

## MUNICIPAL LOANS VALIDATION BILL.

## THIRD READING.

Read a third time, on motion by the COLONIAL SECRETARY, and *passed*.

## EXECUTORS' COMMISSION BILL.

The House resolved into Committee to consider the Bill.

## IN COMMITTEE.

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

## ROADS AND STREETS CLOSURE BILL.

## IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Schedule:

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that the following be added after "North Fremantle":

In Gingin.—All that portion, a public street one chain wide, situate South of Robinson Street, and being bounded on the West by Gingin Suburban Lot 14, and on the East by Suburban Lots 12 and 13.

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

Bill reported with amendment, and report adopted.

## ADJOURNMENT.

On motion by the COLONIAL SECRETARY, the House adjourned at 5.25 p.m. until the next Tuesday.

## Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 27th September, 1899.

Resignation: North Murchison—Question: North Murchison Election, Deposit—Motion: Reports of all Speeches, Verbatim—Motion: Robbery from General Post Office (withdrawn)—Municipal Institutions Bill, in Committee, Clauses 335 to 344, progress: Divisions—Petition on Draft Commonwealth Bill, Motion to Approve (adjourned)—Mines Regulation Amendment Bill, in Committee, Clauses 1 to 24, progress—Pharmacy and Poisons Act Amendment Bill, in Committee, Clauses 1 to 3, progress—Agricultural Bank Act Amendment Bill, second reading (adjourned)—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock, p.m.

## PRAYERS.

## RESIGNATION—NORTH MURCHISON.

THE SPEAKER reported that he had received from Mr. F. W. Moorhead (elected, but not sworn) his written resignation as member for the North Murchison electoral district.

THE PREMIER gave notice that at the next sitting he would move that the seat for North Murchison be declared vacant.

## QUESTION—NORTH MURCHISON ELECTION, DEPOSIT.

MR. LEAKE asked the Premier, whether the £25 deposited with the returning officer for the North Murchison electorate by Mr. T. G. Molloy, on his nomination as a candidate at the recent election, had been returned to Mr. Molloy; and, if not, whether it was proposed to return the deposit.

THE PREMIER replied: 1. It has not been returned. 2. The question has been referred to the Law Department.

## MOTION—REPORTS OF ALL SPEECHES, VERBATIM.

MR. GEORGE (Murray) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable that henceforth a verbatim report be made by *Hansard* of all speeches delivered in this House, whether the House be in Committee or in the ordinary course of business.

He said: In asking hon. members to consider this question, I wish it to be distinctly understood that I cast no reflection whatever on the *Hansard* reporting staff of this House. Indeed, I think

they do their duty admirably; and perhaps if my motion were passed and they were called upon to give a verbatim report of all that is said in this House, in accordance with the terms of my motion, many of us might have strong reasons to feel, I will not say exactly ashamed of ourselves, but we should regret having used words that were not put so correctly as they would have been if the *Hansard* reporters had been allowed the usual discretion which they exercise under present conditions. My principal reason for bringing forward this motion springs out of an incident that occurred in this House a few evenings ago. When I wanted to discuss one of the many Bills that have been placed before members in this House, you, Mr. Speaker, were called out of your chamber to take notice of the fact that there was not a quorum, and to see that a quorum was formed. This occurred several times during discussion of that Bill, and I quite understand that under those circumstances not only yourself, Mr. Speaker, but some members in this House, might have felt considerable irritation at the course taken by certain members in calling attention to the want of a quorum, time after time, and in causing yourself and other members to be summoned repeatedly into the Chamber. That occurred because hon. members, instead of being in their places and listening to the arguments used in this House, and doing their duty as representatives of the people, were absent from their places when they should have been present. But in the decision you gave, Mr. Speaker, and which I do not wish to question, I see what seems to me to be a matter striking at the liberty of discussion in this Chamber: striking so strongly at that liberty that it would be absolutely impossible for any minority in this Chamber to strike out for what they might think are the rights of their position, and the rights which appertain to them as representatives of the people. What could be more easy if, instead of having yourself in the Chair, and we cannot expect to have you there always, we had some gentleman who is more amenable to the influences that would be brought to bear from the Treasury benches? It would be simply a matter of force, and Bills or other matters might be carried through this House by absolute

brute force; and while you decided, sir, that the member for the Murray had gone perilously near to the position which would cause him to be "named" from the Chair, at the same time if such decision had been acted upon, and if the Premier had descended so low as to have named the member for the Murray, the result would have been that every Bill that is brought before this House, and to which some members might strongly object, would be carried through by brute force.

THE SPEAKER: I do not see that the hon. member's observations have anything to do with his motion.

MR. GEORGE: Had I been "named" under the circumstances which I have mentioned, the only defence I could have made would have been a reference to *Hansard* for the exact words I used; and as I know that, in reporting Committee discussions, it is not the custom for *Hansard* to report verbatim, therefore any judgment this House might have given would not have been on the exact words used, but on the feeling of hon. members who might be incensed at having been called into the House several times because there was not a quorum present to do business. I say that unless this system of verbatim reports were adopted, and unless the words actually used were there for any member to refer to when his conduct was called into question, that member would stand in considerable danger of being disgraced for the remainder of his political life, for merely doing what might appear to him his duty to the country and the people who elected him. The present system places such a power in the hands of a despotic Government, that I shall ask the House to assist me in this matter. I may refer, as an instance in point, to the conduct of the member in charge of the Municipal Institutions Bill this year. Had it not been for the stand I took with regard to one particular point, the reiterated amendments and little speeches I made, I could not have had the support of the member for Albany (Mr. Leake) on one important occasion, because the point I was raising then had not occurred to him; and yet, according to the ruling you gave the other evening, sir, I ran a distinct risk of being disgraced before this House and the country. Therefore I bring this

motion in because, if such an incident should occur again, either in the case of myself or any other member, we may have an opportunity of being able to put in something for our defence, by referring to the verbatim report of what we actually said. The principal reason why the Chairman of Committees checked me about repeating myself was that I was compelled to repeat myself, because each time a quorum was called for, several members came into the House, and they had not heard the reasons given in regard to the Bill under discussion. I have it on the authority of two members in the Press Gallery that during the last speech I made, in which the Chairman of Committees said I had repeated myself, I had not repeated myself. I was very careful in what I was saying, and I have their word I did not repeat myself in the manner I was stated to have done. If it comes to a question of obstructing the House and wasting the public time, I would point to the speech of the Premier delivered last evening (Financial Statement), which was nothing more nor less than a waste of time and an obstruction of the business of the country; and yet the hon. member was listened to for two hours without interruption, when all he had to say could have been said by any ordinary member in five minutes. The exercise of the duties of the Chair are in the discretion of the Chair; but it is not for anyone to say how long a member shall speak, and I think if there is any one person who ought to be ashamed of himself in this matter, it is the Premier of the country. He made an attempt to burk discussion which some of us thought was necessary in the interests of the country; and he took advantage of the natural irritation which might be felt by any mean man, to attempt to disgrace one member of this House. I might also point out what occurred the other evening on the Public Service Bill, as a matter of privilege, if I have the right to refer to it. The discussion was going on in Committee on Clause 6, which refers to certain payment for members of the board; yet one hon. member of this House, the member for Nelson (Sir James Lee Steere), delivered a second-reading speech in Committee, and gave it as his opinion, without a rebuke from the Chair, that the Bill was not worth the

paper it was printed on. I know the hon. member has a perfect right to give his opinion when he has an opportunity for doing so; but I ask whether the same measure should not be meted out to the member for Nelson as was meted out to the member for the Murray.

THE SPEAKER: Whom is the hon. member alluding to as the member for Nelson?

MR. GEORGE: The hon. member for Nelson.

THE SPEAKER: Who is he?

MR. GEORGE: Well, sir, when he takes his seat on the floor of the House, he is Sir James Lee Steere.

THE SPEAKER: I do not know what authority you have for saying that I made a second-reading speech.

MR. GEORGE: I am giving my opinion, with all due respect.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member is out of order, then.

MR. GEORGE: Very well; I will sit down.

THE SPEAKER: I think the hon. member had better do so, because, as I have warned you before, your observations are not directed in the least to the motion before the House.

MR. GEORGE: Well, sir, I bow to your ruling, but I regret that it is to be so on an important matter of this sort.

MR. WILSON (Canning) seconded the motion.

Motion put (without further debate), and negatived.

#### MOTION--ROBBERY FROM GENERAL POST OFFICE.

Mr. VOSPER (North-East Coolgardie) moved:

That there be laid upon the table of the House the whole of the papers connected with the robbery of £900 from the General Post Office, together with the full text of the report on the same furnished to the responsible Minister, as the result of inquiry.

It was well known to hon. members and the public generally that an inquiry into this robbery took place, and a portion of the report of the board of inquiry was published; but one or two clauses were omitted from the published report. Whatever reason actuated the Colonial Secretary at that time in keeping back

part of the report could not obtain now. It was about time hon. members knew something of the real truth of the theft which took place on the 1st of December, 1898. He understood that the Royal Commission which inquired into the affairs of the Post Office had these papers for which he was asking. If the Commission were going to furnish their report in a reasonable time, and intended to include these papers as part of the evidence, he would withdraw his motion; but he would like to have an assurance from the Government that this would be done. If not, he would press his motion.

**THE PREMIER** (Right Hon. Sir John Forrest) said he would have pleasure in placing the papers on the table; but he could not promise to give the full report to the House, because there was, so far as his memory served him, one paragraph casting suspicion on some one; and whether that suspicion was well grounded he could not say, but had grave doubts about it. It would be unfair to publish a mere suspicion which was not based on sufficient evidence; and he regretted that the paragraph found a place in the report, and no doubt that was now the opinion of the members of the Commission. The publication of this paragraph might have the effect of unfairly injuring a man who had to make his way in the world, and was dependent for his daily bread on his good character. There were some suspicious circumstances surrounding the matter; still he would be sorry to injure any one unfairly; therefore he did not think the House would say that the portion of the report which reflected on a man who was in the service still, and was a respected member of the community, should be published. He would not mind showing the report to any member of the House who was inquisitive enough to want to see it; but he did not think the report should be published, as it contained a mere suspicion which had not been proved. That was the only matter, as far as his memory served him, which had not been published.

**MR. VOSPER**: The suppression meant that the whole department was suspected.

**THE PREMIER**: It was not well that this particular suspicion should be published to the world. If it had been anything more than suspicion, the Government would have suspended the officer

and prosecuted him; but the Government thought that as there was merely a suspicion, it was only right to suppress it. There were some suspicious circumstances connected with the matter, but they were not evidence; and if the hon. member (Mr. Vosper) or any other member was inquisitive enough to look at the report, he could see it; but it would not be fair to put the report on the table of the House. He did not know what the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the affairs of the Post Office were going to do. They had the matter in their own hands, but no doubt they would take the same course as the Government took, and would not injure anyone on mere suspicion. He would be glad to show the report to any hon. member.

**MR. VOSPER** (in reply): There was nothing further from his mind than to injure any individual. All he desired was that the report should be published in order to remove a suspicion which rested in the minds of the public. At the time the report was published some ugly things were said.

**THE PREMIER**: All very cruel and wrong.

**MR. VOSPER**: There was one point on which he would like to ask the Premier for explanation. The Premier told the House that some person unknown had been suspected, and that suspicion was contained in the report. Hon. members knew, according to the terms of the report, that another officer, who might be the same one for all we knew to the contrary, had been ordered to pay a certain amount towards refunding the money, and we would like an assurance from the Premier that the person who had been asked to refund the money was not the officer on whom suspicion had been cast.

**THE PREMIER**: Certainly, he would assure the hon. member that not a breath of suspicion had been cast on the officer who had to pay the money. The Executive Council, in considering the report of the Commission, came to the conclusion that the officer had been negligent, and for that reason ought to refund the money; but there was not the slightest, and never was the slightest, suspicion as to the integrity of that officer.

**MR. VOSPER**: Was that officer paying the money?

**THE PREMIER:** The officer was paying the money, he believed.

**MR. VOSPER** said he was glad the Premier had given that assurance. He asked leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

## MUNICIPAL INSTITUTIONS BILL.

### IN COMMITTEE.

Consideration resumed from 19th September, and Clause 335 further discussed.

Clause 335—Mode of making valuation; alternative mode of valuation:

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL** moved that Sub-clause 2, paragraph c, relating to pastoral purposes and grazing farms, be struck out. This Sub-clause had been taken from an Act in another colony where the circumstances were not the same in regard to municipal affairs as in this colony.

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

Clause 336—agreed to.

Clause 337—Valuers:

**MR. GEORGE** moved that in line 2, after "valuers," there be inserted the words "not being members of the same firm."

**MR. A. FORREST** (in charge of the Bill) accepted the amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

**MR. A. FORREST** moved that in line 2, after "appoint," the words "a valuer or" be inserted; also that the words "neither of whom" be struck out and "who" inserted in lieu thereof; also that after "shall" the word "not" be inserted, and that after "member" the words "or members" be inserted; also that in line 4 the word "joint" be struck out; also in line 7, after "returned" the words "or in case the valuers differ, the valuation of either" be struck out.

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

Clauses 338 to 341, inclusive—agreed to.

Clause 342—Mayor may send ratepayer schedule of ratable property in certain cases:

**HON. S. BURT:** This clause referred to a mode of valuing provided in Clause 335, which gave to a council the option of two different modes of valuation; yet he understood those optional modes had

been struck out, and as no system of valuation was provided for, this reference in Clause 342 was not required, and should be struck out also.

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL:** The clause defining the mode of valuation was going to be amended on recomittal.

**HON. S. BURT:** This clause provided for a mode of valuation which had been struck out of a previous clause, therefore this provision could not be wanted. If no one in the House looked after these things in the Bill, there was a real danger in passing such a measure as this.

**MR. GEORGE:** What did the hon. member think of the Bill as a whole?

**HON. S. BURT:** Some of the clauses were most dangerous. There was one clause which appeared to him to be revolutionary, for it gave to a municipal council the power to close a declared highway, whereas that power had hitherto been exercised only by Parliament. Persons owning property in a public street or highway might wake up some morning and find the highway closed by order of the municipal council; and such a power should not be placed in any municipal body.

**MR. EWING:** A motion was made by him when the Committee last considered the Bill, and he understood that the member in charge of the Bill would get it thoroughly revised, and come prepared to carry it through this House as an intelligible measure.

**MR. A. FORREST:** The hon. member himself, as a lawyer, had been asked to assist, but he would not do so. Every solicitor in the House had been asked.

**MR. EWING:** The hon. member in charge of the Bill knew that his reply to the request was that it would take a fortnight to put the Bill in order, because it was in such a disgraceful and confused condition that no private member could attempt to do it. Members in Committee were not supposed to draft Bills or create new Bills, in the process of revising them in this House.

**MR. A. FORREST:** The Attorney General had the Bill in hand now.

**MR. GEORGE:** And he was ashamed of it, and would not "father" it.

**MR. EWING:** The Attorney General could not be expected to draft Bills for private members. A dangerous feature

of the Bill was that the clauses were so interdependent, that the alteration of one required consequent alteration in several others.

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL:** It would be moved that the clause be struck out.

**HON. S. BURT:** But the Attorney General had moved to amend the clause.

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL:** No; on recommittal it was intended to amend the clause dealing with methods of valuation; and his instructions were to have struck out the clauses referring to pastoral leases and grazing farms. He had proceeded to carry out these instructions by striking out paragraph *c* in Sub-clause 2 of Clause 335. He moved that the Clause (342) be struck out.

Amendment put and passed, and the clause struck out.

Clause 343—Owner, where name not known, to be rated as owner:

**MR. GEORGE:** This peculiar clause provided for rating the owner without specifying any method of serving him with notice.

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL:** How could an unknown man be served?

**MR. GEORGE:** The fact of there being no provision for the method of service showed the slipshod way in which the Bill had been drawn. If in order, he would move that the Bill be read this day six months.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** The hon. member could not move that.

**MR. GEORGE** moved that the clause be struck out. It seemed to be "balderdash" and unnecessary jumbling, for the insertion of which in the Bill no intelligible reason could be given.

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL:** The clause was taken from Section 255 of the Victorian Local Government Act, and its object was sufficiently apparent. If the owner's name could not be ascertained, was that any reason why such owner should not be rated?

**MR. GEORGE:** No; but the proviso should be put into English that would be intelligible.

**THE ATTORNEY GENERAL:** The hon. member's standard of classic English was so high that it was evidently very hard to satisfy him.

**MR. GEORGE:** The wording of the clause, though clear enough, was childish. Why not provide that the serving of such notice be by posting it on a fence, building, or other convenient place on the land, as had been the practice of the Perth Council? His education had not been of the best, but he did not believe that of the Attorney General had been better.

Amendment to strike out the clause put, and a division taken with the following result:—

|          |     |     |    |
|----------|-----|-----|----|
| Ayes ... | ... | ... | 10 |
| Noes ... | ... | ... | 16 |

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| Majority against ... | 6 |
|----------------------|---|

| AYES.                     | NOES.               |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| Hon. S. Burt              | Mr. Conolly         |
| Mr. Ewing                 | Sir John Forrest    |
| Mr. George                | Mr. A. Forrest      |
| Mr. Gregory               | Mr. Holmes          |
| Mr. Leake                 | Mr. Hubble          |
| Sir J. G. Lee Steere      | Mr. Lefroy          |
| Mr. Vosper                | Mr. Monger          |
| Mr. Wallace               | Mr. Pennefather     |
| Mr. Wilson                | Mr. Piesse          |
| Mr. Illingworth (Teller). | Mr. Quinlan         |
|                           | Mr. Robson          |
|                           | Mr. Sholl           |
|                           | Mr. Solomon         |
|                           | Mr. Throssell       |
|                           | Hon. H. W. Venn     |
|                           | Mr. Rason (Teller). |

Amendment thus negatived, and the clause passed.

Clause 344—Separate rates:

**HON. S. BURT:** Here was a third division in the Bill, dealing with special rates, its provisions having a direct bearing on other divisions of the measure as to general rates, because the clauses were similarly constructed. A week ago it had been pointed out that by Clause 334 there were two systems of valuation, on the capital and on the annual values respectively. The former system had been negatived, and it had been understood that the member in charge withdrew the Bill for the purpose of correcting Clauses 334 and 335, dealing with the rules for finding the capital value. Yet, according to the Attorney General, it was only intended to strike out paragraph *c*, in Sub-clause 2 of Clause 335, containing one of the rules for finding the capital value, although the rating on capital value had been struck out, while this clause contained a proviso dealing with rating on capital value. How could we trust those hon. members who were supposed to be putting this Bill in proper shape, when they had

brought the Bill back without having excised such clauses, among which was a proviso giving power to municipalities to strike a rate on the capital value of 1s. 6d. in the £?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: That would be amended on recommitment.

HON. S. BURT: But the hon. member said he would strike out paragraph c only.

MR. A. FORREST: What was the objection to the clause under discussion?

HON. S. BURT: That the rate would be struck on the capital value, and the same applied to other clauses.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The clause, which related to special rates, provided for raising such rates under certain limitations for the protection of ratepayers.

HON. S. BURT: On what basis?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: On a basis to be subsequently provided. The clause dealing with valuations had, by the previous action of the Committee, been rendered inoperative until further action was taken. On recommitment the whole of that clause would once more be debated, with the intention of placing the system of valuation on the basis on which it had stood before this Bill had been drafted. Supposing the Central Ward of the Perth municipality wanted to wood-block the whole of the streets, they would naturally ask the other wards whether they were willing to join in, and if the ratepayers in other wards were unwilling to do so, the Central Ward could exercise the powers under the next subdivision of the Bill, and rate themselves. It would not concern ratepayers in other wards, as they would not have to pay the special rate.

MR. EWING objected to the clause as a whole, because 1s. 6d. in the £ was too much. The real intention of the member in charge of the Bill, although it was nowhere expressed in the measure, was that the people should be charged 1s. 6d. in the £ on the annual value.

MR. A. FORREST: That was the intention.

MR. EWING: The sooner it was expressed the better. If people were charged 1s. 6d. in the £, together with the lighting rate and the other rates, Parliament should hesitate before they gave the municipalities power to charge

another 6d. in the £ on the requisition of one-third of the ratepayers. This was the most awful system of taxation ever proposed. Was it advisable to heap taxation on the people in this way? There was an expression in this clause, "sixpence in the pound on the ratable value;" and what was the meaning of those words? They were nowhere defined in the Bill; therefore, the words required amendment. It was very well to say the Bill could be amended on recommitment, but now was the time to amend the Bill when in Committee. The whole of Sub-Clause 2 of Clause 335 should have been struck out, because in one paragraph it was provided that no allotment should be valued at less than £10, and the next clause provided that the value should not be less than £30. It was time the member in charge of the Bill reconsidered his position; and to give him time to do so, he (Mr. Ewing) moved that the Chairman do leave the Chair.

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

|          |     |    |
|----------|-----|----|
| Ayes ... | ... | 13 |
| Noes ... | ... | 14 |

Majority against ... 1

| AYES.                | NOES.                |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| Hon. S. Burt         | Sir John Forrest     |
| Mr. Ewing            | Mr. A. Forrest       |
| Mr. George           | Mr. Lefroy           |
| Mr. Gregory          | Mr. Monger           |
| Mr. Holmes           | Mr. Morgans          |
| Mr. Illingworth      | Mr. Pennefather      |
| Mr. James            | Mr. Piesse           |
| Mr. Lenke            | Mr. Quinlan          |
| Mr. Oats             | Mr. Rason            |
| Mr. Robson           | Mr. Sholl            |
| Sir J. G. Lee Steere | Mr. Solomon          |
| Mr. Wallace.         | Mr. Throssell        |
| Mr. Wilson (Teller). | Hon. H. W. Venn      |
|                      | Mr. Hubble (Teller). |

Motion thus negatived.

MR. A. FORREST: In view of the decision which had just taken place, he moved that progress be reported and leave asked to sit again.

Motion put and passed.

MR. A. FORREST moved that the Committee have leave to sit again this day fortnight.

MR. LEAKE moved, as an amendment, that the Committee have leave to sit again this day three months.

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

|          |     |    |
|----------|-----|----|
| Ayes ... | ... | 13 |
| Noes ... | ... | 14 |

Majority against ... 1

AYES.  
 Hon. S. Burt  
 Mr. Ewing  
 Mr. George  
 Mr. Illingworth  
 Mr. James  
 Mr. Kingsmill  
 Mr. Leake  
 Mr. Oats  
 Mr. Robson  
 Mr. Vosper  
 Mr. Wallace  
 Mr. Wilson  
 Mr. Gregory (Teller).

NOES.  
 Mr. Connolly  
 Sir John Forrest  
 Mr. A. Forrest  
 Mr. Hubble  
 Mr. Lefroy  
 Mr. Monger  
 Mr. Morgans  
 Mr. Pennefather  
 Mr. Piesse  
 Mr. Quinlan  
 Mr. Solomon  
 Mr. Throssell  
 Hon. H. W. Venn  
 Mr. Rason (Teller).

Amendment thus negatived, and leave given to sit again in a fortnight.

#### PETITION ON DRAFT COMMONWEALTH BILL.

##### MOTION TO APPROVE.

MR. LEAKE (Albany), in moving the adoption of the prayer of a petition presented previously by the Western Australian Federal League, said: Hon. members who have read the terms of this petition will notice that the gist of it is contained in paragraph 3 and in the prayer. Paragraph 3, I may inform the House, states that the petitioners are in favour of the introduction of the necessary enabling legislation for referring to the people the Commonwealth Bill of Australia without further amendment, in time to allow of Western Australia joining the union as an original State. The prayer of the petition is:

That your Honourable House will take all necessary steps to have the said Commonwealth Bill referred to the people, as above, so that the wishes of the majority may be complied with.

This motion has the support, as hon. members will see on referring to the petition, of over 23,000 of the people of this colony.

MR. HARPER: Question?

MR. LEAKE: The hon. member says "question," but if the hon. member or any other member desires to question this, I challenge him and others to support the motion, and thereby permit this question to be decided by the electors, in which event I venture to predict there will be far more than 23,000 people of this colony found voting in favour of this motion which is embodied in the petition.

MR. HARPER: Do not prophesy unless you know.

MR. LEAKE: If any hon. members, the member for Beverley included, desire to flout the opinion of 23,000 people of this colony, I shall be glad to assist them

in testing the opinion of the people, and it will be interesting perhaps to stand by and see the result. The hon. member, I understand, is a member of what is known as the National League; a league which for a moment enjoyed life, but which recently, if not dead, at any rate has gone into recess.

MR. GEORGE: What?

MR. LEAKE: It has recently gone into recess, with the hope, I believe at the instigation of the member for the Murray, of revivifying itself. When that league is revivified, I have no doubt that those who look forward to the adoption of the Draft Commonwealth Bill will be ready to meet the members of that league in fair and open fight, with the idea of discussing the provisions of the Draft Bill, and also discussing the suggestions which that league may make. Up to the present time, no very direct pronouncement on this important question has been made by the Government, beyond that which was communicated in the speech of His Excellency the Governor in opening this session of Parliament, when he told us that after the whole of Australia had accepted the Bill, it should be referred to the decision of the people of this colony.

MR. MORGANS: To Parliament.

MR. LEAKE: To the decision of the people of the colony. Parliament, of course, would have to be consulted, and we are asking no more than that the expression of opinion given in the Governor's Speech should now be affirmed, and that the enabling legislation should be brought down in order that the referendum may be taken. Hon. members are aware that a Joint Select Committee of both Houses of Parliament has not only been appointed but has also reported on this draft Bill, and certain suggestions have been made in that report. The report may be taken, I dare say, as the opinion of the Administration; following as it did the advice of one of the metropolitan daily journals, namely the *Morning Herald*, which in an issue some few days before the report of the Select Committee was framed, suggested that the draft Bill should be adopted by this colony if certain amendments were made. The suggested amendments were three, as put forth by the *Morning Herald*, and they were: first, that Clause 7 of the draft



Commonwealth Bill should be amended, so that this colony might divide itself up into electorates for the election of members of the Senate in the same manner that Queensland may do under a provision of the Bill; secondly, it was proposed by the *Herald* that the trans-continental railway, connecting the systems of Western Australia and South Australia, should be made a condition of federation; thirdly, it was proposed by the *Herald* to retain certain privileges with regard to the imposition of duties in this colony. These are the three amendments proposed by the *Morning Herald*, which amendments were adopted by the Government, and at the instance of the Government by the Select Committee.

THE PREMIER: Not by the Government yet, I think.

MR. LEAKE: Well, adopted by the right hon. gentleman opposite (the Premier); and in all other instances he represents the Government. If the right hon. gentleman did not represent the Government on that select committee, I should like to know whom he did represent. But in addition to these three suggested amendments, as given in the *Morning Herald*, we find the Government and the majority of the select committee added a fourth, to the effect that the functions of the Inter-State Commission should not be exercised so far as regards this colony for a definite and fixed period. Speaking for myself, and I know that in this respect I voice the opinion of federalists, and the majority if not the whole of those who are represented by this petition to Parliament, I say that amendments to the Commonwealth Bill are impossible at this moment. It is outside the province of this Parliament to amend that draft Bill; and, consequently, to propose or suggest amendments to the Bill at the present juncture must result in a certain delay, such a delay as will prevent this colony joining the union as an original State. Consequently, my advocacy is for the reference of the draft Commonwealth Bill, as amended at the conference of Premiers in February last, to the vote of the people of this colony without further amendment. I take it that the opinion of the Select Committee will possibly be followed by a great number of the members of this honourable House. If that be so, we find that the points

upon which federalists and anti-federalists differ are not only few in number, but unimportant in particulars; that is to say, in all other respects the Bill as drafted is admitted to be good, and sufficiently protects and safeguards this country and its people, and ensures the observance of our constitutional rights in all respects, with the exception of the three particulars to which I have referred. Analyse those particulars, and I say, emphatically, that the differences between the two parties are practically nil; that is, viewed from the national standpoint. If viewed in a way in which they may affect the pockets of one or two individuals, they may appear from the standpoint which each individual takes up to be of some magnitude; but in my opinion, and I think I am right in this, this great measure should be viewed not from the standpoint of how it affects any particular individual or any particular industry, but from the broad and national standpoint as to how it affects not only this colony, but the people of the whole of Australia. I am opposed to the first suggested amendment which has been recommended by the Select Committee, namely, the splitting up of this colony into several electorates. I prefer to see the colony as one electorate, at any rate for the first election, because this colony voting as one electorate ensures that the six representatives who will be sent to the Senate will be men who represent the whole body of the people of Western Australia; it will ensure that they represent the interests of the whole, undivided; whereas, if the colony is split up into electorates, it is quite possible that the various interests will not be represented by those six persons who may be elected to the Senate.

THE SPEAKER: I think the hon. member is out of order in what he is doing now. It is a well-known Parliamentary rule that no member can anticipate the debate on a motion which is set down for consideration; and I see that the report of the Joint Select Committee is set down for consideration by this House on Thursday in next week; therefore the hon. member cannot anticipate discussion now upon the subjects that will be brought forward when that report is discussed.

MR. LEAKE: May I remind you, sir, that my motion was set down first. Am

I to understand that your ruling, sir, simply goes to this point, that I may not anticipate the suggested amendments?

THE SPEAKER: My ruling goes to that. You must not discuss these suggested amendments, which will be brought before the House on Thursday in next week.

MR. LEAKE: I was referring in these items to what was suggested in the Press.

THE SPEAKER: Yes; but the hon. member, just before I interrupted him, was going on to discuss the amendments which are recommended in the report of the Select Committee. That was one of the subjects mentioned in the Press, but that circumstance does not justify the hon. member in discussing the motion which is to be brought before this House. These two questions are so mixed up that it would be much better if the discussion of them were to take place at the same time.

MR. LEAKE: I will endeavour to follow the ruling of the Chair, and I shall ask you, sir, if I diverge at all, to remind me of the fact.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member knows the amendments which are to be brought forward, for they were suggested by the Select Committee.

MR. LEAKE: Of course I know the amendments are in the report. I shall endeavour not to transgress. I think I may speak generally on the power of amendment, without specifying the particular amendments.

THE SPEAKER: Without specifying the particular amendments.

MR. LEAKE: As I am ruled out of order in referring to the amendments which were suggested in the report of the Select Committee, I must address myself only to the question of amendment as it affects the Bill generally; and I repeat, at the risk of being wearisome, but rather for the sake of emphasis, that it is well for hon. members to consider the utter futility of attempting to amend this Bill in any material particular, because if we do so we shall imperil our chances of joining the union as an original State. Any amendments which may be suggested cannot be discussed or determined here, nor can they be determined or granted by the Imperial authorities; but if we desire any amendment, we must wait until the Federal Parliament is in

full swing, and then we, as an intending new State, must approach the federal authorities, and must seek admission to the federation. That is the position in which we find ourselves to-day; and inasmuch as it will possibly be found, when any amendments are suggested, that those amendments, when viewed from a higher standpoint, relate to matters of mean importance, it is well for us to consider whether the advantages of any such amendments outweigh the advantages we shall acquire by joining the Commonwealth as an original State. In my opinion, nothing that can be suggested can compensate us for the disadvantage of being excluded from the union at the beginning. It is of the greatest possible importance that, when the union is established, this colony should be represented. If represented from the start, we shall have a voice in the appointment of the members of the Federal Executive, and shall perhaps be represented upon that Executive. We shall have adequate representation in the House of Representatives; and in respect of the House of Representatives, I may remind hon. members that the colony may be divided into separate electorates, and that each section of the community may, if necessary, be represented in that House; but with regard to the Senate, the Commonwealth Bill does not provide for the subdivision of the colony into electorates, the reason being that it was thought advisable, by those who debated this question at the Convention, that the whole of the colony, voting as one electorate, had better send these six representatives on the united national vote, so that such national vote should not be split up.

MR. MORGANS: Why then did they give that privilege to Queensland?

MR. LEAKE: They gave it to Queensland because Queensland, which was not represented at the Federal Conventions, but was represented at the Conference of Premiers in February last, badly required it; because it was pointed out by Queensland, I believe, that there were certain peculiar interests which required to be separately represented, and that such a concession would facilitate the passing of the Commonwealth Bill in that colony.

MR. MORGANS: Is that not a good reason for giving us a similar concession?

MR. LEAKE: But the conditions of Queensland and the conditions of this colony are not similar. We have no agitation in this colony, as they have in Queensland, for a separation of one portion of the colony from the other.

MR. VOSPER: Quite the contrary! We have such an agitation.

MR. MORGANS: Some people on the goldfields want separation.

MR. LEAKE: I am only replying to the query of the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans). The conditions of Queensland and of this colony are not exactly similar; but there is this to be said, if the question had been raised by our representatives at the Conference, the privilege might have been granted.

THE PREMIER: Oh no; I did raise it.

MR. LEAKE: But if it was raised, the chances are that the reply given to the hon. member who represented us at that conference was this: "You have had an opportunity of discussing this question at the Convention, and the Convention has decided against you; and you honestly bowed to the decision of the majority at the Convention." Well, I was a member of the Convention, and I distinctly remember my speaking upon this Clause 7, and advocating the colony being retained as one electorate instead of being split up.

THE PREMIER: You said a good many things there.

MR. LEAKE: One argument I made use of was that it was better that the colony should be represented by men imbued with national instincts and ideas rather than by "roads-and-bridges" politicians. That was my opinion then, and it is my opinion now. But, of course, if it were possible that an amendment like this could be suggested, I submit to this House that it is impossible or improper that it should be carried. The same observation might apply to many other amendments, but I do not think that, when the time comes, many amendments will be proposed; and we shall find that there is a very narrow gulf, if any at all, separating the federalists and the anti-federalists on this question.

MR. MORGANS: Hear, hear.

MR. LEAKE: The gulf is not so wide that it cannot be bridged, nor are the differences so important that one side

or the other cannot give way. If any hon. member can show me that a reasonable amendment can be adopted, and that by its adoption we shall not imperil our chances of joining the union as an original State, I think I shall be found giving way upon that point, although I may entertain a strong objection to so doing; because my first idea is to federate, and to federate on reasonable terms. Therefore, while I advocate, as strongly as I possibly can, a referendum upon the Bill as drawn, yet I will not say that in no possible circumstances will I consider amendments; but I must be convinced that those amendments are possible at this moment, and can be embodied in the Bill so as to enable us to join as an original State. I will not accept a single amendment which will place us in the position of standing out of the union at the present moment, and which will force us to apply to the Federal Government later on for admission; because, when we so apply, the danger we have before us is that we may have fresh terms imposed, and terms which we cannot accept, or terms not so favourable as those which are defined in the original Bill. The opinion of leading statesmen in the colonies is that the Bill cannot be amended.

MR. MORGANS: That is "bluff."

MR. LEAKE: There are upon the table telegrams from the Right Hon. G. H. Reid, the late Premier of New South Wales, who expressed his own views and the views of the Premiers of the other colonies when he said that our Premier might at once take it for granted that the Bill could not be amended. We have had similar opinions expressed by Mr. Kingston, Mr. Barton, Mr. Glynn, Mr. Deakin, and Mr. Holder.

MR. GREGORY: And by Sir George Turner.

THE PREMIER: Where did Mr. Deakin give his opinion?

MR. LEAKE: Well, I am not in a position to give day and date.

THE PREMIER: But you are sure of the fact?

MR. LEAKE: I think I may say that I have seen private correspondence from Mr. Deakin.

THE PREMIER: I mean, in the Press.

MR. LEAKE: Oh, I did not say in the Press. I have had private corre-

spondence, and other hon. members have had correspondence, with Mr. Deakin. I take it the Premier will remember that upon a recent occasion Mr. Deakin was banqueted in Victoria, and he then expressed the ideas which I am expressing now.

THE PREMIER: I was not aware of it. I did not see any such report.

MR. LEAKE: I should not like to quote some of the opinions of the Hon. Alfred Deakin with regard to certain members of the Convention.

THE PREMIER: Your doing so would not affect them, I expect.

MR. GEORGE: Some men have no shame.

THE PREMIER: Do you think it would? He is so superior to us, I suppose?

MR. LEAKE: I recognise Mr. Deakin as one of the highest authorities on federation, and there is no one in this colony who can "hold a candle" to him.

THE PREMIER: I also have a very high opinion of him.

MR. LEAKE: And there is one thing that may be said of the Hon. A. Deakin: he was a good and honest friend of Western Australia at the Convention.

THE PREMIER: Hear, hear.

MR. LEAKE: He fought the battle of Western Australia in the Convention; and whatever we may think of the result of his efforts, he is entitled to our gratitude for what he did, and for the honesty of his intentions.

THE PREMIER: I quite agree with you, but I did not like the way in which you put it. I do not think that Mr. Deakin has that opinion of our members at the Convention which you would like to insinuate that he holds.

MR. LEAKE: I have rather an unhappy knack of putting things in a way that does not please the right hon. gentleman; but I am addressing the House, addressing the Chair rather than the Premier, at the present moment.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: You should always please the Premier.

MR. LEAKE: Again I say, should we thus imperil our position as an original State for the sake of the possibly trifling differences which exist between the billites and the anti-billites?

MR. MORGANS: But will you imperil the position?

MR. LEAKE: Undoubtedly. In my opinion, and I hope the hon. member will believe that I am honest in this expression of opinion, I have said so from the start, and I say so again, that I believe any attempt to amend this Bill will imperil our joining the Commonwealth as an original State, because it will ensure delay; and the only possible way in which an amendment can be made to that Bill—well, that is wrong, but the only way in which a condition can be granted in our favour is by waiting until the union is an accomplished fact in law; and then by approaching the Federal Government with a request that we be admitted upon terms: that is the position.

MR. MORGANS: A dangerous position.

MR. LEAKE: The very first answer that will be made to such a request will be: "We cannot give you equal representation in the Senate." Now such equal representation is to us of the greatest possible importance.

MR. VOSPER: Why should not the Federal Parliament grant that request?

MR. MORGANS: Why not?

MR. LEAKE: Well, I am about to try to show you why not.

THE PREMIER: We are suppliants, I suppose?

MR. LEAKE: We should be suppliants—undoubtedly suppliants; we must be suppliants, under the terms of the Bill.

THE PREMIER: We are of more importance to the other colonies than they are to us, if you ask me.

MR. LEAKE: Because the Commonwealth Bill says new States may be admitted to the union, but upon terms which may be imposed by the Federal Parliament.

THE PREMIER: We need not join if the terms do not suit us.

MR. LEAKE: Of course we need not join, and that is the very test, that is the point—we need not join; and I fear the right hon. gentleman does not want us to join. I think a suggestion may possibly come from him that this Bill must be amended before we join, so that we shall not join unless special conditions are granted to this colony.

MR. MORGANS: Suppose the other colonies invite us?

MR. LEAKE: One of the first and greatest advantages that any community

of people can have is proper representation in the Parliament of the country, a proper participation not only in the making but in the administration of the law. The very first principle of constitutional stability, which this Constitution Bill recognises, I submit is the question of the federal tariff; and if we stand out of the union from the first, we shall be deprived of discussing the terms of that tariff, and consequently shall not be parties to the framing of our Constitution.

MR. GEORGE: We have got very little voice, you know.

MR. LEAKE: We should, under the Bill, have an equal voice in the Senate; and when I see the possibility of that equal representation being denied to us, if we do not join as an original State, I am mindful of the effort made by the less populous States in inducing the Convention to grant equal representation in the Senate; and we can secure that if we join now. But those people who were opposed to granting that privilege at the Convention would refuse us the privilege, if we ask for admission after the union has been accomplished amongst themselves.

THE PREMIER: That would not be federal.

MR. LEAKE: It would be federal, because this was a concession which was granted in order to induce all the smaller States to come in from the start. It was never anticipated that this should be held out as a condition and a privilege for all time. I ask the Premier, supposing the northern portion of Queensland and the northern portion of South Australia were to be separated and formed into a new State, whether the right hon. gentleman, in the event of this colony joining as an original State, would be prepared to grant to that new State equal representation in the Senate? I do not say he would not, but I should conceive it to be his duty to weigh the the pros and cons of equal representation when such a question arose. I therefore earnestly ask the House, if they are honest, as they desire the public to think they are, in their advocacy of federation, not to imperil the adoption of this measure. I go further and say that those who are against federation should openly say so, and say "We will not have the

Bill either as drafted or amended, but we will vote against federation altogether." The opinion of such men as these I can admire and respect, but I cannot admire those who by design and subtlety endeavour to take away from the real issue the true consideration of the real points; and that is where we will be landed if we are led into a discussion or a consideration of amendments which cannot possibly be made in the Bill, or terms which cannot possibly be given to us, except by the federal power. If the question therefore goes to the people, it should be the same question which has gone to the people of the other colonies; and I remind the House, too, that the Premier of Western Australia at the Conference in February last agreed with the Premiers of the other colonies, that so soon as the people of New South Wales had accepted the Bill, he with the others would use his best endeavours to take the opinion of the electors of his own colony. That course has been honestly pursued by the Premiers of each of the other colonies; each colony has accepted the Bill except Western Australia, but up to the present moment the people have, neither directly nor indirectly, been permitted to voice their opinion on this great question. The federal delegates were not elected by the people; there has been no general election on the question of federation; and the referendum up to the present moment has been denied to them. We ask therefore, and we are reasonable in our request, that the Bill should be referred to the people without delay, in order that the vote of the majority may determine the issue. That was the pledge given by our Premier at the Conference, that the Bill should be referred to the people as then and there amended, and no question was then made about any possible amendment.

THE PREMIER: Referred to the Parliament with a view to its submission to the people. You will always misrepresent.

MR. LEAKE: Whilst on this point of misrepresentation, which is a favourite word with some people, I might remind hon. members of the little speech made in May, 1898, by the right hon. gentleman. That was before the Premiers' Conference and after the Convention, when the Premier, in a speech delivered in Perth, advocated this Bill as prepared

by the Convention, and amongst other things he told the public that any man who went to that Convention and took part in its debates and the framing of that measure was practically a traitor—

MR. GEORGE: What?

MR. LEAKE: Practically a traitor.

MR. MORGANS: That is what the hon. member for East Perth said.

MR. JAMES: I said nothing of the sort.

MR. LEAKE: The Premier said that he would not be worthy of his position if he could come back from the Convention and oppose the Bill. I use the term of expression that is found in the mouth of the right hon. gentleman so often, because the terms of "traitor" and "croaker" are applied to me so often, and it is a pleasure if I can make use of those words sometimes. I was pointing out that when the Premier delivered his speech in Perth, the strongest language was used by the right hon. gentleman to induce the people of the colony to accept the Bill, and he pledged himself then to refer the matter to the vote of the people. Subsequently, at the Conference of Premiers, he did the same thing, and not only did he do that at the Conference in a speech, but he pledged himself in writing to do this, that he would bring this matter down to the Parliament for reference to the people at once. In order that there may be no question of misrepresentation, I will read the second paragraph as to the mode of giving effect to the agreement:

The Premiers of the other colonies are of opinion that after the people of New South Wales have accepted the Bill as altered, it should be submitted to the Parliaments of their respective colonies for reference to the electors.

That has not been done, nor has any attempt been made to do it, but on the other hand there has been an attempt or a series of attempts to delay that reference. The next paragraph says:

The Premiers are also of opinion that it is desirable that the decision of a majority of the electors voting in each colony should be sufficient for the acceptance or rejection of the Bill.

That is signed by George Turner, G. H. Reid, James R. Dickson, C. C. Kingston, E. Braddon, and John Forrest.

MR. GEORGE: John Forrest!

MR. LEAKE: I believe he is the same gentleman who delivered the speech in St. George's Hall, in May 1898, and I would

commend to the consideration of hon. members the phraseology of the speech, and the glorious flow of patriotic sentiment which seemed to pervade the whole of the delivery. I ask hon. members not to treat this petition lightly: I ask them to regard it as a very serious expression of opinion from the bulk of the people of this colony. The 23,807 people who have signed that petition are adult males.

MR. HUBBLE: How often?

MR. LEAKE: Let us suppose, for the sake of argument, that by oversight some people signed the petition several times; suppose that some were deliberately put up by people to do so—by the hon. member opposite, let us suppose, for the sake of argument—and let us suppose that this would be done a thousand times, or say eight hundred times; we will give hon. members opposite the benefit of the doubt in regard to the odd number of figures, 807, and content ourselves by showing that the petition is signed by 23,000 adult males of the colony.

MR. HIGHAM: Give us a bit more credit.

MR. LEAKE: I hope the hon. member does not intend to impugn the truth of my statement. If he does so, he is at liberty to say I am telling an untruth, but I challenge him to prove it. I make the statement in a public place as a public man, and I am not afraid of what I say. If anyone says I am telling an untruth in this matter, I am prepared to test the question in the proper arena, that is before the public, and I stake my public reputation against the hon. member's on the question.

MR. JAMES: You are giving him big odds.

MR. LEAKE: I am always prepared to lay odds, when it is a certainty. It was thought, when this Parliament was opened, that public sentiment was against federation, and that is the key of the position. It is because the right hon. gentleman opposite, and his journalistic adviser, thought the public of Western Australia were against federation that they had the temerity to depart from the strict terms of the agreement come to in Melbourne in February last; but, unfortunately for them, they were not able to properly gauge public opinion and the force of public opinion, as shown by the number of persons who have petitioned for what I now advocate, the submis-

sion of this measure to the vote of the people

At 6.30, the SPEAKER left the Chair.

At 7.30, Chair resumed.

MR. LEAKE (continuing): I was pointing out the force of public opinion in the colony on this question, and that opinion has been expressed by at least 23,000 persons in the manner the petition indicates. And those expressions of opinion do not come from one portion of the colony only, but from all parts—from the goldfields, from the metropolitan centres, from as far south as Albany, and from as far north as Roebourne. It is true there are only a few from there, but still the public opinion has been voiced in that petition. I would like to remind hon. members that this large number of signatures was obtained in only a very short time. We have not had months to work up this question, but a few weeks only, and it seems to me to be indicative in a marked degree of the strength of feeling in this colony on the subject when, in so short a time, so many people have been able to express an opinion. Had there been further time, no doubt we could have had nearly double the number of signatures to this petition. We have then, practically, what we have never before had in the consideration of this question, namely a mandate from the people; and if we are to disregard the people's mandate, it is difficult to know where we shall land ourselves, but it is not difficult to imagine who will win in the long-run. Is the country to be dominated by a Ministry or by Parliament, or by the voice of the people? If we may take anything from the teachings of history, there is no doubt that in the long-run the people will not only be heard, but they will command; and it will be idle for any member in this House to disregard the emphatic expression of opinion which is embodied in this petition. I therefore urge upon hon. members to accede to the prayer of the petition, and to join with me and others in taking the necessary steps to have this Bill referred without any delay at all. It has been urged, over and over again, that we should insist upon better terms or fresh conditions.

If we pause for a moment to consider the possibility of accomplishing our wishes, shall we not see it is more probable that terms and conditions favourable to us may be obtained if we are represented and have a vote in the Federal Parliament, than if we stand out of federation, as it is proposed we should do, until those conditions are granted? Let us assume, for the sake of argument, that we should ask for a transcontinental railway to be built. Is it not far more probable that we shall accomplish our purpose, if that work is advocated by our representatives in Parliament, than if it is advocated by people outside who have no status at all? We are in this position, too, that when we begin to treat either with the federal authority or with the colonies as they exist at the present moment, it may be fairly put to us, as a Parliament, "Whom do you represent? Have you any mandate from the people upon this subject? Has there been a referendum?" We are forced to admit we have no such mandate, and consequently we are merely a small body of persons representing practically nobody on this great question, asking for something which possibly nobody wants. We are in a very awkward position in this respect, that we have had a tacit admission on behalf of the people that the Bill is acceptable to them, and at any rate we know that, as a fact, the people are prepared to consider this question and to vote on it. If the Bill be withheld from the people or rejected, the responsibility must rest with the Premier, because by his conduct he induced the people of the colony to suppose that, sooner or later, they would be permitted to express an opinion on the question. The people were lulled into a feeling that the Bill would be placed before them, stamped with the approval of the Premier, and of the majority of the representatives at the Convention. When the Bill left the Convention, it was approved by the Premier; and it was advocated by him as strenuously as possible in May of last year, and again in February of this year, when it received the stamp of his authority in the agreement which was then entered into. Now, at the last moment, without any adequate reason, we find all these foregone conclusions, as I may almost call them, shattered and cast on one side, and an entirely new phase put on the ques-

tion. What I complain of is that the phase the question has assumed at the present time is an impossible one, or rather such a one as will preclude the possibility of its adoption in the manner contemplated. In other words, we in Western Australia are deprived of the privilege of voting on the measure, a privilege which has been conceded to the people of the neighbouring colonies. Is there any reason, so far as the standard of our intelligence or integrity is concerned, why we, as a people, should not vote on this question? Surely if the popular feeling on the question were recorded, it would be of the greatest possible advantage to Parliament in discussing it. Through the medium of amendments passed at public meetings all over the colony, or by leagues and associations, we should know fairly well what was suggested and how to meet the suggestions; but nothing of the kind has been done. Until a time so late as three or four months ago, it was never for a moment assumed that this question would not be referred to the popular vote. I submit it was the duty of the Administration to bring down the necessary legislation immediately this Parliament assembled, when the question might then have been decided, and it would have been open for any member for or against the Bill to have stumped the country and endeavoured to persuade the people to his particular way of thinking. The question has now been reduced to a very simple issue, and when the time comes we shall find, as I said before, that there is very little between us, and consequently we might just as well, one side or the other, give way. Of course the anti-federalists will say: "Why do you not give way?" I am prepared to give way, if the anti-federalists can convince me of the possibility of carrying out the views they suggest. On the other hand, I say to them: "You should give way, because you have led us to suppose, up to a certain point, that you had no objection, and it is too late now for you to raise objections; and when these objections are raised, we find they are not vital to the question of federation." That is the way I look at the matter. On three or four small issues we are divided, and yet if we listen to the arguments of the anti-federalists, we might suppose that under

federation population would decrease to an alarming extent and the country would be ruined. We had the assurance of the Premier last night that the population is bound to increase during the next three or four years, and that the country is capable of supporting, not hundreds of thousands, but millions. It was refreshing, in one sense, to hear the optimistic view which the Premier took of the colony's prospects; and if he would apply those prospects and possible conditions to the question of federation, I think he would find that the whole of the anti-federal arguments are swept away. There is only one other point I wish to refer to, and that is the strong feeling which exists on the Eastern goldfields, and in fact on all the goldfields, on the question of federation. No doubt one point which has given rise to this feeling more than anything else, is the possibility of cheap living resulting from federation. I do not propose at this moment to enter into the pros and cons of that question, because that can be done later on, when we come to discuss the amendments of the Select Committee, which the Speaker says I must not refer to. But there is a strong feeling, and it is a feeling which members of this House will do well to consider and not treat too lightly. Anyone who has been on the goldfields lately will be able to judge as to that feeling, and must have seen that there is an undercurrent of honest, manly sentiment shown in the consideration of this question. There is no bravado, but an intention is evinced on all sides honestly and fairly to discuss the question, and many of the people and electors up there are not only convinced that this is a measure which they can honestly and fairly adopt, but are troubled in their minds because they have been denied the privilege of expressing their opinion, a privilege which, as I said before, has been granted to their neighbours in the other colonies. One of the strongest anti-federalists in the colony, and he a pressman, too, has told me that the effect of the apparent burking of discussion on this subject has secured more votes for federation than any amount of argument could possibly have secured.

MR. VOSPER: I said the same thing in the House, myself.

MR. LEAKE: I was not referring to the hon. member for North-East Cool-



gardie (Mr. Vosper) at the moment, but to a gentleman who is not a member of the House; and there is no doubt that the effect is as I have stated. The idea that the people should be permitted to vote on the Federal Bill has not only taken firm hold on all the Eastern goldfields, but I am not far wrong in saying that the feeling has been somewhat aggravated during the last few weeks by the attitude taken, I might elaborate upon the possible disadvantage to the country if we do anything to aggravate ill-feeling, or create ill-feeling where at present there is nothing but friendliness. I attended a conference of Federal Leagues at Kalgoorlie a month or so ago, and there was no doubt at all that the feeling expressed there was unanimous. There was a determination, and I use the word advisedly, to have the question referred to the voice of the electors; and that determination will grow stronger and stronger every day, and if we are not careful will develop into something which may possibly create a certain degree of alarm. I am not using this as a threat to hon. members.

**THE PREMIER:** You had better not do so, I think.

**MR. LEAKE:** The right hon. gentleman knows what the feeling on the goldfields is.

**THE PREMIER:** Do not create a panic. I do not think there is the feeling you say.

**MR. LEAKE:** I am not going to mince words over this question.

**THE PREMIER:** Say all you have to say.

**MR. LEAKE:** I am going to say all I have to say. I am only reminding the right hon. gentleman, without any unnecessary point, that ill-feeling at times runs high on the goldfields, and it is quite possible that if the people think they have been burked in their endeavour to express proper opinion on a high constitutional question such as this, feeling may run quite as high on this occasion as it did on an occasion two or three years ago. This is a constitutional question, and we know that when trouble has

arisen and excitement has run high in any of the Australian colonies, it has been when constitutional questions were being discussed, and when the rights of the people have either been interfered with or curtailed. There is not necessarily such an interference here, but there is certainly a curtailment of the people's rights, and that is what I want hon. members to avoid. Anyone who reads the goldfields Press must admit that this is more than a howl and more than a cry. It has been urged that if this question is not dealt with fairly and properly, there may be an agitation in favour of separation. Many hon. members are inclined rather to scorn this idea of separation; but such an agitation is quite within the bounds of possibility, when we come to consider that this is not a question of a portion of Western Australia separating from what we know as the settled or coastal portions, and establishing a new colony in the Australian group as it exists to-day, but the vastly different question of a portion of the colony desiring, with the consent of its federated neighbours, to extend the boundaries of the Commonwealth. It is not a question of separation, but rather a question of a certain portion of this colony demanding to be absorbed by the Commonwealth. There is constitutional power vested in the Imperial authorities to grant such a request, and if that request be made by what may possibly be a majority of the male inhabitants of the colony, backed up by the whole of federated Australia, and supported or countenanced by the Imperial authorities, it would be difficult for us to resist the pressure which might be brought to bear. Practical difficulties might be placed in the way with regard to the adjustment of liabilities and so forth, but there can be no doubt that if an agitation were started, this question of separation might assume a tangible shape, and be brought within the scope of practical politics.

**HON. H. W. VENN:** To fix the boundary lines would be almost impossible.

**MR. LEAKE:** Such a question as the adjustment of a boundary could, I think, be settled by the Imperial Parliament, by the people on the goldfields, by the people of the Commonwealth, and by ourselves—all represented, we will say, at an arbitration board. I am sure the hon.

member will see there is a possibility of this separation; and I am not going to say that it will ensue, but I do say that there will be an agitation for it, and that the agitation will be something which is practical; it will be feasible; and it is a question which we cannot afford to ignore. I certainly will not ignore it; in fact, I may go so far as to say that, if this right be denied to us now, I shall be one to encourage that idea of separation. I do not hesitate for a moment to say that if the circumstances show that the cry for separation is justified, I shall be one of the first to help the movement.

MR. GEORGE: That shows your federal feeling.

MR. LEAKE: It does show my federal feeling in this sense, that I prefer to be a citizen of the Commonwealth rather than a colonist of isolated Western Australia. That is the feeling which I have; and nothing will prevent my casting in my lot with those goldfields people, so long as they act within constitutional bounds. But there is perhaps no need to talk in that strain, except to show, and rather in an argumentative form, that there is a practical view to take of this question. In addition to the fact that the people of the goldfields think they are being denied the right to express their opinion on this question, and that they have been deprived of proper representation under the Constitution, we know that some of the fields, Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie, do not hesitate to say that, so far as their interests are concerned in this House, they are perfectly unrepresented. I think the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans) will admit that fact.

MR. MORGANS: Oh, yes; but I do not admit the truth of the statement.

MR. LEAKE: Of course it would perhaps be difficult to settle that question until there had been a general election; and the hon. member, I suppose, would hardly care at the present moment to resign in order to test the question in the proper constitutional manner.

MR. MORGANS: I should be delighted to do so. I heard the same concerning you at Albany.

MR. DOHERTY: Let the hon. member (Mr. Leake) resign, and test that question.

MR. JAMES: He would meet with more support than the member for Coolgardie.

THE SPEAKER: Order!

MR. LEAKE: I do not think I need say more upon the question of this petition. I should certainly have liked to express my views at greater length on the amendments which are likely to be suggested, but I cannot do so, because I should be out of order; and I consequently ask this House—if I thought fit, I might say I demand of this House—that the prayer of this petition be acceded to. The petition asks for no more than the right hon. gentleman opposite has pledged himself to observe and to grant; and he has done no more than this House has tacitly assented to. The petition does no more than ask for what the people have already approved; and now, at this hour, to deny the request which is made is practically flouting the people's will. Nobody can deny, I believe nobody does deny in this House, that federation as an idea is acceptable to everybody in Australia, as well to those in this colony as to those in the other colonies: they all approve of the idea of creating and establishing a new nation. As the leader of the Convention put it, "A people for a continent and a continent for a people;" and it will be a blot upon the history of Western Australia if we, in comparison a mere handful, 170,000 against 4,000,000, do anything to prevent the accomplishment of the grand object which the people of Australia have in view; and I for one look forward to the day when we shall raise ourselves from the dead level of commonplace which we occupy in the world to-day, to the higher level of nationhood.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir John Forrest): It is somewhat difficult for me to realise what object the hon. member has in view, in making this motion at the present time. He has not told us whether he wishes to have a division on the motion to-night, and I certainly do not wish to have a division on it at the present moment. I do not think it would be to the advantage of federation, or that it would even be seemly, for us to divide upon this question to-night. To do so might have an effect which the hon. member, if we are to judge by his speeches and the sentiments he has expressed, could not desire. The hon. member knows very well there is a motion on the Notice Paper dealing with the report of the Select Committee. One

might have expected that the hon. member would have deferred moving in this matter until that subject, which really belongs to this House, had been dealt with. The Joint Select Committee was appointed by this House; it has reported; the report is not even before hon. members; hon. members have never yet had an opportunity, except through the Press, of seeing the report; they have not had the full report placed before them; and knowing all that, the hon. member brings forward this matter to-night, I suppose with the idea of going to a division on it. It seems to me that ordinary courtesy demands that this House shall do nothing in regard to this question until it has had an opportunity of first seeing and then discussing the report of the Joint Select Committee which the House appointed. I think that argument, if there were no other, ought certainly to have weight with hon. members. For us to proceed to deal with this great question to-night, to take a vote upon it without having the evidence and the report of our own Committee before us, would seem to me to be acting in a way that, to say the least of it, would be a great discourtesy, not only to the House itself, but to those hon. members who gave up so much time to carry out the wishes of the House in that Joint Select Committee. I do not propose to deal with this question to-night; I shall have an opportunity of doing that on to-morrow week, the 5th October, and I shall then be prepared, not only to deal with the question, but also to make a motion upon the report of the Joint Select Committee. I have no doubt, too, there are many hon. members of this House who desire the same opportunity; they desire an opportunity of discussing the whole of the Commonwealth Bill, together with the Joint Select Committee's report; an opportunity which they have never had yet, and which they then will have. If the hon. member's motion were carried to-night, that opportunity would be denied to the House, and hon. members could neither discuss the Commonwealth Bill nor the Select Committee's report. That being so, I think it is due to this House that such an opportunity should be given; and I cannot understand what the member for Albany is driving at, in desiring that this question should be discussed here to-

night. I do not propose to discuss it; I certainly do not propose to take a vote upon it if I can possibly avoid doing so; and I propose to move, before I sit down, that the debate be adjourned, in order that hon. members may have an opportunity of discussing the whole question, and also of giving that consideration to the report of the Joint Select Committee which the report deserves. The hon. member seems altogether to forget, in all his arguments with regard to this matter, that the only reason why the Bill was not at once referred to the electors of the colony, as was done in the other colonies, was the fact of the insertion in our Enabling Act of a proviso to the effect that the Commonwealth Bill must be approved by Parliament before being submitted to the people. The hon. member knows that very well; he knows that the Parliament of this colony inserted that section, and that the section has been a stumbling-block in the way of the Bill going direct to the people without Parliament being first consulted. The hon. member is well aware of that fact. He talks about the curtailment of the rights of the people; but I think that must be merely an electioneering cry, or a statement made for some purpose of the hon. member's own; because we all belong to the British nation, and we know that never in our history, in modern times at all events, has there been such a thing as a referendum. We know that the referendum is absolutely unknown to the Constitution of Great Britain; we know it is absolutely unknown to the Constitutions of the Australian colonies; and that this is the first time in our history that the referendum—though so common in the United States of America, and used under the constitution of the United States—that this is the first time in the history of Australia, and the first time for a long period at any rate, I do not know how long, in the history of the British Empire, that any Englishman or British subject has had an opportunity of expressing his views by voting on a referendum to the people. The hon. member knows that very well; therefore, if there be a curtailment, it is a curtailment of something we have never had before, and of what the people of our own nation in the mother country have never had. Therefore, I do not think,

speaking for myself, that the dissatisfaction at the curtailment, if it be a curtailment, of a privilege which we have never enjoyed, should be very deep-seated, at all events at the beginning. There is no such thing as a referendum in the constitution of Canada. Under the Canadian constitution, federation was carried by Parliament in the ordinary way after a general election; and that is the system under which we have all been brought up, and the system by which the will of the people has been invariably expressed. The will of the people in all British countries has hitherto been expressed through Parliament. That is the plan to which we are accustomed; and there has never been, in recent times at any rate, such a thing in our history as a referendum. For the hon. member to talk about the curtailment of my liberty in that respect, or the curtailment of his liberty, is telling us a lot of nonsense. We never possessed the liberty he talks about; and if it is curtailed, we will not feel it much.

**MR. LEAKE:** It is curtailment what you agreed to give the people at the Premiers' Conference.

**THE PREMIER:** Silence, sir! Will the hon. member keep silent?

**MR. LEAKE:** No, sir; I will not keep silent.

**THE PREMIER:** I wish the hon. member would keep in order. I think the hon. member is losing his senses in going on in this way. By the manner in which the hon. member is going on, it appears as if he could not be told the truth without boiling over with indignation. I wish the hon. member would keep quiet, and let me get on with what I have to say. I want to tell the hon. member, when he talks about the curtailment of our rights and privileges—I only use that as an argument—that we never had those privileges or rights; we never had those rights, nor our fathers, nor our grandfathers before us. Therefore, the hon. member is really trying to make capital out of a false proposition. I think the best thing we can do is to treat the Joint Select Committee's report with that consideration and deference to which it is entitled. We need not get excited about it. We are not trying to gain time; we are not trying to delay the matter unduly. We look upon this as a great constitutional question, which

has to be dealt with in a serious and constitutional manner. The hon. member tells us, so far as I can gather from his words, that he would have been in favour of the proposals of the Select Committee: he thinks the proposals are so small—I think he said they were so few in number and so unimportant—that the two parties ought to come together. I think that was a federal remark on the part of the hon. member, and a very reasonable one; and I tell him this, and I tell all those who signed the petition also, that if they had not been so impetuous, and had trusted to those who are trying to do the best for the country, the difficulties that may be in the way of the colony entering the federation on the terms named by the Joint Select Committee would not have existed; but the party in the colony, led by the hon. member, are doing their best to prevent the colony from getting the rights we are entitled to. If we keep out of federation at the beginning, and if we do not get the concessions conceded which are so reasonable, and which are so few and unimportant in the hon. member's opinion, he and those he has been following more than leading—whether it is leading or following, I do not care much—will be most to blame. There is one proposal the hon. member altogether misrepresents. There was nothing in the Joint Select Committee's report which said or intended to say that the Federal Parliament should build a railway to this colony. That is the sort of thing which the hon. member says, but which has no foundation whatever in fact. All that the Select Committee say is that the Federal Government should have the power and the right to authorise the construction of a railway to this colony, and that no State in Australia, be it large or small, should have the power of preventing this railway being constructed, and connecting us with the railway systems of the other colonies. That is what we have been arguing for, and if that is an unimportant matter, then I admit that all the other recommendations which we shall have an opportunity of discussing in a few days are unimportant also. The effect I think of the recommendations of the Select Committee, when they come before us, will be shown to be such, and in the hon. member's opinion so un-

important, that I do not think they will go to show that the members of the Joint Committee are adverse to federation; because, if a majority of the members of the Select Committee were adverse to federation, the objections would not have been few and not unimportant. That shows, I think, that the committee were influenced by a desire to approve of the Bill, and not in any way to thwart it. However, I must not discuss the Select Committee's report, as I know it is contrary to the Standing Orders. I ask hon. members to support the proposal which I intend to make, and I think it will be in the interests of federation and in the interests of the colony; therefore, I beg to move that the debate be adjourned until 5th October, so that the petition may be considered when the report of the Joint Select Committee and the Commonwealth Bill are being considered.

MR. LEAKE: I thought you were going to propose an amendment.

THE PREMIER: No; not an amendment. I only intend to move the adjournment of the debate.

MR. VOSPER: Will the moving of that motion stop discussion?

THE PREMIER: I think so. My object now is to stop discussion. We had better deal with the question as a whole, and not piecemeal. Let us deal with the Bill and the report of the Select Committee together. But if any hon. members wish to speak, I will delay moving my motion, so that those members who wish to speak can do so; but I do not think any good can be gained by the discussion, because we want the discussion as a whole, and not piecemeal. At any rate, if the hon. member (Mr. Vosper) desires to say anything, I will not move the adjournment of the debate now, but I will get someone to move it later on.

MR. VOSPER: It is not that I wish to say anything, but I think some hon. members on this side wish to say something.

THE PREMIER: I think it would be better to discuss the whole thing at one time; have a field-day, in fact. But if any hon. member is prepared to speak, he can do so. I am not prepared to speak on the question now, but I shall be prepared on Thursday in next week, when the Select Committee's report is under

consideration. That appears to me to be the time when the whole matter can be discussed, and then we can take a week over the subject if necessary, dealing with the matter day after day; not only considering the Select Committee's recommendations, but all the other parts of the Bill. If it is the desire of any hon. member to speak now, I will not move the adjournment of the debate, but will get some hon. member to do so later on.

MR. LEAKE: I have no objection to the motion for adjournment; and if the hon. member had intimated what he intended to do, we might have arrived at the object sooner. I do not know that any hon. member on this side wishes to speak now; therefore, I raise no objection to the adjournment. We simply cannot discuss the amendments, under the Speaker's ruling.

Motion—that the debate be adjourned until 5th October—put and passed.

#### MINES REGULATION AMENDMENT BILL.

##### IN COMMITTEE.

[Bill reprinted, with amendments introduced *pro forma*.]

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Application of this Act and the principal Act:

MR. JAMES: The clause said "this Act and the principal Act shall apply to all mines and machinery areas on such goldfields districts and mining districts as the Governor may, by order in Council, from time to time direct." This Bill was different from the principal Act. He quite understood the provision that the Bill should only apply to such areas as the Governor-in-Council might direct; but the clause said that the principal Act should only apply to such places as the Governor-in-Council might direct. What about the existing proclamations?

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The clause had been inserted to make the provision clear. It might be said that although the principal Act applied to certain goldfields, this amending Bill would not apply.

MR. JAMES: The principal Act applied to such areas as had been defined by the Governor, by order in Council; therefore, there was no need in this Bill to say the principal Act should apply by

proclamation. That caused a certain element of doubt as to what would happen to the existing goldfields between the time of the existing proclamations and new proclamations being issued. Take an area on the goldfields proclaimed under the old Act: under Clause 3, that area might not be proclaimed for two or three months, it might be overlooked.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Oh, no. It would be proclaimed at once. Directly this Bill was approved by the Governor, it would be applied.

MR. JAMES: It was rather clumsy legislation to rely upon prompt application of the measure. Provision ought to be made for all contingencies. A special clause was inserted in the Bill, which said the measure should apply to certain goldfields hereafter proclaimed. That was open to misconstruction, and should be made clear. It was necessary to save rights existing under the present proclamation until the new proclamation was issued.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: Clause 1, which incorporated this amending Bill with the principal Act, looked as if it did everything necessary. When once incorporated, it formed part of the principal Act. Clause 3, however, raised a little conflict as to the degree of incorporation. He had not studied the Bill very carefully, but as the hon. member had drawn his attention to it, he saw the clause raised some doubt as to whether it impliedly meant the proclamations under the principal Act were legally preserved.

MR. EWING: Section 2 of the original Act said, "This Act shall apply only to mines in which more than five persons are ordinarily employed below ground." If there were less than five persons, a proclamation was necessary under the old Act.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Let the hon. member read Section 1.

MR. EWING: By Section 1 it was seen that the Act only had application to goldfields.

HON. S. BURT: And then only to certain mines.

MR. EWING: It was desirable the Bill should apply to all mines in the colony, whether there was a proclamation or not, for if the Act was necessary for the safety and protection of the workmen,

it was just as necessary in a mine outside a proclaimed district as in one within.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The Bill was one which he would apply to all goldfields at once.

MR. JAMES: The way to do what was required would be to strike out the word "such," in line 2, insert "all" in lieu thereof, and strike out all the words after "1898."

MR. EWING: Why not say "all mines," straight away? If the whole of the words after "areas" were struck out, there would be no doubt at all, as the measure would then apply to all mines and machinery areas.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: There was no objection to the hon. member's suggestion, because certainly the intention was that, directly the Bill was approved, it should be applied to all mines and machinery areas in all goldfields and mineral districts.

MR. EWING moved that all words after "areas," in line 2, be struck out.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: The amendment would not affect the Bill.

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

Clause 4—Repeal of Section 2 of principal Act:

MR. VOSPER asked what was Section 2 of the principal Act?

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Section 2 of the principal Act provided that the Act should apply only to mines in which more than five persons were ordinarily employed below ground. It was intended that this Bill and the principal Act should apply to all mines. At the same time the general rules were the principal things really under which the mine managers and employees worked, and those general rules were only made by the Act to apply where reasonably practicable.

MR. VOSPER: The repeal of Section 2 of the principal Act was quite approved by him, because he noticed that the mortality from mining accidents on the goldfields largely arose from alluvial workings. He believed the original idea was to prevent expense, but if we were going to raise the question of expense against mortality, we should be willing to allow expense to go on if we could save human life by so doing. It would be absurd to apply the same rules to alluvial

mines as to the "Great Boulder." We wanted hard and fast rules and the most reasonable interpretation in large mines, and to make the same rules apply as easily as possible to the case of smaller mines, bearing in mind that the object was to minimise the loss of human life and to prevent accidents as far as possible.

**THE MINISTER OF MINES:** Throughout Australia the Mines Regulation Act applied to all places where mining was carried on. With regard to alluvial miners, the alluvial miner was not always the owner of the mine, by any means; in fact, people in Perth worked alluvial mines and employed labour. It was quite as much the duty of those people to look after their workmen as it was the duty of the manager of a large gold mine to look after his employees.

**MR. MORGANS:** Did quarrying stone come within the definition of mining? Taking stone out of a quarry was just as much mining as taking stone out of a mine.

**THE MINISTER OF MINES:** "Mining" or "to mine" was thus defined in the Bill:—"To disturb, remove, cart, carry, wash, sift, smelt, refine, crush, or otherwise deal with any earth by any mode or method whatsoever for the purpose of obtaining gold or any other mineral therefrom."

**MR. MORGANS:** This measure, he took it, would not apply in the direction of minerals.

**MR. GREGORY:** Gold was a mineral.

**MR. MORGANS:** Granite was as much a mineral as copper.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 5 and 6—agreed to.

Clause 7—Amendment of Section 17 of the principal Act:

**MR. GREGORY:** A slight amendment was required in the clause. In case of accident, information had to be sent to the inspector, or, in his absence, to the warden or registrar, and on receipt of such information, the inspector had to proceed to the scene of the accident. The clause made no provision for inspection in the case of the absence of the inspector, and it would be well if power were given to the warden or to the registrar to appoint some person to make the necessary inspection. It would hardly do to compel either the warden or the registrar

to go to the scene of the accident, because in most cases these officials had very little knowledge of mining.

**MR. JAMES:** It was also provided that the inspector should hold an inquiry, but in the absence of the inspector there was no provision for appointing anyone to make the inquiry in his place. In order to meet the suggestion just made, he moved that after the word "inspector" in line 5, the words "or in his absence any person appointed by the warden or registrar, as the case may be" be inserted. It was undesirable that the warden should hold the inquiry, because the report of the inquiry had subsequently to be forwarded to the warden or registrar.

**MR. MORGANS:** Did the amendment mean that any person could be selected to make this very important inquiry?

**MR. JAMES:** A provision was necessary that in the absence of the inspector, some person should hold an inquiry, and one could see no other way of securing this except by the amendment. After receiving the report from the inspector, the warden or registrar had the right to hold a further inquiry, and the same person ought not to hold both inquiries.

**MR. GREGORY:** About five weeks ago, when an accident happened in a large mine in the Niagara district, the inspector was away on a trip in the North, and the portion of the mine where the accident occurred had been closed down ever since, awaiting the inspector's return.

**MR. GEORGE** supported the amendment because when he some time ago was in the Niagara district, a fatal accident occurred in a mine. The inspector was absent, and the magistrate, who took certain action in regard to the burial of the deceased man, ran great risk of being censured for the action he took. If the Act had contained such a provision as was now proposed, the magistrate could have been empowered to take the very common-sense action which he did; and it was repulsive in such fatalities that the deceased might have to be kept unburied three or four days.

**MR. VOSPER:** Under the principal Act and also the Bill, any portion of a mine in which an accident occurred could not be worked until after inspection, and if it was compulsory to close a mine immediately after, say, a fall of earth, it might mean that the whole of the drive

might fall in also. In case of a fall of rock or earth, the first thing that was done was to prop up the rest of the drive, and if it were necessary to wait perhaps a week for an inspection of the hole, there might be no hole to inspect when the inspector arrived.

MR. MORGANS: There was force in the observations which had been made, but the amendment did not help the matter. The substitute appointed by the warden or magistrate might be a person entirely unacquainted with mining, and there was no power to allow the mine to be opened after such an inspection; but if such power were given, there would be no objection to the amendment.

MR. WALLACE: In the case of an accident in the Yalgoo district the other day, the warden had to wait six days for the inspector, whereas under the amendment he could have appointed a practical mining man to inspect the property. In this case one of the bodies was not discovered until two days after the other deceased had been interred. No doubt the warden or registrar would be able to find practical men, quite as capable as the Inspector of Mines.

MR. MORGANS: The same power and authority must be given to the person appointed to represent the inspector.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: Section 18 of the principal Act would meet the point raised by the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans). In a large country like this, where an inspector's work extended perhaps over hundreds of miles, it was necessary some such power as that proposed should be given to the warden, and it would be as much as a warden's position was worth to appoint an incompetent person. He was prepared to accept the amendment.

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

Clause 8—Amendment of Section 21 of principal Act:

MR. GREGORY moved that the following be added to the clause:

Also by inserting after the word "mines," in the third line:—"And no person shall be so employed for more than 48 hours in any week, nor more than eight hours in any day except in cases of emergency, and a person shall be deemed to be employed below ground from the time that he commences to descend a mine until he is relieved of his work and commences to return to the surface by author-

ity of the owner or his agent. No person shall be employed on any mine on Sundays, except for pumping, timbering, or in cases of emergency."

It was desirable to legislate as to the number of hours persons should work underground. The usual practice now was to work 47 hours a week, but it should be insisted that no person be compelled to work for more than 48 hours, or eight hours a day.

MR. MORGANS: Why insist, when there was no necessity?

MR. GREGORY: As well make a start. In the other colonies there was similar legislation, and it was time this colony fell into line.

MR. JAMES: This amendment, and another in the same clause of which the hon. member (Mr. Gregory) had given notice, should be moved later as separate clauses.

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

Clause 9—agreed to.

Clause 10—Amendments to Section 23 of principal Act (General Rules):

MR. GREGORY moved that the following be added:

Also by adding the following words to Subsection (10):—"There shall be a uniform code of signals in all mines as prescribed by the Regulations."

As very few mines on the goldfields had the same code of signals, and as men going to work in a new mine were thus considerably puzzled, a uniform code was surely desirable, and had been strongly recommended by the Mining Commission. The Minister could easily get the miners and mine managers to agree to such a code, which could then be prescribed by regulation.

MR. MORGANS supported the amendment. Proper signals should be determined by a commission.

MR. VOSPER: What constituted a proper code had been disputed for three years at Charters Towers (Queensland).

THE MINISTER OF MINES agreed with the amendment. Miners should be accustomed to use one code of signals only, so that men leaving one mine for another would not be inconvenienced. Last year in Queensland there had been a consolidation of the mining laws, and a uniform code provided. With the assistance of the mining bodies, a code as recommended by the Mining Commission



might be adopted and could be prescribed in the regulations as soon as possible after the passing of the Bill. The signals might advantageously be included in the "general rules" which were posted up at every mine.

MR. EWING: There should be a separate clause providing that the signals used in all mines should be those prescribed by the Regulations. The amendment should be moved as a new clause, for it had no special reference to Clause 10.

MR. GREGORY, accepting the last suggestion, asked leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn, and the clause passed.

Clauses 11 to 21, inclusive—agreed to.

Clause 22—Coroners' inquests on deaths from accidents in mines:

MR. GREGORY moved that the following be added to the clause:

"The Inspector of Mines of the district shall be present at inquests, and may examine witnesses and elicit evidence relative to the cause of death, and to the issue whether the accident was attributable to negligence or any omission to comply with the provisions of this Act. A representative of the Miners' Association of the district may be present at any inquiry, and may put questions to any witness as to the cause of the accident."

In cases of fatal accidents, the fullest possible investigation should be made, which could only be done by procuring the best expert evidence obtainable. At such inquests the Inspector of Mines should be present.

MR. MORGANS: The fullest inquiry should be made in case of accident; that was the desire of every one; but a representative of the employer should be present at inquiries. The words "and of the employer" might be inserted after "district."

MR. GREGORY accepted the amendment.

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

Clause 23—agreed to.

Clause 24—Regulations:

MR. GEORGE: In regard to the examination of engine-drivers, in the case of a man who had been examined and who failed to pass the examination, an opportunity should be given for the man to appeal to the Minister so as to be

re-examined; otherwise a man might be deprived of employment altogether.

THE MINISTER OF MINES: That could be provided for in the regulations.

Clause put and passed.

On motion by MR. VOSPER, progress was reported and leave given to sit again.

#### PHARMACY AND POISONS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Amendment of 58 Victoria, c. 35:

MR. VOSPER moved that after the word "thereto," in line 8 of paragraph 1, the following be inserted:

Or is possessed of any qualification legally recognised in any of the Australasian colonies, or has been for at least two years previous to the passing of this Act the proprietor or manager of an open shop in Western Australia, wherein the prescriptions of legally qualified medical practitioners are dispensed.

There were members of the profession of chemists in this colony who had qualifications from New Zealand and other parts of the world, but who would not be recognised under the Bill unless the amendment were introduced. It seemed to him that those persons who had come to this colony, invested their capital here in establishing themselves in business, and were carrying on business satisfactorily to the medical profession and the general public, should be allowed to continue. If this Bill was intended to do good, it should not deprive these men of obtaining a livelihood. There was one chemist in Kalgoorlie who had spent £2,000 in fitting up a shop, and who had performed his duties to the satisfaction of everyone. If this clause were passed as it stood, this chemist would have to close his shop, lose the capital he had invested, and be deprived of the means of a livelihood. That was the case with others. His amendment went further, and provided that those persons who had been in practice for two years should be allowed to carry on their business if the business had been conducted satisfactorily. Those who had suffered so far from the want of liberality in the principal Act should get that liberality extended to them in this amendment. The amendment would not injure any member of the Pharmaceutical Society in this colony.

MR. JAMES: The amendment was not desirable or necessary. The member for North-East Coolgardie (Mr. Vosper) very properly pointed out that when the principal Act was passed in 1894, provision was inserted that any person who had been carrying on business for two years under the then existing law should not be prejudiced by this new legislation. That was a provision inserted in every Bill, and was intended to protect vested rights that had been acquired. Since 1894 a period of five years had elapsed, and this Bill did not affect any persons except those who were employed as assistants in chemists' shops and were not qualified. All agreed that persons who were not qualified should not be employed in shops. If we agreed to that, and this amendment were made to cover any of those cases, should we not be blowing hot and cold?

MR. VOSPER: The amendment referred distinctly to the proprietor or manager.

MR. JAMES: The present measure did not interfere with the status of one individual. Section 38 of the principal Act said that "any person other than a pharmaceutical chemist, or a person or company registered under 'The Companies Act, 1893,' carrying on the business of a chemist and druggist or of a pharmaceutical chemist by an agent, manager, or servant who is a pharmaceutical chemist," should not do so and so. So to-morrow he or any person in the House could go and start business as a chemist, and would be perfectly justified in doing so as long as he had a qualified assistant in the shop; therefore the proprietor, as a proprietor, was not suffering an injustice. The first qualification mentioned in the amendment was this: "or is possessed of any qualification legally recognised in any of the Australasian colonies." That would not do, because in some of the colonies there was no regulation at all, and any person might be recognised.

MR. EWING: There was a Pharmacy Act passed in Sydney in 1897. The regulation referred to would only apply to persons entitled to practise here.

MR. JAMES: In those colonies where there was no legislation on the subject, any person was legally recognised and entitled to carry on business as a chemist.

MR. VOSPER: The amendment said "any qualification legally recognised."

MR. JAMES: In those countries where there was no system of registration at all, any man could call himself a chemist.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: In Sydney there was not a Medical Act, he thought, unless it had been passed quite recently.

MR. JAMES: If any gentleman in this colony had a qualification in a sister colony based on examination, that gentleman could be admitted in this colony. As to those who had been refused, members did not know why they were refused.

THE PREMIER: The certificate of one gentleman from the other colonies was obtained without examination.

MR. JAMES: When the present Act was passed, local men were admitted because they were carrying on business under the laws of the colony, and the Act would have prejudiced them; but that argument would not apply to the utterly unqualified men who came from Victoria or New South Wales.

MR. EWING: Those men were just as well qualified as the men admitted here.

MR. JAMES: The men here were admitted because there was no desire for them to suffer an injustice through the Act. They had acquired vested rights here. The sister colonies would not admit our men without examination, and why should an amendment like that now proposed be passed to admit to this colony men who were not qualified? Those people who had come to us since this legislation was passed, came with a full knowledge of the position.

MR. EWING: And they were allowed to practise, but were not registered.

MR. JAMES: If they were carrying on business and were not qualified, they were breaking the law.

MR. EWING: The hon. member knew they ought to be registered.

MR. JAMES: It was rubbish to say we ought to register them, and did not do so. He had no particular knowledge of the special facts referred to, and it was to be regretted that he had not been told them. A thing like this was sprung upon the House, and upon him, without any information at all, because apparently half a dozen had been round seeing two or three members of the House. The amendment went on: "has been for two years previously to the passing of this

Act the proprietor or manager of any shop in Western Australia." If that were passed, a person who had never been inside a chemist's shop might call himself a chemist. At one time there was the business of Edmund Dean and Co., in which several persons had an interest, and under this amendment some of them, who he believed belonged to his own profession, would be entitled to call themselves chemists. It did not say the proprietor or manager who himself dispensed.

MR. VOSPER: That could easily be altered. The word "keeper" might be used.

MR. JAMES: Unless a person had some qualification, the mere fact that he had kept a shop would not be sufficient. If the hon. member pressed the amendment, he should move that progress be reported.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. R. W. Pennefather): As the hon. member (Mr. James) said, this amendment was evidently moved with the object of allowing certain persons to be qualified who could not be qualified now under the present Act.

MR. VOSPER: The board would not admit them.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: A gentleman had evidently applied to be registered by the board under the principal Act, and had been refused, because if he had not been refused this amendment would not have been moved. If such person had been refused registration by the board under the principal Act, it could only be on the ground that he was not qualified. If he was qualified, and the board had still refused to register him, that person could, by means of a *mandamus*, have compelled the board to register him. Was it right to go outside the provisions of the principal Act, and admit any persons who under the principal Act could not be registered? He did not see the force of that position at all. The Legislature had a duty to the public, and must protect them as far as possible against persons who were not qualified. The amendment was a dangerous one, and he would oppose it.

MR. EWING: The amendment was a good one, but it should stop at the words "or is possessed of any qualification legally recognised in any of the Australian colonies." The real trouble arose

from the insertion of a few dangerous words in the original Act, which provided as one ground of qualification that the person held a certificate of competency from any "State, college," and so on, "recognised under the regulations"; so that all the board had to do, and what the board had done, was to say they would not recognise a certain class of certificate. Although a person might be legally qualified in New South Wales or any other colony, the board could refuse to recognise a certificate because they were given power to recognise only those which the regulations said they would recognise. A man holding a certificate under the Pharmacy Act of New South Wales could be precluded from practising here, against the very spirit of the Act, because inadvertently the board had been given power to go behind the very spirit of the Act, and say whether a qualification should be recognised or not. The intention of the Act was that a person duly qualified and coming to the colony should be admitted to practise, but that intention had been defeated by the board.

MR. VOSPER: For the sake of carrying the first part of his amendment, he was willing to forego the second. The difficulty was that all boards became more or less "wooden" in the course of years, and possessed of the one idea of making a close corporation, to which end they exerted all their legal powers.

MR. EWING: It was the same with the Barristers' Board; and it was a bad principle to put in the hands of a profession the power to keep others out.

MR. VOSPER: The intention of the Bill was not to protect a ring, monopoly, corporation, or trades union, but to maintain the safety of the public; and nothing had been stated yet to show that the admission of the persons mentioned in the amendment would in any way interfere with the public safety. Large corporations employed unqualified assistants, and it was desired to put an end to that, but there was no desire to give to the board a tyrannical power never contemplated by the Act.

MR. JAMES moved that progress be reported, and asked hon. members to place on the Notice Paper any amendments they desired to move.

Motion put and passed.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

# AGRICULTURAL BANK ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

## SECOND READING (MOVED).

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. G. Throssell), in moving the second reading, said: No doubt hon. members naturally require some explanation as to the object of the Bill. First, I would like to say that this small Bill of four clauses is brought forward with the chief object of increasing the funds of the Agricultural Bank from £100,000 to £200,000. Clause 2 gives power to help selectors by allowing them to make a declaration without coming into town, before a person appointed by the Minister; and in the bush this will be a very great convenience. Clause 3 simply provides that the fencing must be well put up and the land well cultivated; and the penalty incurred for neglect in this case is exactly the same as that in the Act regulating the payment of interest or principal. Clause 4 is the chief clause, and, as I have said, hon. members will naturally require some explanation as to its object. It is a remarkable coincidence that it is exactly five years ago to-night since the Premier brought forward the first Bill in connection with the Agricultural Bank. As the result of the five years' operations, we have nearly exhausted the first £100,000, and it will naturally be asked, what is the result of these five years' operations? I desire to deal with the matter as briefly as possible, and I had a return prepared up to the 15th of the current month, which goes to show the Bank manager has dealt with 925 applicants, and that the sum of £98,825 has been paid or approved. The value of the improvements completed represents the magnificent sum of £201,483; that is to say, the expenditure of £98,825 has insured the expenditure by borrowers of £201,483. The details of the expenditure represent 51,341 acres of land cleared, 41,345 acres cultivated, 59,621 acres ringbarked, 426 miles of fencing, £5,600 spent on water supply and drainage, and £11,295 has been expended on farm buildings. That is the result, so far as the expenditure is concerned, of the operations of the Bank. The question arises now whether the institution will pay. When the

Premier was delivering his Budget speech last night, the question was asked as to whether this financial institution paid. In the report to which I have just alluded the Bank manager, Mr. W. Paterson, gives a debit and credit account of the transactions of the Bank. Application fees received during the year ended 30th June, 1899, were £305 10s.; interest accruing 31st December, 1898, was £1,408 5s.; interest accruing on 30th June, 1899, £1,626 1s. 6d.; interim interest received on loans repaid during the year (£1,625), £18 6s. 1d.; total income, £3,358 2s. 7d. As against that there are: Salary, William Paterson, manager, £500; salary, J. D. Stevenson, accountant, £250; salary, A. McLarty, clerk, £120; manager's allowance for horse and man, £84; incidental (including travelling expenses), £268; foreign telegrams and stationery, £24 7s.; postage and telephone rent, £8; interest on mortgage bonds for the year, £1,839 15s. 3d.; total, £3,094 8s.; showing a direct profit of £264 on the transactions of the Bank. I am sorry that more hon. members are not present to hear that what I have already dealt with is by no means the most profitable part of the Bank's transactions. I have shown that 51,000 acres of land have been cleared, independent of other improvements. My experience, and that of other members who have a knowledge of agriculture, goes to show that the return to the country of these 51,000 acres cannot be estimated at less than £1 per acre per annum; in other words an expenditure in round numbers of £100,000 has given the country annually a return of £51,000. And that by no means is the end of the gain to the country. If we could visit those farms to-night, representing 51,000 acres of cleared land, we should find that not only has an army of labourers been working in clearing and fencing; not only have a large number of people with families been made possibly independent for life; but this has reacted upon the workshops of city and town, and every artisan and labourer in those workshops has been provided with profitable employment. Thus it will be found that those employed in mechanical pursuits, and particularly wheelwrights, carriage builders, and harness makers, have benefited, and in every other direction trade has been stimulated to the great gain of the whole

community. I believe I am right in saying that there is no more profitable work, more reproductive work, than the Government ever undertook than the spending of this £100,000. It may be asked whether the necessity arises to go on with work of this sort; and in answer to that question I would point out that, when the Premier introduced the first Agricultural Bank Bill in the year 1895, we were then importing very largely the products of the Eastern colonies, and the land under cultivation in this colony at that date was 81,328 acres, our population being 82,000. During the ensuing five years our population has reached 170,000, and by the latest returns of 1897-8, we have under cultivation 133,182 acres. This area is, of course, altogether independent of the large quantity of land fallowed and cleared and awaiting cultivation, which totals 275,525 acres. But while in 1895 we were importing largely, I am sorry to say that the current year, notwithstanding the advance of local agriculture, still finds us importing very largely from the other colonies. It may be said of agriculture, as of all the other industries of the colony, that after all it is only in its a-b-c; therefore, I maintain that the greatest possible good will accrue to the colony by passing this Bill, increasing the amount available to the bank from £100,000 to £200,000. As was stated in 1895, there is a great difference between our own Bank and those of the other Australian Governments. While Victoria, I think I am right in stating, has placed £5,000,000 sterling at the disposal of her people for the assistance of agriculture, we have decided to vote £100,000 for the same purpose, with this great difference, that the money of the Victorian Government, if I understand aright, is devoted in the main to the assistance of those settlers who have become embarrassed; and while it is a right noble thing to assist struggling men who have become largely indebted to private institutions, the principle after all amounts to this, that the Victorian vote for agriculture is devoted to the purpose of saving from ruin men already upon the soil, while our small sum of £100,000 means that we have created new homes and brought about new prosperity. I believe I have said enough—I hope so, at all events—

to convince hon. members of the wisdom and the necessity of this measure. I well remember that in 1895 one of the great objections urged against it was the danger of over-production. Over-production, save the mark, with 130,000 acres under crop! And there are not wanting at the present day those who voice the same objection; and I have said it before, and I say it again, that I look forward to being, in due time, about the best-cursed man in Western Australia. That state of affairs will come about when the produce of the soil is so large in quantity that it will be difficult to find purchasers, and that will be to me a great consolation. The cry of over-production has no terrors for me. Such a state of affairs is a stage we should all desire to reach, because only by over-production in certain directions can we overcome the disadvantages from which we suffer in other directions. Let me illustrate what I mean. At the present moment we are importing vast quantities of hams and bacon. Speaking in round numbers and averaging, we import yearly about 30,000 pigs, which statement, after all, is only another way of saying that our supply of wheat was short. How can we successfully establish large bacon and ham factories throughout Western Australia until, for a time at any rate, wheat becomes, comparatively speaking, a drug on the market? How can we hope to follow the example of the other colonies in the successful establishment of jam factories, and fruit-canning factories and vegetable factories, until the fruit and other raw material have become, so to speak, a drug in the market? Such local factories, when established, will step in to relieve this over-production. True, disorganisation may exist for a time, but the great hope we have before us is to stimulate the establishment of factories. With regard to my reasons for supporting this Bill, I again repeat that there is no measure ever brought forward, amongst the many good measures of the Forrest Government, which has been attended by so many direct blessings to the colony as the Agricultural Bank Act. This is a matter that I had at heart very many years before I contemplated taking up a political life, and I was rejoiced to find, in 1895, that the Premier gave his assistance to place that

measure on the statute book. Since then, I believe the same principle, under another name, has permeated the whole of Australasia, and even the Continent of Europe; and we find that there, under different names and in different ways, the same help is given to agriculturists. I wish to ask hon. members, if they have any prejudices, to relinquish them; but I feel sure that what I have said, and the figures I hope to be able to place before the House to-morrow night in a detailed report from the Bank manager, will all show that the trust this House placed in the Government in allowing them, so to speak, to experiment with the sum of £100,000, has been a trust that has not been misplaced; and that this fact will give hon. members confidence to go forward, and to trust us again with a similar amount. After all, the same principle obtains on the goldfields. I believe I am right in stating that 55,000 sovereigns have been devoted by this liberal Government to the purchase of State batteries; and if those State batteries are only properly worked, and placed altogether outside political influences, so that care may be taken that no mistakes be made, and that they are placed in the districts where poor men and mineral lodes really exist, nothing but good can come from that expenditure. I take it that the State batteries do not pride themselves on their direct profit; neither do I pride myself upon the direct profit on the working of this Bank, which shows only a small direct profit after all salaries, travelling expenses, and everything else have been paid, of £258. I think I have shown hon. members, and I could demonstrate it much more clearly, the great gain to the whole colony by the operations of this institution. I believe the Minister of Mines would not be able to show a very large profit from the public batteries; but I think I am right in saying that the Premier stated last night that the public batteries showed a total output of £25,000 worth of gold, which, but for those batteries, might have lain dormant in the earth. What has been the effect of that? It means that £25,000 will be distributed, and labour employed; that a large number of men will be at work who, but for such batteries, would probably be seeking "fresh fields and pastures new." I do not think

I need take up the time of hon. members any longer. I deeply regret that this question, which is one of great interest to the Government and to myself, is not of such interest to the House as to command a larger attendance of members to listen to this explanation. With regard to the Bank management generally, I have nothing but the highest mead of praise to express. I am sure I should be wanting in my duty if I did not take this opportunity of saying that in Mr. Paterson we have an officer whom it would be very hard indeed to replace. [SEVERAL MEMBERS: Hear, hear.] And he is becoming more efficient every day. To be honest, I desire to state that the past five years under the working of the Act have only seen us dealing with the payment of the interest, and I assure the House that we have not lost one penny: we have had no trouble whatever. But it is also my duty to point out that the five years just past have possibly been five rosy years to agriculture. Prices have been high; and farmers, small or large, have had little excuse for non-payment of interest or of principal. But it is my duty to point out that, with a possibly larger production and lower prices, we shall have to exercise it may be much greater caution, great as our caution has been in the past, to see that the loans are carefully placed. It is quite clear, I am sure, to hon. members that, with chaff at £5 7s. a ton, with wheat at 5s. a bushel, and with other products of the soil in proportion, it is comparatively easier for a farmer to pay the interest and principal of his loans than when wheat is 3s. a bushel and chaff £3 a ton. Speaking for myself, I have no fear, and I wish to assure hon. members that, whatever else happens, the working of this institution is kept altogether outside of any political influences. The Bank manager is left entirely to himself. The mode of proceeding is that the applicant makes his application to the Bank manager, who as soon as possible visits the land, and approves or disapproves of the application. If approved of, the application in due course comes before me, and I can say, feeling the responsibility of dealing with public money, that every application is most closely looked into, and yet that I have never had more than one occasion

during my term of office to send back a recommendation to the manager for further consideration. I feel no difficulty in urging the House to accept this Bill as it stands, seeing that a gentleman like Mr. Paterson is at the head of affairs. Hon. members may ask me where will I get the money? Well, I only say to them by way of explanation that we have plenty of money in the Savings Bank, and I believe it is right, with proper care and under proper restrictions, that we should use that money, and lay it out for the benefit of the farmers, for the purposes named, at the rate of 5 per cent. As before stated, we have never made a bad debt; and while the near future will bring about a different state of things for agriculture, necessitating greater caution, I have the fullest possible confidence in going forward in this direction. I may say, in conclusion, that I consider we are not doing enough. Some say we are going too fast in this matter, but my own feeling is that we are going altogether too slowly. One of the mistakes, and one of the few mistakes made by the Forrest Government, and by Sir John Forrest in particular, was that in the early days of our colony we did not boldly set aside £100,000 for clearing the South-West swamps, and draining their subdivisions. I venture to say I feel earnest about this. I have told the Premier many a time that had this been done five years ago, when my department was selling town lots on the goldfields, had £100,000 then been put aside for the purpose I have named, we should have wiped out long ago the importation of potatoes and onions and other products which we are now obtaining from the other colonies. I have had great pleasure in giving this explanation to the House in moving the second reading of the Bill, and I count heartily on the cordial support of the hon. member for Albany and other members of this House in carrying this Bill through.

**THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS** (Hon. F. H. Piesse): I can hardly let this opportunity pass without remarking that I regret the explanation of a measure which has so much interest to the people of the country should have been listened to by so few members. This is a measure that has an important bearing on the agricultural development

of the country, and I consider the Agricultural Bank Act has done much to help forward the farming interest. The words uttered to-night by the Minister of Lands should convey to those who have been sceptical in regard to this matter, that there is no room for doubt. From my knowledge of the operations of the Agricultural Bank during the past five years, all I can say is that it has been successful throughout the agricultural districts, and it has been the means of bringing under cultivation large areas of land which otherwise would not have been brought under cultivation. There is one matter that perhaps may be mentioned to-night in regard to the value of improvements that have been made, and which are put down at something over £200,000. I would like to say that in addition to the value of the improvements mentioned, many of the holdings on which money has been lent, and which have been taken as security, are worth three times as much as the amount set down as the value of the improvements. It is not only on the lands that have been recently brought under cultivation and recently occupied that money has been lent, but also land upon which already large improvements had been carried out; therefore, the security is very considerable. Not only has money been lent to the special occupation leaseholder, who goes on to the land with perhaps very little money, and with only his pertinacity of purpose to help him along, but money has been lent to other holders; therefore, the security offered to the people is in most instances much more than the security that is asked for ordinarily under the Act. Therefore, the value of the improvements which have been given by the Minister to-night forms in the aggregate a very small portion of the value of the security offered by the persons who have obtained loans under the Act. I would like also to add to the words that have fallen from the Minister to-night, and the remarks which he has made in regard to Mr. Paterson, the manager of the Agricultural Bank. I have had an opportunity of seeing that gentleman travelling through the country from time to time, and I am quite conversant with the methods of business which he practises. I think we have been very successful in securing

a man with such experience, and with such a knowledge of the country and of improvements, and who has a great desire to carry out his work successfully. That has indeed been one of the principal features of success in regard to the working of the measure. I would not have risen to-night to say anything, only that I think it was unfortunate that we had not a larger House to-night to listen to the remarks of the Minister in moving the second reading of this Bill, because I am quite confident all members would have liked to hear his explanation. The great progress which agriculture is making to-day ought to be further supported. There has never been any doubt in my mind, but if any doubt should rest in the minds of hon. members that this country will be able to produce up to requirements, that doubt should be removed by the great impetus which has been given to farming recently by the large amount of produce realised, and the great strides made towards supplying our own needs. I am with the Minister in saying that the House should agree to the second reading of the Bill, and grant the additional £100,000 now being asked for, to further assist the carrying out of the provisions of the Agricultural Bank Act.

On motion by MR. QUINLAN, the debate was adjourned.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10-21 p.m. until the next day.

## Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 28th September, 1899.

North Murchison Electorate: Vacancy—Public Service Bill, third reading—Constitution Acts Amendment Bill, postponement—Mines Regulation Bill, in Committee, new clauses, progress—Noxious Weeds Bill, in Committee; Division, progress—Agricultural Bank Act Amendment Bill, second reading resumed and concluded—Papers presented—Pharmacy and Poisons Act Amendment Bill, in Committee, Clause 3 to new clause, progress—Adjournment.

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

#### PRAYERS.

#### NORTH MURCHISON ELECTORATE— VACANCY.

THE PREMIER moved: That in consequence of the resignation of Mr. F. W. Moorhead, the seat in the Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of North Murchison be declared vacant.

Question put and passed.

#### PUBLIC SERVICE BILL.

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

#### CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

##### POSTPONEMENT.

Order read for third reading of the Bill.

THE PREMIER said he had some verbal alterations, and some alterations a little more than verbal, to make in the schedule, which was very long and intricate. The schedule had been closely examined, and there were no alterations which would affect the boundaries except in connection with the Kalgoorlie electoral district, which would have to be altered a little, because it was the desire of the Select Committee which considered the Bill to make the boundaries of the Kalgoorlie electoral district coincide with the municipal boundaries. At that time the municipal boundaries were being altered, but he had been of opinion that the boundaries which he recommended to the Select Committee were the boundaries which the municipal council were adopting. It now appeared that the boundaries he had recommended were not the Kalgoorlie municipal boundaries,