bill, which was then reported, the third reading being made an Order of the Day for Wednesday, 19th June.

The House adjourned at four o'clock, p.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Wednesday, 19th June, 1878.

Petition—Railway from Fremantle to Perth and Guildford: Southern Route—First reading—Health of flocks of various districts: return moved for—License for removing timber—Northern Railway: deviation from original route—Eastern Railway: line of survey—Game Acts, 1874-6, Repeal Bill, 1878: motion for second reading—Third Readings—Message No. 1 (Fremantle, Perth, and Guildford Railway): consideration of, in committee—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

PETITION.

MR. S. H. PARKER presented a petition signed by 320 citizens, land-owners, and others of Perth, praying that the City Central Railway route, in combination with the Southern Line, laid down by Mr. Victor, be adopted; and moved that the petition be received.

Motion agreed to. Petition read.

RAILWAY FROM FREMANTLE TO PERTH AND GUILDFORD—SOUTHERN ROUTE.

MR. BROWN, with leave, without notice, asked the Colonial Secretary, Whether the adoption by this House of a route for the railway between Perth and Fremantle on the Southern side of the river would necessitate reference to the Secretary of State for the Colonies before His Excellency the Governor would be empowered to sanction such a route?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. R. T. Goldsworthy) replied that he could find nothing in the Despatch from the Secretary of State to justify His Excellency, in the event of the feeling of the House being in favor of the South side, sanctioning the immediate commencement of the railway on that side; but that the wishes of the House, whatever they might be, would at all times be considered by the Government.

FIRST READING.

The "Transfer of Land Act, 1874, Amendment Bill, 1878," was read a first time.

HEALTH OF FLOCKS OF VARIOUS DISTRICTS.

SIR T. COCKBURN-CAMPBELL, in accordance with notice, moved for a return showing the present state of health of the flocks in the various Scab Districts separately, as compared with their condition at the time of the formation of the Scab Districts in 1877.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. R. T. Goldsworthy) said the return asked for by the hon. baronet would be laid on the Table in due course.

LICENSE FOR REMOVING TIMBER.

MR. CAREY, pursuant to notice, drew the attention of the Government to the practice of charging a separate license fee for removing timber, in addition to the license fee charged for felling, cutting, or splitting; and moved the following resolution: "That in the opinion of this House it is desirable that such alteration be made in the hundred and third clause of the Land Regulations as will permit persons other than the licensees to remove timber." So far back as July, 1874, he had asked the same question, and moved a similar resolution, and he understood that some alteration would have been made in this respect. But, so far, no alteration whatever had been made. So far as he understood the Land Regulations no such a charge as was now made was ever contemplated: it was never intended that a separate license fee should be imposed for removing timber for cutting which a fee had already been paid.

MR. SHENTON seconded the resolution.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. M. Fraser): I think the hon. member will be satisfied when I inform him that, following upon his resolution of a previous Session, the Select Committee then appointed to consider the Land Regulations recommended that the suggestion of the hon. member should be adopted; and, in the amended Land Regulations which are now on the eve of being promulgated, the recommendation of the Committee has been carried out, and no separate license fee for the removal of timber, in respect of cutting or felling which a fee has already been paid, will be required.

MR. CAREY: With that explanation I am quite prepared to withdraw my resolution.

Resolution, by leave, withdrawn.

NORTHERN RAILWAY: DEVIATION FROM ORIGINAL ROUTE.

MR. BROWN, in accordance with notice, asked the Surveyor General, what was the intention of the Government in reference to deviation from the original route of the Northern Railway in the neighborhood of Northampton, and whether any extension of the Railway at that place was contemplated; and, if so, what?

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. M. Fraser) laid on the Table a plan showing the terminus of the railway, and papers affording some information relative to the subject, which, he said, was one that had occupied the serious attention of the Government. When the line was contracted for, it was merely provided to run to a point which was barely within the town of Northampton; but, as the place was likely to become one of considerable importance, it was now deemed desirable that a more convenient terminal point should be fixed upon. Further steps to ascertain which was the best site for a terminus were likely to be taken by the Government, and any further information, beyond that embodied in the papers he had laid on the Table, would be furnished to the House as soon as the Government became possessed of it.

EASTERN RAILWAY: LINE OF SURVEY.

IN COMMITTEE.

MR. BROWN, in accordance with notice, moved "That an humble address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, praying that he will be pleased to place on the Estimates a sum of money sufficient to ascertain by survey the most desirable route for the extension of the Eastern Railway from Guildford to a point as nearly as practicable equi-distant from York, Northam, and Toodyay." Hon. members were aware that already a large sum of money had been expended in surveying a line of railway to the Eastern Districts—between Guildford, Northam, Toodyay, and, he

believed, York. That line, however, which it was proposed to take round by the valley of the Avon was a very circuitous route, and he thought the majority of hon. members would agree with him that it was one beyond the means of the Colony to carry through. It had been said by many who had examined the surveyed route that it would be quite impracticable to construct a railway along it, except at an immense cost, owing to the enormous engineering difficulties which would have to be encountered, and which it would be madness on the part of a Colony like this to attempt to overcome. Hon. members would bear in mind that the great object—or one of the great objects—in view, in connecting the Eastern Districts with a port of shipment, at Fremantle, was the development of the agricultural industry of those districts, where there was a large area of good agricultural land. The House had to look at this question from a national point of view, and he conceived it to be their duty to construct the railway along such route as would be productive of the greatest good to the country at large, without considering the local interests of particular districts. Hon. members were aware that the largest quantity of agricultural land in the Eastern Districts was to be found at York, and to the southward of York, and the object to be kept in view was the tapping of this country, and of the intermediate land that could be served by a railway. The line which had already been surveyed was certainly not the best one that could be had for carrying out this object, apart from the fact of its being a very circuitous and very expensive route. By taking the line by the Helena Valley—or the “Vale of Misery” as it had been called—the Eastern Districts would be tapped and served by a railway that would be no length in comparison with the Avon line; and it was with a view to ascertain whether it was practicable to take a line in the direction he had indicated that he had submitted his resolution to the House. It might be said that the resolution tied the Government to one particular route, but it was not his intention to do so, nor did he think that the wording of the resolution was such as would bear that construction. What he proposed was that the most desirable

route should be ascertained, and this would possibly render it necessary to make many trial surveys, which the resolution before the Committee would not preclude them from doing. It merely indicated the direction in which the House considered it desirable the railway should go, or, rather, where the surveys should be made. He had brought forward a similar resolution last year but it fell through for want of support, the House deeming it better to leave the Government entirely unfettered as to the direction which the line should take. For his part, he had no wish to fetter the Government in the matter, but he did think the House should express an opinion as to the direction which it considered desirable the railway should go, so as to afford some guide to the Government in carrying out the necessary surveys. With these remarks, he commended the resolution to the approval of the House, in the hope it would not meet with the same fate as the resolution of last year.

MR. SHENTON moved, as an amendment, That all the words after the word “the,” before the word “Eastern,” in the third line, be struck out, and the words “Railway from Guildford to the Eastern Districts,” be inserted in lieu thereof. He did so, because, in his opinion, the resolution of the hon. member for Geraldton did bind the Government down to one particular route. He was in favor of the Helena line, himself, and would advocate the adoption of that route, because, in his opinion, it would be an advantage not only to the Toodyay Districts, but also to Victoria Plains, while at the same time it would open up a large quantity of agricultural land in the neighborhood of Chittering Brook, Bindoon, and Gingin. When the survey was made before, he understood that the surveyor was not well acquainted with the country to be traversed. Personally he was not wedded to any particular route, so long as the Eastern Districts obtained railway communication.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. M. Fraser) said the Government were prepared to expend, say £2,000, for this object of a survey, and he thought the amendment of the hon. member for Toodyay an improvement on the original resolution, inasmuch as it

left the Government less fettered in the matter of fixing upon the most desirable route. The House might rest assured that the sole object of the Government would be to secure the most practicable and most convenient route, so as to attain the object which the whole House must have in view.

MR. BROWN: Now that we have a *Hansard*, and the remarks of the hon. gentleman who has spoken on the part of the Government are likely to be recorded, I think the House may possibly accept his assurance on the subject. I have no objection to do so, on the distinct understanding that it is the intention of the Government to undertake the survey simply with the view of ascertaining the best route—that which will open up the greatest area of available agricultural land.

SIR L. S. LEAKE: When the Commissioner of Crown Lands rose, I was in hope he was going to oppose the resolution. I shall do so myself. In view of the difficulty which the Government are likely to find in providing ways and means for the ordinary colonial expenditure next year, I think it becomes a very serious matter when the House seeks to hamper them with an expenditure of £2,000 for the purpose contemplated in this resolution. Of course it is well known to all hon. members that in voting for the construction of the railway from Fremantle to Guildford, I did so solely on the ground that it was the first section of a line to be hereafter extended to the Eastern Districts. I have every hope that before many weeks are over we shall see that line commenced, but I have little hope of its being extended to the Eastern Districts next year, and, therefore, I should be sorry to see our revenue pledged to this purpose. I think the more proper way to provide for this survey would be to include the amount necessary for carrying it out, in the Railway Loan Bill. I think this course would be better for the Colony and better for the Government, than to pledge the current revenue to such an expenditure. For that reason I shall oppose the presentation of the proposed address to the Governor praying His Excellency to place on the Estimates a sum of money sufficient for this purpose.

MR. SHENTON: Unless we can find

the means for the Government to carry out this survey, I am afraid it will be very many years before we can find the means to carry out the railway itself. Whether we borrow the money or not, I think we should place a sum at the disposal of the Government for the object of ascertaining, by means of a survey, which is the most desirable route for extending the railway to the Eastern districts.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. R. T. Goldsworthy) quite agreed with what had fallen from the hon. member for Perth (Sir L. S. Leake), that the cost of these surveys should not be defrayed out of current revenue, but out of the loan to be raised for the construction of a railway which was eventually intended to connect the Eastern Districts with a port of shipment. Necessarily, a considerable period of time must elapse before the Colony would be in a position to carry out this great work to completion, seeing that its cost would certainly not be less than a quarter of a million sterling. With reference to the resolution before the Committee, he was inclined to support the amendment of the hon. member for Toodyay, inasmuch as it did not fetter the Government to any particular point equi-distant from the various towns referred to in the resolution, but left it to be ascertained, by inspection and survey, which route, taking everything into consideration, was best for the districts to be served and for the Colony at large. It appeared to him—as the Colony was not likely to be in a position to carry the line through for some years to come—it would be well to consider and determine upon some temporary terminus a short distance—say seventeen or eighteen miles—from Guildford, in the direction of the districts Eastward, so as to bring the principal towns of those districts within one day's travelling (by team) of a railway. Be that as it may, if the House proposed to place a sum at the disposal of the Government for the purpose of this survey, the money ought, in his opinion, to be included in the Railway Loan Bill, and not provided out of current revenue. As to the question of route, it appeared to him it would be wise to leave that matter in the hands of the Government, for the House might

rest assured that the sole object the Government could have in view was the progress and welfare of the Colony.

MR. S. H. PARKER moved, as an amendment to the proposed amendment of the hon. member for Toodyay, That the words "the Eastern Districts," be struck out, and the word "York" be inserted in lieu thereof. He could not help thinking it would be more advisable, if the Committee authorised the Government to survey, they should give some indication of the way which the line ought to go; and he thought it would be admitted by every unprejudiced person that York should be the terminus of the line in the Eastern Districts. He had no interest at all in York himself; but in the interests of the Colony at large, and especially of the taxpayers, he hoped the line would go somewhere where there was likely to be some traffic, and in the interests of Perth he trusted it would go to some place that would ensure the citizens being well and regularly supplied with agricultural produce. York was undoubtedly the most populous part of the Eastern Districts; it had the largest number of stock, and the greatest area of land under cultivation of any of the neighboring districts; and he thought the proper course for the railway to take would be to go direct to York, whence, in time, it might be extended to Beverley, and the Williams, and ultimately to Albany. Notwithstanding what had fallen from Mr. Speaker, he thought it very desirable that the House should pass this resolution, and that the survey should be immediately proceeded with. To leave the railway at Guildford, would be to saddle the Colony with a great deal of expense, for no one pretended that the line would prove a reproductive work if it stopped there. He regretted to find that in the Despatches on this railway question which had been laid on the Table of the House—although the Governor said in his opening speech that he trusted to see the line extended to the Eastern Districts—not a single word was said about the proposed extension. So far as he (Mr. Parker) was concerned, unless he thought the Government had in view the early extension of the line to those districts, he would vote against spending a single

penny on the railway. The House had been told there must necessarily be a considerable delay before the line could be carried on to its destination, and that it would cost a quarter of a million sterling. He firmly believed that, under our present Constitution, we should never be able to raise such a sum for the completion of the work, and the best thing they could do would be to go in for a Constitution under which they might be able to do so, and to do other things calculated to develop the resources of the country.

MR. MONGER said he intended to support the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Perth (Mr. Parker), for he quite agreed with him that York ought to be made the terminus of the line in the Eastern Districts. Had the resolution emanated from him (Mr. Monger), it might have been said he was an interested party; but having come from the member for Perth it was different, and he would support it. There was no doubt that when they got to the Helena Valley, the cheapest and the best route for the railway would be a little north of York.

MR. BROCKMAN said he would support the amendment of the hon. member for Toodyay, for the reason that it left the Government at liberty to ascertain for itself which was the most desirable route to adopt.

MR. MARMION said he recollected that at the last Session of Council a great deal of time had been taken up in discussing a similar motion to that now before the Committee; but, owing to the great number of amendments proposed, the House became rather confused, and the amendments got mixed up. The consequence was that no definite expression of opinion on the part of the House as to the route which ought to be surveyed was obtained. On that occasion, he had argued rather strongly that there had already been rather too much money expended on these surveys. The line surveyed by Mr. Major was at one time considered the best, and advantages were claimed for it superior to any other line. At all events, £1,500 had been spent, and he did not think there was any necessity to spend any more in that direction. It appeared there were only two other directions which required to

be settled, and as the House had of late years been possessed with a mania for preliminary surveys, perhaps it would be as well that a preliminary survey of the two remaining routes should take place—one direct to York, and the other to a point equi-distant between York, Northam, and Toodyay. He thought that the amendment he had proposed last Session, and which was very nearly being carried, might be adopted by the Committee on the present occasion. To that end, he would move, as an amendment upon the amendment of the hon. member for Perth (Mr. Parker)—

MR. PARKER: With the leave of the House, I shall withdraw my amendment.

MR. MARMION: Then I shall move, as an amendment upon the proposed amendment of the hon. member for Toodyay, That all the words after the word "That," be struck out, and the words "an Humble Address be presented to His Excellency the Governor, praying that he will be pleased to place on the Estimates a sum of money sufficient to make a preliminary survey of a suitable route for the Eastern Districts Railway, between Guildford and York; and also of an alternative route from Guildford to a point in the neighborhood of Northam, or equi-distant between Northam and York," be inserted in lieu thereof.

MR. BROWN said the amendment put forward by the hon. member for Fremantle quite met his own view; nevertheless he would not withdraw his resolution, though he was prepared to vote for the amendment. He was quite in accord with His Honor the Speaker that it would be much more desirable that the cost of the survey should not be defrayed out of current revenue, but that provision should be made for it by loan. But they had no Loan Bill at present before the House, and he saw no objection to the amount required being placed on the Estimates. It might be a matter for subsequent consideration whether the money should be provided out of current revenue or by means of a loan.

MR. CAREY would support the amendment of the hon. member for Fremantle. He quite concurred with Mr. Speaker that the money to defray the cost of these surveys should not come out of the current revenue.

MR. HAMERSLEY said it was generally understood that the assent of the Secretary of State would be obtained to the Bill for the construction of the railway from Fremantle to Guildford, but it was just a question whether the measure would not be endangered if they added another item to it.

MR. S. H. PARKER thought that would be very likely. If the Secretary of State discovered that the railway to Guildford was but the commencement of a line involving a much larger expenditure he might object to the Loan Bill altogether.

The amendment of the hon. member for Fremantle was then put and carried, without a division.

GAME ACTS, 1874-6, REPEAL BILL, 1878.

MR. S. H. PARKER moved the second reading of a Bill to repeal the Game Acts of 1874 and 1876, so as to restore legislation on this subject to the state of the law prior to the passing of those Acts,—Acts which the Legislature of that day conceived would tend to the protection of game, by preventing their indiscriminate slaughter out of season. The conclusion, however, which subsequent observation and experience had forced upon all who knew anything about the habits of birds, in the vicinity of Perth at all events, was that the Game Acts had proved useless as affording a means of protection, and that their tendency had been to drive game into the interior. Very strong representations had been made to him on the subject,—representations which had irresistibly led him to the conclusion that the enactment of these Game Laws had been a mistake—at any rate, so far as Perth was concerned. The result had been this: immediately the close season ended everybody possessed of a gun and of sporting proclivities turned out, and an indiscriminate and wholesale slaughter took place for a few days, resulting in no more game being seen after about a week. It might be said that these Game Acts did not apply to Perth alone, and that was true; but they all knew that in the country districts, where the police were not at hand, there was very little restriction if any upon shooting game, at all seasons, and the Acts remained a dead

letter. He could not help thinking that, with our sparse population and vast extent of territory peculiarly adapted for the breeding of game, these protective laws were unnecessary. It might be said that it looked ridiculous to pass an Act one year and repeal it the next. He admitted that such a proceeding did appear strange, but that was no argument for the retention of a bad law on the statute book. Such a course was by no means a novel one in that House; it had been adopted in other instances, and in that of the Dangerous Matches Act the Bill was actually repealed before it came into operation. There was nothing unusual, therefore, in the course which he asked the House to adopt with respect to the Game Acts and their repeal.

MR. SHENTON moved, as an amendment upon the motion for the second reading, that the Bill be read a second time that day six months. He did so on the ground that the Game Act was only passed in 1874, and amended in the Session before last, and no opportunity had yet been afforded to see what the real effect of the enactments would be. There were a great many people outside who were of opinion that these laws proved very beneficial, and were calculated to answer the object which the Legislature had in view when framing them, and he did think the House should pause before destroying the work of its own hands, until a further opportunity had been afforded to see how these Acts operated.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. M. Fraser) supported the amendment. The hon. member who had introduced the Bill now before the House had introduced it, admittedly, in the interests of his own constituents; but he would remind the hon. member that game was not confined to the neighborhood of Perth, but were common to all the Colony, and the provisions of the Game Acts were of equal latitude. So far from these Acts having a tendency to diminish the number of game, he believed it was quite the reverse. Apart from this, he thought the House should exercise more caution in rescinding laws which had received careful consideration at the hands of hon. members.

MR. CAREY had observed that, since the passing of the Game Acts, very little

game had been about. He did not know whether the Acts had frightened game away, nor did he mean to assert that they had; but the fact remained that there had been great scarcity of game since the present laws were enacted, and he would therefore support the motion for the second reading of the Repeal Bill.

MR. BROWN had of late heard volumes spoken in favor of the existing Acts, and was told by more than one person that in the enactment of these laws the Legislature had at last done something for which it was entitled to the thanks of the country. He believed the Acts had afforded every satisfaction until the present season, when it appeared that very little game was to be found in the neighborhood of towns, and, for the matter of that, throughout the settled districts of the Colony. But it was all nonsense to say that this was the result of the Game Acts. He believed that the cause of this scarcity of game throughout the settled parts of the Colony was the exceptionally dry seasons they had experienced. When they got back their ordinary seasons, they would find that game would return to their former habitats. He should be exceedingly sorry to see the Acts repealed.

MR. MONGER said he agreed with what had fallen from the hon. member for Geraldton, that it was the exceptional character of the seasons they had lately experienced which had driven game away from the settled portions of the Colony, and not the Game Acts. Those Acts, however, were of very little use in country districts, where they were hardly ever enforced, and remained a dead letter. In York he could go out shooting at any time, whether close season or not, and nothing would be heard about it. As the Acts were thus allowed to remain inoperative, he would support the motion for repealing them, for it appeared to him useless to have a lot of laws on the statute book which were never enforced.

MR. MARMION was opposed to repealing the existing Acts, which, in his opinion, afforded a great deal of protection to native game. No cause had been made out for repealing these enactments, nor had he heard any great outcry against them outside. A gentleman writing to him from the country, relative

to the announced intention of the hon. member for Perth to move for the repeal of the existing game laws, spoke of the hon. gentleman as a person of a most sanguinary character. There was no doubt that the Acts now in force operated to check that indiscriminate slaughter of game, at all seasons of the year, which took place before they were enacted, and he hoped the House would give them a further trial before proceeding to repeal them.

MR. S. H. PARKER said the hon. member for Greenough had just handed him a petition emanating from his (Mr. Crowther's) constituents, requesting him to support the Repeal Bill.

MR. MARMION (interposing) called the attention of Mr. Speaker to the rules of debate, and, quoting from *May* p. 305, said a reply was only allowed by courtesy, to the member who had proposed a distinct question to the House; it was not conceded to a member who had moved an Order of the Day. The hon. member for Perth (Mr. Parker) was therefore out of order in rising a second time to address the House, as to his motion, which was an Order of the Day.

MR. SPEAKER: There is an amendment moved, and surely the hon. member may be allowed to speak to that amendment. I think he is quite in order.

MR. S. H. PARKER said the hon. member for Greenough had handed him a petition, showing that there were people outside Perth who were desirous that the present Game Acts should be repealed. Looking, however, at the opposition which existed among hon. members to the repeal of these enactments, he felt it would be useless for him to press his motion: he could not hope to contend successfully against the combined forces of the Government and the hon. members for Toodyay, Geraldton, and Fremantle.

MR. CROWTHER said his constituents did not complain so much of the Acts themselves, as of their provisions being allowed to remain a dead letter.

MR. BURT said the principle of protecting game had been adopted in other countries, and if they expected to preserve game here, they must have resort to legislation to protect them. If any hon. gentleman could show him that the enactment of these laws was the direct,

or indirect, cause of the late scarcity of game, he would be among the first to repeal them. It must be borne in mind that the provisions of these Acts were not confined to the protection of native game, but also applied to game imported for the purposes of acclimatisation, for which the House had voted a sum of money.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. R. T. Goldsworthy) said he was inclined to adopt the views of the constituents of the hon. member for Greenough, and considered that the provisions of the existing Acts should be more strictly enforced rather than repeal them altogether. He went on the broad principle that it was folly to enact a law this Session and repeal it the next. On his first arrival in these Colonies, not many months ago, when making inquiries in Melbourne relative to Western Australia the remark was made to him, "Judge for yourself: two Sessions ago, the local Legislature passed an Act to prohibit the use of lucifer matches, and before the Act came into operation it was actually repealed." The action of the Council with respect to that Act had been a source of considerable amusement in the neighboring Colonies, and he would be sorry to see the action repeated.

The amendment—"That the Bill be read a second time that day six months"—was then put and carried, on the voices.

THIRD READINGS.

The Real Property Limitation Bill, 1878; the Perth Drainage Act, 1875, Amendment Bill, 1878; and the Confirmation of Expenditure Bill, were read a third time and passed.

MESSAGE No. 1—FREMANTLE, PERTH, AND GUILDFORD RAILWAY.

IN COMMITTEE.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. M. Fraser) said that before proceeding to deal with His Excellency's message, it would perhaps be as well to refer to what had already been done by the House and by the Government with reference to this railway question. It would probably be in the recollection of hon. members that in December, 1875, certain propositions

were laid before the Council with a view to providing a guarantee of a certain amount of interest upon the capital proposed to be expended by some adventurous spirits in the construction of a projected line of railway from Fremantle to Perth and Guildford. The proposals of the promoters were referred by the House to a Select Committee, and, following upon the adoption of the report which emanated from that Committee, His Excellency Governor Robinson, on the 16th February following (1876)—hon. members would be good enough to note the dates he was about to quote, as there was an impression abroad, in some quarters, that there had been some unnecessary delay on the part of the Government and of the Home authorities in dealing with the question: on the 16th February, the then Governor communicated the result of the debate upon the Select Committee (to which the question had been referred) to the Secretary of State, requesting his Lordship's views on the principle involved in the scheme—that of a Government guarantee upon the capital proposed to be expended. This despatch was replied to by Lord Carnarvon on the 19th June, in the same year, in which his Lordship expressed an opinion somewhat adverse to the principle referred to, and suggested, as a more desirable course for the colonists to pursue, that the construction of the railway should be undertaken by direct Government action, through experienced contractors, rather than on the principle of guarantee or concession. Adverting to this despatch from the Secretary of State, His Excellency the Governor, on the occasion of opening the Legislative Council on the 7th August, in the same year, communicated the tenor of it to the House, and on the 15th August, His Excellency further addressed the House on the subject, and expressed his readiness to take the preliminary steps which would devolve upon the Government in the matter of surveys, in the event of the House providing the necessary funds to cover the cost. On the 5th September following, he noticed, the House agreed to a vote of £2,000 for this purpose. These surveys occupied some six or eight months, and the results were sent home with Governor Robinson's despatch of the 6th June, 1877, together

with certain plans. On the 10th July in the same year, His Excellency, in the speech with which he opened the Council, informed the House that these surveys had been sent home, "with full information on all necessary points." His Excellency's despatch of the 6th June was promptly replied to by Lord Carnarvon on the 5th September, His Lordship's reply being received here on the eve of Governor Robinson's departure from the Colony, and left by His Excellency for his successor to deal with. On Governor Ord's arrival in the Colony, no time was lost by His Excellency in attending to the despatch, and on the 28th December in the same year His Excellency replied to it, in the despatch which was communicated to the House with the message now under the consideration of the Committee. From this short review of the action taken in the matter, since the origin of the scheme in December, 1875, up to the end of December, 1877, it would be seen by hon. members that no time was lost by the Local Government or by the authorities at home in dealing with the question. All the papers relating to it sent home were promptly acknowledged, and the despatches in reply were equally promptly attended to by the Government here. Having so far given a *resumé* of the history of this railway question, he would proceed to deal with that which more immediately concerned the present—the consideration of the question of route. He found on reference to *Hansard* that this question was first brought forward by the hon. member for Geraldton on the 20th July, 1877, who moved that in the opinion of the House the most desirable route was that termed the "alternative route" in the report of the Director of Public Works. Then—as with the good people of Laputa, who differed in opinion as to the end on which an egg should be cracked—then began the row between the Big-endians and the Little-endians—a row resulting in a great deal of discussion in the House, and outside the House. The then Governor was not prepared to enter into the question of the relative merits of the various routes proposed, for in dealing with that question His Excellency felt that it was incumbent upon him to consider it in the light of a national undertaking and not from a mere local standpoint.

What the Governor had to deal with was not the interests of individuals but the common good. The Director of Public Works pointed out very strongly the advantages presented by the northern route, though at the same time he did not deny that the other line also had its advantages, and he himself (the Commissioner of Crown Lands) was at that time of opinion that the balance of advantages was in favor of the southern route. The whole subject, however, had been considered by the Government in a most unbiassed and unprejudiced spirit. The House must bear in mind that there were many points in which such a question as this must be viewed. It was not merely a question of whether a certain advantage would be gained by serving the interests of any particular timber station, or whether the line should arrive at any particular spot in this town or that. The question must be regarded as one of national importance, and all interests concerned must be considered in dealing with it. There was, however, one point which must not be lost sight of in constructing the line: it would be the greatest injustice to the capital city were they to neglect to provide every necessary accommodation for the convenience of its trade and commerce, and its passenger traffic. This and other points had received every consideration at the hands of the Government, and hon. members on reading His Excellency's despatch to the Secretary of State, setting forth the relative merits of the rival routes, would see how carefully, and at the same time how skilfully, His Excellency had dealt with the whole matter, setting forth the relative advantages of the two routes, and, by inference, of a third. While thus balancing the advantages in favor of one route against the advantages possessed by the other, His Excellency did not hesitate to give his own opinion—an opinion which he (the Commissioner of Crown Lands) regarded as a most valuable one—as to which was the best route to adopt. What would that House say, what would the country say, if the Government, having had the matter under consideration for a period of two years, and having employed the best professional talent at their disposal—and he ventured to say that, in this respect, we were served as

well as any other Australian Colony; what would the House say if the Government were to ignore the opinions of responsible professional men in favor of the cry raised by this or that party? Or what would be said, if the Government had not come forward with some definite proposal, after mature deliberation, as to which route the country should adopt? The only reasonable inference would have been that the Government wanted to shirk the responsibility or to burk the whole question. If he might venture to go outside the immediate subject of his remarks, he might show that the intention and the action of the Government all through had been consistent. They had never lost sight of the fact that this line was but the first section of the proposed railway to connect the Eastern Districts with a port of shipment. And they were perfectly prepared to annex to any loan bill introduced for the purposes of this railway the sum necessary to take what he might call the initiatory steps towards continuing this line beyond the town of Guildford. Without trespassing further on the patience and forbearance of the House, he would merely, at this stage of the debate, add an expression of hope that hon. members would approach the consideration of His Excellency's message in a broad and unprejudiced spirit. In the present state of the Colony, and looking at the desire that must possess all hon. members in common with himself, and with the whole Government, to adopt some immediate steps to remove the present depression, by the initiation of some scheme of public works, he hoped the House would interpose no obstacles in the way of carrying out the wishes of the people. He hoped hon. members would lay aside all personal feeling in the matter, and any feeling which they might entertain as to being obligated in the interests of their constituents to support this or that particular route, and bear in mind that in this matter the Government was supported in its views by the opinions expressed by the Secretary of State, and by the opinions of one of the leading engineers in England (Mr. Gregory)—whose views supported those of our own Director of Public Works—looking at all these facts, he hoped the House would pause before it offered any opposition to the resolution

which he was about to propose. The Government had felt no hesitation, after due consideration, to express an opinion—which he believed was a correct one—as to the most desirable route to adopt; and he hoped, and trusted, and believed that the majority of the members of that House would show their appreciation of the efforts made by the Government to carry out a measure which emanated firstly from this Council. The resolution which he now asked the Committee to affirm was—"That the views put forth by His Excellency the Governor in Message (No. 1) of 17th June, 1878, having been fully considered by this Council, it is respectfully requested that His Excellency will cause to be prepared the requisite Bills for measures necessary for giving effect to them."

MR. BROWN said he had no intention of entering in detail into the whole question of railway construction between Guildford and Fremantle; nevertheless, he did desire to say something upon the present aspect of matters connected with that question. He would not travel over the history of the various attempts made from time to time to secure railway communication between the towns referred to, as had been done by the hon. the Commissioner of Crown Lands; his views on that subject were very strongly expressed last Session, and he need not repeat them now. He would therefore take up the subject from that point at which the Commissioner of Crown Lands said that the Government were not then prepared to deal with the question. When was that? It was last year—when he (Mr. Brown) submitted to the House a resolution with a view to test the question as to which side of the river it was considered desirable the proposed railway should run; and he was exceedingly surprised to find that the Government were not then prepared to go into the question. This subject had then been under their consideration for a very long period, and he then expressed an opinion that they ought to have been prepared to go into the subject fully. Last Session, he thought was the time—or, at any rate would have been a better time than this—for the House to have expressed an opinion as to which side of the river the railway should go; but as the Government had kept aloof in the matter,

and were not prepared to go into the question of route, it was deemed advisable to withdraw the resolution he had brought forward with a view to elicit discussion on that question. The House had been told that the Government had done their best in the matter. He had not the slightest doubt they *had* done their best, and that all connected with the surveys had also done their best; but what he did object to was, that the Government, having done their best as to what they considered the interests of the Colony, should have in no way recognised that the people of the Colony themselves had a right to a voice in the matter. The Government had decided the whole question themselves, and ignored that House altogether. They were told that the Government were not prepared—why were they not prepared?—last Session to enter upon the question of route. They were prepared to submit their plans to the Imperial Government at that time; and he could not find that anything in the way of further surveys had been made since to enable them to be in a better position to judge which was the best route to adopt. Although the House was informed that last Session the Government were not prepared to go into this matter, yet at that very time they were in a position to press their own views upon the Imperial Government in favor of the northern route. He was in no way quarrelling with those views; what he did complain about was this—whether the Government thought the north side or the south side was the best, it was due to the people of this Colony that they should have been allowed, through their representatives in that House, a voice in the matter. How did they find the position of affairs at the present moment? They found that after a large expenditure of money on surveys, and after what was of much more importance, great waste of time, the House was bound either to accept the route dictated to them—dictated, no doubt, with the very best intentions—by the Government, or, as they had been told that evening, submit to a considerable delay in the construction of this railway. He thought every hon. member would agree with him that this was not as it should be. No one would deny but that a very strong expression of

opinion was put forward in that House, and outside the House, that the railway should be taken on the southern side. The Government could not be otherwise than cognisant of this feeling, and, that being so, he did think they ought to have been prepared at the present time to come forward with both routes, and have said to the House: "Railway communication is peculiarly a subject for the consideration of the people of the Colony: there are two routes proposed; we recommend the northern route for your adoption: if you adopt it, we are prepared to proceed with it immediately: on the other hand, there is the southern route—we disapprove of that, and think it our duty to recommend you not to adopt it; at the same time, if, after due reflection, you consider it the more desirable route, we are in a position to proceed with it immediately." That was the position which, it appeared to him, the Government ought to occupy at the present moment. Such, however, was not the case. On the contrary, the House was expected to accept the scheme put forward by the Government—a scheme, honestly and carefully considered, no doubt, but in which the people had had no voice—or submit to a delay which might imperil the accomplishment of the object which they all had in view. He trusted that anything he had said on this subject would not be taken by the Government in any other spirit than that in which it was meant. He was perfectly certain that the Government had done what they conceived to be the best in the matter, and from proper motives, and he did trust the House would not be led away by any warmth of feeling on the subject. There was no doubt, however, that had the Council been left unfettered to deal with this question of route—had it been in a position to deal on equal terms with the two routes—it would have decided in favor of the southern side. But the interests of the Colony demanded an early settlement of this question; delay would be dangerous; and the House should carefully consider whether, in the interests of the country, it would not be better to accept the northern route which could be proceeded with immediately, and abandon the southern route, rather than jeopardise the whole matter. His own

impression was that it would be wise to do so. Although he had been in favor of the southern route, and was so still—yet, he did see, and had long seen, that the northern route would compass the main object they had in view, namely, connect the Eastern Districts with the port of Fremantle, and also afford a means of communication between Guildford and Perth. Therefore, looking at the matter in this light, rather than run the risk of losing the railway altogether, or submit to a delay which would prove detrimental to the Colony, he was prepared, if the House divided on the question, to give his support to the route recommended by the Government, and which, as the Commissioner of Crown Lands had said, afforded a central and convenient means of communication for the capital city. Though agreeing, however, with the desirability of making such a provision in the interests of the city, he did not consider that those interests were paramount to all other interests, or that the convenience of the city should be solely regarded, at the cost of sacrificing the interests of other portions of the districts which the proposed railway was intended to serve.

MR. MARMION: The hon. member for Geraldton has so completely taken the wind out of my sail—has adduced so many of the arguments which I had intended to bring forward—that I need not trespass on the patience of the House so long as I am afraid I would otherwise have had to do. There are, however, two or three points which the hon. member has not alluded to, and which I hope to be allowed to point out to the House. It would be useless on my part, and indeed it is needless, that I should refer to the arguments which have been put forward in this House, and through the medium of the newspapers, and in memorials addressed to the Government, with reference to the most desirable route, for, as has been said by the hon. member for Geraldton, we are placed in a position of having to take that which is put before us, or—take nothing at all. In fact, this honorable Council is reduced to the position of having simply to vote the money necessary to carry out the work recommended by the Government—to carry out a work which, if left free to vote on the subject in accordance with

the majority of hon. members' opinions, the House would not be inclined to carry out. Under existing circumstances, this Council may be said to have deteriorated into something worse than the condition of any district roads board, for when a sum of money is placed at the disposal of these boards for the purposes of road formation, the members have the privilege of deciding where that road should go; but we, the members of this House; the Legislative Council of the country, have to surrender our deliberative functions, and are obliged to carry out, not the dictates of our own reason but the dictates of gentlemen sixteen thousand miles away, who condescendingly tell us: "We have decided which way your railway should go, but we give you the privilege of voting the money to carry out the work—we give you the privilege of taxing yourselves in order to provide the means of paying back that money, but we cannot allow you to spend it in the way which you consider most desirable." I cannot take upon myself the responsibility of asking the House to postpone the consideration of this question until its wishes are carried into effect. I do not feel justified in accepting such a responsibility in the present condition of the Colony—taking into consideration the dulness of trade, the scarcity of work, the number of our unemployed, and the general depression and stagnation which for some time past has been felt throughout the Colony. The proposed railway is a public work which has been eagerly looked forward to by the people, as a means of relieving the existing distress, and I should be sorry to see its inauguration postponed. At the same time, I cannot resist the temptation to allude to some of the remarks which have been made in the despatches sent home with reference to it, for the consideration of the Secretary of State. I cannot refrain from alluding to some of the remarks made by the Director of Public Works, and also by His Excellency, in recommending the northern route to the attention of the home authorities, almost to the utter exclusion of the southern route. I cannot help thinking—although we have the assurance of the Director of Public Works and of the representative of the Government in this House that the

arguments in favor of the two routes have been considered without prejudice, that their relative merits have been fairly weighed, that an equally complete survey of each was sent home for the information of the Secretary of State and the consulting engineer,—I cannot help thinking in spite of all this, that there was a predominating opinion on the part of the Government that the northern route was the one which should be adopted, and that the southern route has suffered something in consequence of this predilection in favor of the rival line—that it has not had at the hands of the Government that full and impartial consideration which its claims deserve, in the face of the support accorded to it by a vast number of the people of this Colony. His Excellency the Governor has given very strong reasons why, in his opinion, the line should be taken on the north side; in fact, he has gone so far as to say that the other proposed route is utterly impracticable; and some of us, who have interviewed His Excellency on the subject, are in a position to know that we must accept the northern route, or wait for a time—I cannot say how long—and then not be sure of obtaining the southern line. In looking at one of the original reports of the Director of Public Works on this railway, referred to in the second paragraph of Governor Robinson's despatch to Lord Carnarvon, dated 6th June, I find that he estimates the cost of the railway by the northern route at £87,098, and by the southern route at £99,121. This latter route was the line which was to connect Fremantle with Guildford, the city being supplied with a branch line. The proposal to supply Perth with a branch line was, however, condemned by the House, and the question was asked whether it was not possible, while carrying the line on the south side of the river, to embrace Perth in the main line, and at the same time to supply that great desideratum—a central station in the city. The Director of Public Works showed this was quite possible. In the eighth clause of his report dated 24th May, 1877, he says: "There is another route,—that of adopting a portion of the line from Fremantle on the southern side and crossing the river from South Perth at Mill Point, skirting the Fremantle

"Road to the Commissariat Store, where a station could be made." Further on, in paragraph 24 of the same report, Mr. Thomas says: "There is yet another route to be considered, which, although it would be a little longer and more expensive than either of the others, has the advantage of opening up the best lands on both sides of the river, adopting the surveyed line on the south side for nine miles, and from Perth to Guildford on the north. The city station would certainly be at the extreme east end of the town, but still I think this is worth consideration." The House will see from these extracts that the Director of Public Works, at any rate, did not consider it impracticable to serve Perth without resorting to a branch line, and yet adopt the southern route. In a later report, dated 16th June, 1877, the same officer says, "I have marked on the accompanying plan what would be the best route for taking the railway through Perth, if the alternative line referred to in paragraph 21 of my report should be adopted. I have been over the ground from where the bridge would have to be constructed, in order to connect the south side of the river with the north, and as there are no difficulties whatever to be overcome, I do not think it necessary to have it surveyed, unless it is determined the line should be taken that way." Having pointed out the manifold advantages of this route, the Director proceeds to throw cold water on it, on the score of expense, which he estimates at £108,125 as compared with £87,098, the estimated cost of the route on the north side. So that the question resolves itself into this:—If the wishes of the majority of the Council are to be carried out, it will involve an increased expenditure of about £21,000, or, in other words, an extra charge on the revenue of about £1,000. It is not a question of engineering difficulties, but simply a question of cost, which I apprehend is a matter for the country and for this House to decide. I now proceed to deal with one or two remarks of His Excellency Governor Ord, in his despatch to the Secretary of State, dated 28th December, 1877, and, in doing so, I will endeavor to show that His Excellency, however strongly he may feel on the subject now, was then of

opinion that either of the alternative routes would meet the case. In the fifth paragraph of this despatch, His Excellency says: "The conclusion at which I have arrived after a close investigation, extending over several interviews, into the various points adverted to by your Lordship and dealt with in Mr. Thomas' report is—that either of the alternative routes proposed by him offers a good, convenient, and economical way of connecting the three towns." After that expression of opinion on the part of His Excellency, I cannot see how it is possible for him to say that the southern route is altogether an impracticable one. Therefore, it appears to me that, relatively speaking, the two routes really stand in the same position, if they had fair play. The House is aware that preliminary surveys have already been made of the two routes, and we are further aware that a final survey will have to be made, which will have to be referred home, and I cannot see why these final surveys should not be made in connection with the southern route as well as the northern route. I do not see how this would involve any very serious delay. It, however, leaves the responsibility in case of any unnecessary delay with this House, and I fear that hon. members are too anxious to see the work undertaken to interpose what may possibly prove an obstacle in the way of carrying out the wishes of the country. They therefore naturally hesitate to bring forward any amendment upon the motion submitted for the affirmation of the House by the Government. It is said that the same amount of consideration has been given by the Government to the surveys and the plans of the southern route as of the northern line. It is, however, with very much regret that I assume from the report of the Director of Public Works that the same amount of attention has not been paid to the surveys of the former route, or to the arguments in its favor. I will read a few extracts from the report, which is dated December, 1877. The Secretary of State, it will be observed, is inclined to be rather hard upon the Director, in consequence of his not having sent home any copies of his surveys, and it was only accompanying *this* report (which I shall

now quote from) that he sent home—in December last—the plans and surveys necessary to enable the Secretary of State and the consulting engineer to base their opinions as to the relative merits of the two routes. I would ask hon. members, whether they think, in the face of the paragraphs I am about to quote, there has been the same attention paid to the plans and surveys on the south side that there have been with respect to the other side, or, rather whether a foregone conclusion had not been arrived at in favor of the northern route, and that all the arguments of the Director of Public Works are based on the assumption that that route would be finally adopted. In the fifth paragraph of his report, Mr. Thomas says: “The ‘deviations I propose in the final staking out of the line’—*the line*, hon. members will observe—‘are shown ‘upon the plans, and I trust they will ‘give every information that may be ‘required.’” Again, in the next paragraph the Director, ignoring all other routes, says: “Accompanying the drawings are designs I propose for the only ‘two bridges of any importance on the ‘line (North side).’” “*The line*,” again. In paragraph seven, we find the same expression made use of, to the exclusion of any other line. The Director’s words are “A plan of Perth, showing the various routes the proposed line may take in passing through the city, etc.” Coming to the eleventh paragraph we come to something still stronger in favor of the assumption that the Director of Public Works when writing this report had only one line in view, or, at any rate, that the northern line was uppermost in his mind. He says: “The actual ‘length of *the line* on the traverse made ‘is 20 miles, 37 chains, but the above ‘*estimate*’—not estimates, but estimate—‘was made on 21 miles 40 chains to ‘allow for sidings. It will therefore be ‘seen that although the total amount, ‘£87,098, given by me as the cost of ‘*the line* (on the north), etc.”—no allusion whatever, as hon. members will observe, to the line on the south. Then, again, in the next paragraph, Mr. Thomas, full of his pet line, to the exclusion of the southern route, says: “I ‘have been liberal in all the measurements and prices in *this estimate*, and I

‘feel certain that the work can be ‘carried out for the amount named. So ‘sure am I, that I would undertake to ‘obtain responsible contractors to construct *the line* for the sum named.” There is also the same irresistible evidence of the Director being entirely absorbed in the consideration of the northern line, in the 15th paragraph of his report, and I think that what I have quoted from that report must lead the House to the conclusion that an unfair prominence has been given in it to the northern line, and that the writer was evidently biassed in favor of that route,—so much so that it led him to entirely ignore the rival route. I will say no more. I think I am right in asserting that this House, in accepting the line offered to them by the Government do so under a feeling of compulsion, and in the interests of the Colony, believing that a postponement of the question might endanger the whole project, and that the northern line is better than no line at all.

MR. SHENTON said one would think from the remarks of the hon. member for Fremantle (Mr. Marmion) that His Excellency the Governor had never read the debates which took place last Session on this very question of route. It would be in the recollection of the House that although the hon. member for Geraldton moved a resolution in favor of what is termed the “alternative route,” there was an amendment moved upon that resolution by the hon. member for Wellington in favor of the northern route, and it was only on the motion of the then Acting Colonial Secretary that progress was reported and agreed to by a simple majority of 9 to 8. It appeared to him that His Excellency was bound to look at the debate which took place on the question last Session, and, doing so, His Excellency would find that the two members for Perth had voted in favor of the northern route. Now, taking into consideration that Perth represented such a large proportion of the whole inhabitants of the Colony, he thought that His Excellency was bound to give some weight to the fact that the two representatives of the capital city had expressed themselves altogether in favor of the north side of the river as the more desirable route, and that, with the

exception of the representatives of Fremantle, all the members for this part of the Colony had expressed themselves in favor of the amendment of the member for Wellington. Having regard to the scope of the debate last Session, and looking also at the question from an engineering point of view—and the House must admit that His Excellency was pre-eminently qualified to form an opinion on that point—the Governor was, no doubt, forced to the conclusion that it was his duty to recommend the northern route. Hon. members seemed to regard this question as if the proposed line was intended merely to connect Fremantle with Perth, whereas, in point of fact, the main object of the proposed railway was to connect the Eastern districts with a port of shipment. This was a feature of the question which, however, was not likely to escape the attention of the Governor, who, it appeared to him, had acted honestly and straightforwardly throughout the whole affair.

MR. S. H. PARKER could not help thinking that the hon. member for Geraldton and the hon. member for Fremantle had forgotten that Western Australia was a Crown Colony; and, bearing that in mind, he was, for his own part, thankful for whatever small mercies we received from "Downing Street." When he heard the speech with which His Excellency opened the Session, and found that no despatches confirming the telegram received, authorising the construction of the line, had arrived, he began to fear that when those despatches did arrive the matter would be clogged and hampered with such conditions that many a long day would elapse before the work was really undertaken. He was, however, free to admit that he had been somewhat agreeably disappointed at the tenor of the Secretary of State's despatch, in which, after some trifling delay of three years or so, His Lordship had actually sanctioned the construction of a line of railway. Thankful indeed he was—thankful indeed ought the House to be—for such considerate attention on the part of "Downing Street."

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. M. Fraser) said the hon. member for Geraldton seemed inclined to blame the Government for not consulting

the people with regard to the question of route—for not canvassing, so to say, popular opinion on the subject. Now it appeared to him that had the Government done that, it would have found itself on the horns of a dilemma, and found it very difficult to escape transfixion, seeing the great diversity of opinion which prevailed with respect to the relative merits of the rival routes. Again, the Government was blamed because it did not come to that House prepared with a measure for the north in one hand, and a measure for the south in the other, and, going round the House, asking members to help themselves out of which basket they liked. What would have been the result? Nothing further than what resulted from the debate on the same question last Session,—it would be simply another case of "as you were." So far from adopting this indefinite course, the Government had come before the House prepared with a definite and well-digested scheme, and given what appeared to him very sound reasons for the faith that was in them. As to what had fallen from the hon. member for Fremantle as to the necessity of hon. members accepting what was forced upon them, or nothing at all, he had already informed the House that if the majority of members were not prepared to support the policy of the Government in this matter, they were quite at liberty to advocate the southern route. At the same time, he could only say, in a whisper, that such a course must necessarily involve some delay. As to the allegation that more attention had been paid by the Government to the surveys on the north side than on the south, the House must be aware, from papers laid before it not many days ago, that equal attention had been paid to both routes; in fact, the greater part of the work was done on the south side. He assured the hon. member for Fremantle he was laboring under an entirely erroneous impression if he thought that the case for the south had not been equally as forcibly placed before the Home authorities as the case for the north—with this difference, that the professional adviser of the Government had shown conclusively that there were economical advantages in favor of the northern route which were not possessed by the south. Was the

sum of £21,000, the estimated difference in the cost of the two lines, a question of no importance? [AN HON. MEMBER: Certainly not.] Were almost impracticable engineering difficulties of no consideration? It had been said by an eminent member of the profession that in railway construction "there were no engineering difficulties saving that of capital:" but it appeared to him very questionable whether this Colony was in a position to provide the necessary capital for the solution of any serious engineering difficulties. The House would do well to bear in mind that £21,000 would suffice to construct a railway for some distance in the direction in which it was proposed to extend this line towards the Eastern districts, and this, he thought, was a matter worthy of some consideration. With reference to the jocularity of the hon. member for Perth (Mr. Parker), as to being thankful for small mercies from Downing Street, and short delays of three years, and other equally powerful but harmless witticisms, he hoped hon. members would not allow themselves to be influenced by such trifles;—they knew the hon. gentleman's little weaknesses in this direction. Seriously, he (the Commissioner of Crown Lands) thought the best thing the House could do, the best course they could all adopt in this matter, was to go hand-in-hand with the Government.

MR. PARKER said, so far from treating the question jocosely, he was never more serious in his life. So strongly did he feel in the matter, that had the Government proposed to carry out the railway miles away into the interior he would have been prepared to support the proposition, for he was sure they would be never able to raise a loan unless they were in accord with the Government as to the route. He might also have pointed out, when speaking of the debt of gratitude which they owed to the Secretary of State, how thankful the House ought to be for the suggestion that the Crown Agents were the persons through whom to raise the proposed loan. He also thought they ought to be very grateful for the suggestion that those gentlemen were also the proper persons through whom to obtain the necessary rails and materials for the construction of the line. So solicitous, so

paternal, was the Secretary of State's regard for the people of this Colony, that he did not intend to trouble them with any of these little details: he had pointed out to us the route which the line should take, how the money to construct it was to be raised, when the loan should be floated, and who were to get the commission and the—profits. Nothing, in fact, was left for the people of this Colony but just to vote one little Bill. As to the question of route he did not think it materially affected the interests of Perth, whether the line went on the north or the south side, so long as the city was provided with a convenient central station. So far as he was personally concerned, his views on the question of route were in accord with the Government. What he really wanted to see was the railway started, and to that end, he intended to go with the Government in this matter.

MR. CROWTHER could only wish, and he very sincerely did wish, that the past experience which the Government had had in railway construction would have a salutary effect upon their future management of such undertakings, and he thought that, on the principle of nipping the evil in the bud, they ought to have nothing whatever to do with the Crown Agents in this matter. He had read with some little care the desire expressed by those gentlemen to have the manipulation of the rolling stock, rails, and other material required for the line, and also to negotiate the loan for its construction. He could only say with reference to the Geraldton and Northampton line, the rails, etc., for which, were obtained through the intervention of the Crown Agents, that the material sent out for that railway was, almost without exception, simply a disgrace to the persons who sent it out. Had it been supplied in the ordinary way of business to a private firm, it would be the very last transaction which that firm would have with the house supplying it. To say nothing of the other expenditure connected with that "unhappy railway," owing to the inferior quality of the material supplied, he might say that, although the line was not yet opened from end to end, they were obliged to keep a staff of officers employed to keep the two engines in repair, and as a proof of the tremendous speed capable of being

attained on the line he might mention to the House that he had had the pleasure of travelling on it, and on one occasion they actually accomplished about twenty-five miles in the space of from eight to nine hours. He was told by experienced practical engineers that there was not the remotest chance of these engines lasting more than half a dozen years, and he knew for a fact, from personal observation, that with only twenty-six or twenty-seven tons weight to draw, half the carriages had to be shunted, the engine having afterwards to return for them. He did think that the experience which the Government had had, with reference to the Crown Agents, in supplying the rolling stock and material for this line, ought to teach them to have nothing more to do with those gentlemen. With reference to the particular railway now under consideration, he endorsed to a certain extent, though not in its entirety, what had been said with reference to the absence of any reference to the southern route in the Secretary of State's despatch. It was absurd to think that His Excellency the Governor had, personally, any leaning one way or the other, but he certainly could not see why the necessary information should not have been sent home with respect to the south side line as well as the north. He did not see why, had that been done, the Government should not now be in a position to say to the House, "Here is one line, which will cost you £120,000, and here is another that will only cost you £100,000—we prefer the latter—but take your choice." Instead of that, the Secretary of State in effect said, "My dear friends, open your mouths and shut your eyes, and we will send you what we think will suit you." He would simply vote for the resolution before the House in the belief that unless we agreed to the Government proposals, we should not get *that* much—(suited the action to the word.)

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. R. T. Goldsworthy) said he regretted very much that the south, rather than the north, side had been decided upon, for they would then at any rate have been spared the somewhat violent tirade of the hon. member for Fremantle. But, notwithstanding that hon. member's declamation, he (the Colonial Secretary)

believed that His Excellency had acted honestly and wisely in recommending to the Home Government the adoption of that which he considered to be the best line. In that opinion, His Excellency was supported by one of the most eminent engineering authorities in England, who also supported the opinion expressed by our own Director of Public Works. There might be some local engineering magnates who differed from these opinions, but surely the House would not have the Government to adopt those opinions in opposition to those of their responsible advisers. The Government had come forward honestly and straightforwardly with what they considered the best scheme for adoption; if the House approved of it, well and good. If, on the other hand, the Council preferred the other route, the Government would throw no fractious opposition in its way, nor interpose any obstacles in the way of the wishes of the House being carried out. But, as for himself, he was quite in accord on this point with the hon. member for Perth, that it would be wiser—not only in this particular instance but on other occasions—to "bear the ills we have than fly to others that we know not of."

MR. BURT did not think any member of that Committee would be prepared to say that His Excellency the Governor had acted otherwise than *bonâ fide* in this matter, or that His Excellency was not much better able, from an engineering point of view, to deal with the question of route than any hon. member in that House. But what he was disappointed at was—he thought they all agreed that the two routes should have been sent home together, on an equal footing—that the Government were not in a position to sanction the construction of the line on whichever side of the river the House deemed best for the benefit of the country. No engineering skill was required to decide which route would prove most beneficial to the districts concerned, and to the Colony at large, as being likely to be the most reproductive undertaking; and if the House, or in other words the country, was prepared to pay for that line, he did not see why the country should not have it. But under the constitution we now had, he was inclined, like the hon.

member for Perth, to be thankful for small mercies, in the firm belief that half a loaf was better than no bread. He would support the resolution before the Committee, because, in his opinion, it would be perfectly useless to support any other.

MR. MARMION deprecated the idea that he had in any way accused His Excellency of acting other than with perfect uprightness and fairness in this matter. His remarks were particularly directed to the report of the Director of Public Works, who, he thought, had not put forward the claims of the rival routes as fairly as he might have done. With all due respect, however, towards the Governor, he thought that His Excellency, before framing his report, should have waited for the House to have expressed an opinion on the question of route.

MR. BROWN said, as the subject was one of the gravest importance, he thought the House would do well to postpone its final decision in the matter until another day, and, regard being had to the lateness of the hour, he would now move that progress be reported, and leave obtained to sit again on Friday, for the further consideration of His Excellency's message.

Motion agreed to, and progress reported accordingly.

The House adjourned at five minutes to eleven o'clock, p.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

Thursday, 20th June, 1878.

Eastern Railway: Petition to His Excellency the Governor—Duty on Transfer of Land Bill, 1878: first reading—Incorporation of West Australian Bank Shareholders' Bill, 1878: first reading—Customs Ordinance, 1860, Amendment Bill, 1878: first reading—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at noon.

PRAYERS.

EASTERN RAILWAY—PETITION.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. R. T. Goldsworthy) said he held in his hand a petition presented to His Excellency the Governor by a number of the citizens of Perth, praying that he may approve of and adopt the route proposed for the Eastern Railway by the Government Engineer, and known as the "North Route." The hon. gentleman moved that the petition be received.

MR. S. H. PARKER pointed out that the petition was addressed to the Governor and not to the Council, and he did not think, therefore, it could be read.

MR. BROWN also thought the House could not receive a petition that was not addressed to the Council.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. R. T. Goldsworthy) said he would merely move that it be laid on the Table.

MR. SPEAKER ruled that the petition might be laid on the Table of the House for the information of hon. members.

FIRST READINGS.

MR. BURT, in accordance with notice, moved the first reading of a Bill to enforce the payment of Duty on the Transfer of Land.

Motion agreed to.

MR. BURT also moved for leave to bring in a Bill to incorporate the Shareholders of the W. A. Bank, and for other purposes.

Leave given, and Bill read a first time.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. H. H. Hocking), in accordance with notice, moved the first reading of a Bill to further amend "The Customs Ordinance, 1860."

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at half-past twelve o'clock, p.m.
