

thick and thin were advocating representation in the first place on territory, then on interest, then on population. They advocated territory when it suited them, and when it did not they threw that aside and advocated the representation of interest. We had the Premier saying that territory should be looked after. Yilgarn was a big place, and there were other electorates where there were 3,000 voters or 4,000 voters, yet we had just passed an electorate with only 1,100 voters. Yilgarn was an old district connected with the metropolis by railway and by telegraph, and it should have representation. We were retrograding, and protests were unavailing. A great deal more would be heard of this matter in the country.

Yilgarn put and passed.

York Electoral District:

MR. DAGLISH: Did the Government propose to adhere to this electorate?

MR. PURKISS supported the retention of York because one of the leading agricultural members said that stupidity should have a greater representation than intelligence, and because another said that acres should be represented rather than intelligence and population. Moreover, yesterday the Premier designated the member for York as one of the most brilliant of his supporters.

MR. MORAN supported the item for the last reason mentioned by the preceding speaker, and because the member for York had said that town was likely to become the federal capital.

MR. BURGESS denied the statement.

York put and passed.

Preamble of the Bill:

MR. MORAN: Could we not insert a preamble to the effect that this was a Bill to disfranchise the populous districts of Western Australia?

Put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

THE PREMIER moved that the consideration of the report be made an order for Thursday next. Members would thus have time to give notice of amendments.

MR. MORAN: Did the Premier intend to adhere to his statement at York, that the House should not have the Budget till the Redistribution Bill was finally disposed of?

THE PREMIER: Yes.

MR. MORAN: Then the Government were on their own initiative postponing the Budget Speech for another week.

Question put and passed.

Bill reported with amendments.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 11:24 o'clock, until the next day.

### Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 30th September, 1903.

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

#### PRAYERS.

#### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the MINISTER FOR WORKS: By-laws of Nelson Roads Board. Railway Classification and Rate Book, Alterations.

By the TREASURER: Report of Museum and Art Gallery, 1902.

Ordered, to lie on the table.

#### QUESTION—FREMANTLE HARBOUR PILOTAGE.

MR. JACOBY, for Mr. Hassell, asked the Premier: The amount of pilotage paid to the Fremantle Harbour Trust since its formation, and when collected.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES, for the Premier, replied: The amount of pilotage paid to the Fremantle Harbour Trust direct has been £543 10s. 6d. for

the month of September instant. The pilotage collected at Fremantle for the remaining eight months since the formation of the Trust was collected by the Harbour and Light Department, on behalf of the Trust, and was as follows:—January, £164 19s.; February, £378 3s.; March, £336 9s.; April, £338 19s.; May, £313 1s.; June, £332 18s.; July, £308 17s.; August, £409 19s.

#### QUESTION—FREMANTLE HARBOUR ALTERATIONS.

MR. JACOBY, for Mr. Hassell, asked the Premier: Whether he is yet in a position to lay on the table of the House a copy of the Trust's recommendations of proposed alterations in the Fremantle Harbour; also the report of the late engineer (Mr. Leslie) on the proposed harbour alterations.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES, for the Premier, replied: The Engineer-in-Chief is considering these recommendations and report, and his report will be ready in a week or two. Directly this report is to hand the recommendations and the two reports will be placed on the table.

#### RETURN—WATER SHAFT CONTRACT, JOURDIE HILLS.

On motion by MR. F. REID, ordered: That all papers relating to the sinking of the Jourdie Hills Water Shaft be laid on the table of the House, with a return showing:—(a) Whether the shaft was let on contract. (b) The terms and prices of the agreement. (c) To whom the contract was let. (d) The number and names of the men employed by the contractors. (e) The distance sunk by the contractors and the time occupied in sinking. (f) The amount of money paid by the Department to the contractors. (g) The time worked and amount received by each man employed. (h) Whether the men employed by the contractors were paid their wages in full. (i) The amount still owing by the contractors to each individual employed by them. (j) Whether the officers of the Works Department were aware that a large sum was owing by the contractors to their employees when the work was taken from the contractors by the Works Department. (k) Whether all necessary pre-

cautions were taken by the department to insure the payment in full of the workmen's wages by the contractors. (l) Whether the work was completed by day labour, and what was the cost per foot. (m) The depth of the shaft and the average cost per foot.

#### RETURN—AUDIT DEPARTMENT, SALARIES.

On motion by MR. DAGLISH, ordered: That a return be laid upon the table showing—1, The names of officers of the Audit Department and their respective salaries; 2, The salary which each officer will receive if Mr. Whitton's recommendations are adopted; 3, The fee paid to Mr. Whitton for his report upon the department.

#### RETURN—MIDLAND RAILWAY, SALES OF LAND.

On motion by DR. O'CONNOR, ordered: That there be laid upon the table of the House a return showing—1, The amount received by the Government for sales of land made by the Midland Railway Company to secure debentures guaranteed by Government. 2, What amount was paid by Government for interest on said debentures, and when. 3, The amount in the hands of the Government to credit of Midland Railway Company, and to be devoted towards redeeming said debentures. 4, How this is invested.

#### RETURN—LIQUOR LICENSES, INSPECTION.

MR. J. C. G. FOULKES (Claremont) moved:

That there be laid upon the table of the House a return showing, for the year expiring on the 31st day of August, 1903:—1, The names and addresses of persons employed as inspectors in testing the quality and purity of liquor in the licensed houses of the State. 2, The remuneration and duties of such inspectors. 3, The date of their respective appointments. 4, The various districts each inspector is in charge of. 5, The names and addresses of the licensed houses which the inspectors, in pursuance of their duties, visited, and the dates on which such visits were made. 6, The system adopted by such inspectors in testing liquor. 7 (a), Whether the liquor of every licensed house was periodically subjected to analysis; (b) the dates of such periods; (c) the names of the analysts who analysed such liquor; (d) the amount paid as fees to such analysts, and by whom such fees were paid; (e) a list of the liquors

so analysed; (f) a list of the licensed houses (showing addresses and names of landlords) whose liquors were so analysed; (g) the dates on which such analysis was made; (h) the result of such analysis in each respective case; (i) to which department of the Public Service such analysis was forwarded. 8. Whether any prosecutions have been brought against any holder of a licensed house for adulteration of liquor during the twelve months expiring on the 31st day of August last consequent upon any examination and testing of liquor by any inspector. 9. The result of such prosecutions.

Last year he moved for a return somewhat similar to that now asked for, but the answers given were very unsatisfactory. They were practically to the effect that there was no test made of the quality and purity of liquor sold in the licensed houses of the State. He wanted to have the fullest information given, so that we might know definitely whether up to August last any testing of the liquor sold in the different public houses had been made, and he particularly wished to know when that testing took place, and whether the Government were satisfied that the liquor sold in those public houses was pure.

Question put and passed.

**MOTION—PETITION OF DR. L. M. HUNGERFORD.**

**MR. H. J. YELVERTON** (Sussex) moved—

That the petition of Dr. L. M. Hungerford be referred to a select committee, with power to call for persons and papers, to sit on days over which the House stands adjourned, and to report this day fortnight.

The reason for moving to appoint a select committee was that he felt an injustice had been done to Dr. Hungerford. He asked members to read the petition, and be thought they would find ample justification for this motion. The facts of the case were that Dr. Hungerford was appointed some 12 years ago to the position of resident medical officer at Dongarra, and afterwards to a dual position—that of resident medical officer at Busselton at a salary of £100, afterwards increased to £200, and of resident magistrate in Busselton district at a salary of £200 per annum and £50 forage allowance. Recently, owing to the recommendations of the Public Service Commission, it became necessary to abolish the office of resident magistrate at Busselton. Although the district had

enjoyed the benefit of having a magistrate continually for very many years, personally he had little fault to find with the Government for carrying out those recommendations whereby economy could be effected; but, as a matter of justice, Dr. Hungerford should have been treated fairly. In the case of other gentlemen whose offices had been abolished, they received considerable compensation on the abolition of their offices, and Dr. Hungerford should have been treated in an equally fair manner. He would not trouble members at great length now, but should it be necessary he would speak more fully later. This was a matter of simple justice to a worthy man, and he appealed to the House to agree to the appointment of a select committee to go into the merits of the case, and say whether Dr. Hungerford should have anything more than the six months' leave granted to him or not.

**MR. W. ATKINS** (Murray) seconded the motion.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS** (Hon. C. H. Rason): The hon. member might have given his reasons at greater length than he had done. It was a somewhat extraordinary request to make, that because a civil service office had been abolished and that civil servant considered he was aggrieved, therefore a select committee should be appointed by Parliament to inquire into the circumstances. It was true that Dr. Hungerford held the position of resident magistrate and resident medical officer at Busselton, and it was true he received a salary of £200 per annum and £50 forage allowance; but that could hardly be regarded as a salary paid to a civil servant under ordinary circumstances; rather it was in the nature of a subsidy in aid of private practice, there not being sufficient private practice perhaps to insure a medical officer with the qualifications of Dr. Hungerford settling there without some additional inducement. It was to give to the residents of Busselton the services of a good medical officer that this subsidy to Dr. Hungerford had been paid. The House would agree that this hardly placed Dr. Hungerford on the fixed list as a civil servant, and he (the Minister) submitted that in any case it was hardly desirable that a select committee should

be appointed to inquire into the circumstances of the abolition of an office which the Public Service Commission strongly recommended should be done away with. From what he had heard of the case, he did not think Dr. Hungerford had been harshly dealt with in any way. Dr. Hungerford had received the same treatment as would be accorded to anyone else in his position under the circumstances. During all the years he was there he received the subsidy, and had the right of private practice as well, and so far as he (the Minister) could understand the position, any medical officer would gladly go to Busselton for the same privileges as Dr. Hungerford received, and would not expect any additional reward at the termination of his office. If Dr. Hungerford had received exceptional treatment, one could have understood the hon. member being anxious to move in this direction; but Dr. Hungerford had received exactly the same treatment as had been meted out to everyone else in the same position. He had suffered no injustice in this respect, or indeed in any other, and he (the Minister) submitted that the hon. member having drawn attention to the matter, it would be advisable for him—if the hon. member would pardon him for saying it—to withdraw this motion rather than press it.

**MR. YELVERTON:** Would the Minister give some instances of others having been treated similarly?

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** At the present moment he could not give instances: he did not happen to administer this department. He was assured, and from what he remembered of the case when it came before Cabinet he believed, that Dr. Hungerford did receive fair and judicious treatment, the same as was meted out to others. Having received the same treatment as other gentlemen in his position who had been retrenched, if we were to have a select committee appointed to inquire into each case, the House would be more than fully occupied for some time to come. He hoped the mover would not press the motion.

**MR. F. CONNOR (East Kimberley):** It was to be hoped the hon. member would press the motion, not on account of this particular case but on account of other cases which would have to be

brought before the House in connection with the discharge from the public service of men who had rendered good service, but who had been superseded by officers who had not rendered such long service to the State. This had been done with the consent and connivance of the Government.

**MR. J. C. G. FOULKES (Claremont)** did not agree with the contention of the Minister that the appointment of resident magistrates was regarded as a subsidy towards the medical appointment. He always understood that the post of resident magistrate was a separate post, and was held by many gentlemen quite apart from their medical appointment. There were many instances in which resident medical officers were not magistrates. The member for Sussex had no doubt in his mind, when moving the motion, the case of the warden at Southern Cross who, when his office was abolished, received a considerable sum of money, he thought £1,000. He believed that gentleman was also resident magistrate at Southern Cross.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES:** That officer received £750 a year and he held a permanent appointment.

**MR. FOULKES:** One would like to know if the appointment of the resident magistrate at Busselton was not also a permanent appointment. Most of the resident magistrates hitherto had been looked upon as holding posts that were regarded as permanent. He was aware that a deputation waited on the Attorney General with regard to the treatment of this officer, and the Attorney General seemed to be quite emphatic that full justice had been done to this officer. If a committee were appointed, he had such confidence in the Attorney General's desire to be fair to all officers in the service, that no doubt the Attorney General would be found to be correct in his statement.

**DR. HICKS (Roebourne)** moved that the debate be adjourned.

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

Ayes	...	...	...	13
Noes	...	...	...	11
Majority for ...				2

## AYES.

Mr. Bath  
Mr. Foulkes  
Mr. Gardiner  
Mr. Gregory  
Mr. Hastie  
Mr. Hayward  
Mr. Hicks  
Mr. Hopkins  
Mr. Illingworth  
Mr. McDonald  
Mr. Bason  
Mr. Reid  
Mr. Ferguson (Teller).

## NOES.

Mr. Butcher  
Mr. Connor  
Mr. Harper  
Mr. Isdell  
Mr. Nanson  
Mr. O'Connor  
Mr. Taylor  
Mr. Throssell  
Mr. Wallace  
Mr. Yelverton  
Mr. Atkins (Teller).

Motion thus passed, and the debate adjourned.

## MOTION—SINGLE-CHAMBER CONSTITUTION, REFERENDUM.

Mr. J. L. NANSON (Murchison) moved—

That in the opinion of this House the Government should, at the next general election, cause a referendum to be taken in all the electoral districts simultaneously with the election of members for such districts, with a view to ascertaining what proportion of electors in each constituency favours the adoption of a single Chamber constitution for the State.

In dealing with the motion, it is scarcely necessary for me to say that I do not intend to go into the question as to whether we should have in this State two Chambers or a single Chamber constitution. That question does not arise at all. I do not put it forward on this occasion. Members sufficiently know my opinion in regard to that question. There is, however, a very general opinion that the country is not yet ripe for this change and that the great majority of people in the country are opposed to any tampering with the Constitution in that form; therefore I think it would be interesting, more than interesting it would be advantageous, if by some such means as suggested in the motion we ascertained what is the opinion of the constituencies on this point. Members will notice that the motion is so worded as not to involve the taking of a mass referendum such as was taken on the question whether Western Australia should or should not enter the Commonwealth. The motion proposes, not a mass vote of the whole of the electors in the State, but that a vote be taken by constituencies. We shall then be in a position to ascertain the opinion of the mass of the voters, and we shall know what is the opinion of the constituencies also. And while the Constitution is in its present form, every one of us is aware that

there can be no change from a bicameral to a unicameral system until a majority of the constituencies favour the change. It is possible that if a vote be taken we shall find that while the majority of the electors are in favour of a single-chamber Constitution, the majority of the constituencies are in favour of retaining the Constitution in its present form. There can be no doubt that whatever may be the decision as to taking a referendum, this question of a unicameral or a bicameral Constitution is coming forward, and coming forward more rapidly perhaps than some people imagine. Those who have studied the developments which took place in the Dominion of Canada after Federation had been achieved in that country are well aware that the idea of abolishing two-chamber Constitutions in several of the Canadian provinces was scouted just as contemptuously as it is scouted at the present time by many people in this and other States of the Commonwealth. But, as was mentioned by a writer in the *Times* dealing with the Canadian Constitution, it was found that for all practical purposes a single-chamber Constitution answered better than the old system. It was found in Canada, although it had been prophesied that all sorts of evils would result, that those evils really existed in the imagination only, and that the course of public business was much facilitated by having only one Chamber. I do not wish to go into detail as to whether in that Chamber we should have two or three sorts of members, as has been suggested in another Australian State, or whether the Chamber should take a more democratic form; but I think the House may well assent to this motion, because the discussion of the subject throughout the country will at least have an educative effect, and will enable those who favour a two-chamber Constitution to explain their views, while those who favour the existing order will be equally able to advance the strong opinions which they hold as to the advisableness of keeping things as they are. Therefore, the referendum cannot be productive of any kind of harm. On the other hand, it may be said it cannot result in any practical good. It is certainly true that if the vast majority of the constituencies

decided in favour of a single-chamber Constitution, even then the referendum would not have any immediate effect, because the change would have to be brought about in the ordinary constitutional manner. It may be argued that it is not within the province of the Government to hold a referendum on this or any other question without first obtaining the sanction of an Act of Parliament. No doubt that view would hold good were it suggested that effect should be given to the decision arrived at by a referendum. But that is not suggested. The motion suggests that a referendum be taken, so that we may know exactly what is on this question the opinion of the people; not that, as in the case of the Commonwealth referendum, certain action should follow the taking of the referendum. I therefore trust that both those who are in favour of and those opposed to a two-chamber Constitution will perceive the advantage of ascertaining what are the views of the people. It may be said that there is no need for a referendum, because public opinion can be ascertained through the ordinary channel of a general election; but we all know that in the more populous electorates it is very difficult indeed to obtain at a general election a decisive verdict on any single point. If this question of the form which the Constitution should take, now that we have federated, were a burning question, then we could hope to obtain a decisive verdict through the ordinary channel provided by a general election; but I do not argue, and I have never contended, that this is a burning question. I admit that much missionary and pioneering work has to be done before we shall be justified in expecting that so vast a change in our constitutional system will be adopted. But it is in the firm belief that such a change will ultimately be adopted that I bring forward this motion, firstly with the idea of letting every public man know in the clearest possible manner what are the wishes of the people of the State on this subject, and secondly that the advocates on both sides may have an opportunity of doing what lies in their power to educate public opinion as to the issue. I have pleasure in moving the motion.

MR. R. HASTIE (Kanowna): I second the motion, and hope the House will take

this matter into serious consideration. The hon. member has given some strong reasons why we should refer this question to the electors; and another reason occurs to me which I do not think he advanced. We are members of one branch of the Legislature, and are to a large extent elected by the people who elect members of the Upper House. Some in this Chamber do believe that we should have a single-chamber Constitution and some do not; and therefore it seems very hard for us that we should have to decide whether we shall or shall not have only one Chamber. The people who elected us are the residents of this State. They and they only ought to take this responsibility. One objection to this motion I admit is not very strong. The hon. member asks that the electors shall decide whether or not we shall have a change in the Constitution; but it is said that the effect of a referendum will be that no man will be able to say exactly what is the opinion of the electors after the referendum has been taken. Again and again in this House we have members declaring that the great body of the electors in this State are in favour of this or of that; and no one can contradict the statements. But if this question is placed before the electors, members will certainly have to be more cautious in such expressions of opinion. That is the case as regards this State. But the difficulty is not confined entirely to this State; because I observed the other day that a neighbouring Premier went out of his way to express the opinion of the people of the goldfields in this State on a very important matter; and his statement was quite in keeping with similar statements which have been made in this House. I refer to the telegraphic report of an utterance by Mr. Jenkins, the Premier of South Australia, who, having no means whatever of knowing the opinion of our goldfields people with reference to the Transcontinental Railway, nevertheless alleged that they had a certain opinion. I may be permitted to say that so far as I can gauge the goldfields opinion, Mr. Jenkins is entirely in the wrong, and that if a referendum of the goldfields people were now taken we should all be quite satisfied on that point. With reference to this motion, I hope the matter will be placed

before the electors early next year, so that they may say whether Western Australia shall be governed by two Houses or by one. In the referendum voting papers, it will probably be as well that the question asked of the people shall be so simple that they will be able to state their opinions concisely, even if we go so far as to ask them to state whether they prefer to be governed by the Upper House or by the Lower House, because I notice that in this State some people believe that another place is more important than this. On that subject the electors ought to be allowed to express their opinions, and I hope they will not be deprived of the opportunity of so doing.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. J. M. Hopkins):** One cannot commend the member for the Murchison, now that he has moved a motion which has as it were come down from the clouds, for having advanced any very strong reasons in condemnation of the present system of government; nor can one commend him for having shown that the method which he proposes to follow is likely to achieve the end he has in view. I have in the past expressed in this House the opinion that each State of Australia could very well, following on the establishment of federation, carry on its business with a single Chamber. But the object of those who advocate a single-chamber Constitution should surely be, not to carry a motion such as this in the Assembly, but to consider the problem from a broader standpoint, so as to have the matter debated by all persons interested; for example, by members in another place. If that were done, we could formulate some proposal which, if carried into effect, would probably be followed by the dissolution of both Houses and the settlement of the number of members for the single Chamber which would remain. If such a course were taken, members in this and in the other Chamber would be given equal opportunities of entering the single Chamber. I believe it is the desire of every member of this House that the people's will shall as far as possible be reflected in the Legislature of the country.

**MR. CONNOR:** Why do you not give effect to it?

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** I have no doubt that when the member for East Kimberley comes into power he will

give effect to most things. There is no doubt that before a question of this kind can be seriously considered, either in this House or in the country, it will be necessary to have the pros and cons thoroughly debated, not only here but in the Upper House and before the electors.

**MR. TAYLOR:** Through the *West Australian*?

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** No; not necessarily through the *West Australian*.

**MR. CONNOR:** The *Boulder Star*.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** That would perhaps be an admirable channel. There are also newspapers circulating in other parts of the State.

**MR. NANSON:** It would create controversy.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** After all, does it not take us back to this point, that the first thing to establish is the referendum, and not the carrying of resolutions of this description. When we have determined by legislative enactment to adopt the referendum, then we have to say to what it is to apply. Otherwise, unless we have some restriction of the nature I have indicated, does it not follow that one member will get up one day and move for a referendum on some cause that is dear to him? No doubt we have weaknesses in that direction, for every member representing a constituency since far back has had some wrong, or something which he feels to be a wrong, under which his part of the State is suffering, and to which he desires to give publicity, as the member for the Murchison is doing; not so much to give out the fact as to draw public attention to it, and create a lively discussion on it. Would it not be necessary, before this serious question is taken into consideration, that those persons who champion the other Chamber should have the right to claim to be heard? Also it should first be proved that the two Chambers are not required; and in the demonstration of that point we must have the experience of other countries clearly placed before us. I venture to say that the Upper Chamber in Western Australia has more supporters than an Upper Chamber would have in Victoria, where the Upper House consists of 48 landlords.

**MR. TAYLOR:** Why not vote for the motion?

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** The hon. member will be able to deal with his aspect of the question a little later. In Victoria it has been for many years a standing cry that proposals for advancement were continuously rejected by the Upper House. They have not an Upper House elected on the liberal franchise that obtains in Western Australia. The New South Wales Constitution, providing for a nominee Upper House, cannot be compared with the privileges which surround the election of a member to the Upper House in Western Australia.

**MR. BATH:** It is much easier of amendment.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** The trouble is that they do not amend it. Take Tasmania, New Zealand, Queensland, and South Australia: when we place this State in comparison with one or all of those other States we come back to this position, that we have, more particularly under our Electoral Bill, the freest and most popular representation in the Upper House that exists in any State of Australia to-day. Surely these are matters which are worthy of serious consideration; and surely it remains to be proved, before we have any resolution of this sort or any agitation of the kind, or before we can even contemplate any, that we would be successful in an endeavour to bring about the establishment of a single Chamber against the bicameral system we have under our Constitution. We will have to prove that one of these Houses is, as it were, unnecessary, and what is more, that the popular will and the popular desire are being blocked in the Upper Chamber. But what has been the experience for some years past? Was it not the common cry of a former Premier, Sir John Forrest, that the ultra-liberals and ultra-radicals of Western Australia were all in the Upper House? Is that not so? Is it not a fact that we see Labour representatives in the Upper House? Is that not an indication of what the franchise is? Has any person been elected in recent years to the Upper House, except perhaps for the North Province, who has not stood upon a platform which would have elected him to this Chamber? My own opinion on the question of one or two Houses, my inclination has been that, after the establishment of Federation, we should work

to the goal of one Chamber. That is my personal conviction; but at the same time I realise that we are not going to achieve this goal on a resolution of this Chamber—a resolution moved with half-a-dozen words in support of it. I say that if we carry this resolution we are giving to those persons who believe in two Houses a whip with which they will scourge us later on.

**MR. CONNOR:** It is only a motion to affirm a principle.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** I am perfectly aware of that. [Motion read.] I say the time is not ripe for a proposal of this kind. The member for Mt. Margaret may laugh. He will have an opportunity of placing his side of the question before the House, and when he does so I have no doubt he will be able to break down all the traditions that control the government of the British Isles and possessions throughout the world. This system is not something that has been built up on a five-minutes speech, such as we have heard from the member for the Murchison. Neither has it been built up on lines proposed on longer speeches, such as I have perhaps delivered myself on the question of a single Chamber. It has taken years to grow and develop, and as an outcome of that growth and development it is claimed throughout the Continent of Europe that the Constitution under which the people of Britain live, both at home and abroad, is something not enjoyed by any other country in the world. These are reasons which are bound to actuate the minds of those persons who occupy a purely independent position to-day. If it is proposed that, instead of having 50 members in one House and 30 in another, after the bringing about of a single Chamber we should have one large House which could be carried on more economically with perhaps an additional membership of 10 or 15, other amendments to the Constitution would necessarily be entailed; because even in countries where the referendum exists to-day it is not simply a matter of placing a question before the public and having it carried. In Switzerland a referendum of the various cantons does not make a matter law. In Western Australia this proposal would involve a very serious amendment of the Constitution, which will have to be dealt with;



and I venture to say that the great work which the politicians and statesmen of Australia undertook in building the Constitution of the Commonwealth will have to be repeated again by the politicians not only of Western Australia—because when this question grows to such an extent as to become an active political question in this State it will have reached dimensions in other parts of the Commonwealth—but the other politicians and statesmen of Australia will be called upon to bring their opinions to bear on the question of bringing about the consummation of single-chamber constitutions throughout Australia, which will require as much consideration as was given to the Constitution of the Commonwealth. The recognition of the great work done by the Chief Justice of Queensland, Sir Samuel Griffith, as shown by his appointment as Chief Justice of the Commonwealth, is the recognition of the work of a man who devoted, I suppose, his life to the basic principles that form the Constitution of the Commonwealth. These are reasons which, on the face, show that this question is not a matter to be lightly dealt with. I know the motive of the hon. member. When I sat on the cross-benches myself I felt, no doubt, as hon. members sitting there feel to-day—

A MEMBER: Irresponsible?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I will not exactly say that; but matters looked different to me when free from the obligations and responsibilities a seat on the Ministerial benches entails; and after all there will be small respect for a Minister who does not admit the responsibilities that are upon him.

MR. CONNOR: How do you feel to-day?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I feel just as independent as ever I did, and I do not think it can be said against any Minister that he loses his independence so far as political issues are concerned. I did not come prepared to speak on this problem; but these thoughts are uppermost in my mind, and I am sure they are uppermost in the minds of everybody in the community when it is a question of a drastic change in the Constitution. While I believe the proposed change may shortly be consummated, we cannot help realising that there are difficulties in the way. When

it comes to an amendment of the Constitution—an amendment so far-reaching in its effect as the proposition, if it were once established, would have—we must admit it must have very grave consideration at the hands, not only of this Assembly, but of the people. After all, if this proposal were carried by the House, and if we submitted the question to the people to-morrow, I venture to say 90 per cent. of the papers would be returned to the ballot-box marked, "We do not know anything of this question." The member for Mt. Margaret laughs again. I have not the slightest doubt that he can frame a Constitution for Western Australia and the States of the Commonwealth, somewhat as a spider spins webs—with not the slightest difficulty. However, there is another aspect to the question. At the very basis of the Constitution Act lie the rights and liberties of the people, and whatever these rights, liberties, and privileges may be, existing as they are to-day, I venture to say that the people of Western Australia are not going, on the flimsy case presented to the House by the member for the Murchison and the member for Kanowna, to abolish their Constitution for the purpose of taking on something that, after all, may be something in the shape of a mirage which, in the distance looks very well, but which as one approaches it one will probably find to have very little real substance in it. Distant fields are always green. I undertake to say that, before the referendum can be applied to such questions as this, for example, we will have the member for Mt. Margaret tabling a motion asking that another State hotel shall be established in his constituency.

MR. TAYLOR: Such a one as that in the Boulder with the 16-foot frontage.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: If the hon. member has anything to say with regard to that, it is a great pity he does not say it. I do not know whether he means to imply that I am interested in that transaction, or that I was ever interested in it. One can only assume, from the way he speaks, that he means to infer something of that kind. I have no interest in that property, and never did have any interest in it—not the slightest. Moreover, I was not aware the license was granted until some months after it

was granted. If asked to express a fair, independent opinion on the matter, I would say that at last justice has been done. Up to the time these particular premises were built, wine and beer licenses had been granted there, and it was necessary to build a saloon before a license for it could be got.

MR. TAYLOR: Does that affect the referendum?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: You raised the point, and the way in which you did it could only lead members to believe that probably I was interested in the question. Perhaps a hotel is preferable to some of the places where the hon. member has been. There is not the slightest doubt the hon. member made the interjection he did for a purpose, and I claim that under those circumstances I am entitled—

MR. TAYLOR: It seems to make you blush a bit.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Perhaps I am not so accustomed to having things of this sort levelled at me as some people. At the same time it is the kind of argument we expect to hear from gentlemen like the hon. member for Mt. Margaret. Referring to the question before the House, I have not the slightest doubt we shall hear some very interesting comments from that hon. member bearing on the amendment of the Constitution, and I can understand it is the one question with which he is highly competent to deal at even short notice. There is not the slightest doubt he will be able to give us something that will be very interesting.

MR. F. ILLINGWORTH (Cue): Perhaps it is a very remarkable thing, and yet not so very remarkable, that at specified seasons throughout all ages almost, we have an attack on the British Constitution. One of the greatest statesmen we had in times past, Mr. Burke, spoke of the British Constitution as the admiration of the world and the bulwark of British liberty. It so happens that when a wave of excitement crosses any people, whether in Great Britain or any of her colonies, somebody raises the cry, "Do away with the House of Lords," or "Do away with the second Chamber." The people of America, numbering 80 millions, are satisfied to have a second Chamber, and

they cannot be said to be monarchical or oligarchical in their ideas of government. The French people, numbering 38 millions and forming a republic that has even done away with monarchy altogether, have decided that for the interests of good government a second Chamber is an absolute necessity. [MR. NANSON: The latest book?] The latest evidence we have on the question has not yet had sufficient time for its accuracy to be tested. Surely a Constitution which is the admiration of the world, which has sustained, maintained, and developed the liberties under which we live, should at least have some respect accorded to it when proposing to alter it in a vital particular such as that suggested by the motion. The suggestion itself looks harmless, just asking the people whether they would like to have government by one House or by two. For my part, if I regarded the second Chamber in no higher sense, I would say it was the safety-valve of our liberties. It acts very much in the same way as a lead plug does in our boilers. The boiler does its work from day to day, nothing happens, and the plug looks like a somewhat unnecessary appendage, and occasionally it is a little inconvenient; but when the time of testing comes, when life and property are in danger, then we find the value of the lead plug. And so in the history of nations, when public excitement arises, when it is necessary that opportunities should be given for people to reconsider and think more carefully over the schemes which they have in view, especially when they are wide-reaching in their operation and serious in their consequences, it is well for us to have some means of having a check even upon ourselves. It is a good thing for the best man in this House and the best man in this State to have second thoughts. Second thoughts are best in most cases, and it is a good thing for any people to have time to think again, especially in times of stress and times of excitement. But in all times, notwithstanding all the tests we have had and all the experience of the ages, we still find a certain number of people who desire to have some change, if only for change's sake. No utility has been even suggested. Even when it has been proposed in Great Britain to do away with the House of Lords, no one

has ever suggested a rational, sensible reason for abolishing that institution. Here, because we have payment of members, some people talk of economy. Really it is surprising how economical some people become at times. They will vote cheerfully £20,000, £30,000, and £40,000 for works and things of some utility, and yet when it comes to the vital question of how people shall be governed, how their liberties shall be maintained, their expenditure managed, and the taxation collected, then they coolly say in a moment of excitement, and by the casting vote perhaps of the Chairman, the whole of the people are to be put under taxation, the whole of the properties of the people are to be put in certain risks and under certain legislation, without any check and without any reconsideration or any opportunity whatever to revise. Such is not, in accordance with my reading of past history, a wise or desirable thing. But looking at what is suggested, supposing it were deemed desirable to consider the question as to whether we should have a second Chamber or not, I ask reasonable members in this House, and reasonable men in this State, to ask themselves if it is a reasonable proposition to request the people in this State to say "yes" or "no" to such a question as that? Thousands, very many thousands of the people in this State have never given five minutes' consideration to the whole question in their lives. No debate, no opportunity of discussion, but at the next election, and in the excitement of election too, the people are to be asked, if this motion be passed, to settle the great constitutional question which has proved for ages to be the bulwark of British liberties, they are to settle by perhaps a majority of two or three hundred votes such a question as this motion suggests should be decided. [MR. NANSON: Not settled.] Not settled, I grant. The hon. member is wise in his generation. He knows full well that if it should so happen that the majority of votes were cast against the Legislative Council or in favour of one Chamber in a majority of constituencies, probably the result would be that there would be a majority sent back to this House for the purpose of doing away with the second Chamber. And why? It would be based, not upon the conviction of the individual, not upon

sound experience of past ages, not upon what all experience has proved to be the best system of government—every nation on the earth admitting it to be the best, and all experience telling us it is the best—but on some fancy notion in the heads of hundreds or thousands of people as the case might be, during a wave of excitement for the time being. It would be more dangerous to have a referendum on any question like this than to have a referendum upon a given question of law. Here we propose in this motion to change the whole Constitution of the State and give up, in the face of the experience of history, all that has been dear to us in times past, simply because somebody thinks it would be a little less expensive to govern with one Chamber. People become very earnest and very decided upon a certain question in this House, and because we in this House, in our collective wisdom, decide that a certain course is wise and best for the State—decide it perhaps under the influence and heat of debate and excitement—and because another Chamber is pleased to reject, wisely or unwisely (sometimes unwisely, I admit) the decision of this House, members get up and rave as though they were the Constitution, as though they were Parliament. One thing which members in this House and this country need to understand is that Parliament does not, at present at any rate, consist of one Chamber. Parliament consists of this Chamber and another place, and His Majesty's representative in this State; and we have no more right to expect that our will shall be carried out on our *ipse dixit* than any other individual. The question that lies behind the whole is this—has it been proved, or has any reason been given in the Press or out of the Press, or by any member of this House or out of it, from experience of history or anywhere else, why it is a desirable thing to change the British Constitution? I say that no evidence has ever yet been adduced, and I assert that no evidence can be adduced, that such a change is desirable. Experience of all history is adverse to such a proposition, and yet people who have never given consideration to political economy and to the history of the past are to be asked, if this motion be carried, whether it is desirable to have one Chamber or two. It is

not fair to the State that such a proposition should be put before the people in this bald way. If the question is to be dealt with at all, let it be dealt with by the people's representatives, calmly and deliberately in this Assembly. Let the views of this Assembly be stated fully and clearly after proper debate, and with proper opportunities of fully discussing and examining the question. Then let the second Chamber consider the question also, and after this consideration let it come before the people in the ordinary way of ordinary legislation, and we shall get a decision. A question so vital as this is not one of those which can be looked over at a general election. It will be a question that will be paramount in a time of election, which will decide the fate of Ministries and the fate of the member who puts it forward; but would any member say it would matter to his seat at the next general election whether he said he was for or against a second Chamber? It will not affect the question a bit; but after the subject has been properly discussed, when the whole question has been raised and popular feeling aroused, and people have begun to study and think over and consider the history of the past and the circumstances of the present, then we shall find that at the next general election it will be a test question, not simply for one or two people, but for the members who are to be returned. When the House has been returned under circumstances like those, we may reasonably consider the question for or against. The hon. member has been pleased again and again to quote Canada in favour of a single Chamber. I have quoted figures before which the hon. member has been pleased to call stale figures. They were taken for a previous date, but I so took them advisedly, for I wanted to find out if the conditions in Canada were the same as the conditions in the Commonwealth. I fixed the dates, such as were available, for that express purpose, and I say still that the conditions of this Commonwealth are entirely different from the conditions of the Canadian Commonwealth. [MEMBER: In what way?] In this way, that the Canadian Commonwealth deals practically with the whole subject of legislation, whilst the provinces are something

like glorified municipal councils. If the States of this Commonwealth, of this Federation, were simply glorified municipal councils, then the argument would be with the hon. member; but it is not so. The conditions are not so, and even if they were, those provinces are represented in the Dominion Parliament by a far larger number of members than these State Parliaments have. Nor have they even yet followed the evil example of a single Chamber in all cases, and the experience of Canada is too young altogether for us to base such a great change as this upon it. I hope the day is distant when we shall even dream of changing the principles of the great British Constitution. People rail, and my friends behind me may speak somewhat disrespectfully, as they often do, of the British Constitution; but the liberties of the British people are wrapped up in the British Constitution, and when I speak of it I refer to those liberties and not the parchment that exists. We know the British Constitution is not a written one and probably never will be. Supposing it were admitted to be desirable that this question should come to issue—say for a moment that under existing circumstances it is desirable that we should reduce the expenditure of government. What is the cost of government in this State? It is a mere bagatelle, the whole cost of government in this State. It bears no comparison, and there are a hundred and one things which are done in this State which cost nothing. I mean the actual government by Parliament. It is clear we cannot do without some kind of Parliament, and supposing we could reduce the expense of Parliament by one-half, what would it amount to? You might say it would be £5,000. What is that to a question of such vital importance as this? Supposing it were advisable that we should adopt a single-chamber Constitution, let it be a proposition ripe for consideration. What then? Is it desirable to adopt this means of obtaining the public will? I say "No." I say this is not the way to obtain the mind of the people on a great question of this kind. It is not a question that can be decided in five minutes or five hours or five years. It is a question of the experience of nations for ages. It is

not merely our own experience as a nation, but the mistakes and errors and the conditions of other nations as well. We have in our Constitution the combined wisdom, not of Great Britain and the English-speaking people only, but we have the combined wisdom of the whole of the world, for we, as a people, have always been willing to learn. We have gained experience where we could get it. We have watched the experience of other nations who have fought for their liberties in the times past, the Constitutions which are steeped in blood from start to finish, and it is the blood of men whose hearts were in the right place and not merely visionaries, men who were prepared to fight for their liberties and stand by them, not for one year but for century after century, and who obtained the liberties on which their Constitution is based. Yet in one day, and an excited day perhaps, which a general election certainly will be, the people are to be asked "Shall we or shall we not have two Chambers?" The proposition is not one that should be put before the people in this form. When we have to consider the question let us face our responsibility as representatives of the people. Let us deal with the question with the powers and experiences we ought to have and with the information at our disposal. And when we have fairly settled the question in the House, and are prepared to express our opinions to the people of the State as to what ought to be done in a change of the Constitution, then we are in a position to educate the people of the State, and they having heard the discussions, having considered the question, and having had it forced on them again and again, will be in a position to express their mind, not by means of the referendum, but through the ordinary constitutional channel. Members are sent to this House impressed by the will of the people as to what they desire in this respect. With caution, with earnestness, with wisdom, and with what information is available, we shall have the question settled after careful consideration and perhaps after two or three general elections. It is easy to say "referendum" and "the people shall rule." The people will not thank us for that kind of rule. Democracy is not built up on such visionary things as those. It

is built up on the moderate will of the educated people. I do not say educated in any particular direction, but education on the subject in question. And I say safe democracy, which I believe has given us so much in ages past, especially during the last hundred years, which has built up the United States and France and given broad views to our national life, is built up on education of that character which perhaps may be trusted and ought to be trusted, and will be trusted when the time comes. I say I would just as soon take a decision from a lottery-box as a decision from people who have not yet considered the question. It is mere chance as to what the ballot may be; it may be one way or it may be another. And the people who vote will not thank us for such a constitution, or for trifling with the liberties of the past ages in a way like that. I hope the hon. member will not press his motion at the present time. Let us all feel interested in the question; let us go to our electors, and we shall have an opportunity next general election, which is not far off, for every member to express himself on this point and begin a campaign which will lead to a proper education of the people on this question; then when the time is ripe let us settle the question. If there be a proper education, I mean sufficient information, not biased on one side or another, if there be sufficient information disseminated throughout the State, there will be an overwhelming vote against a single-chamber Constitution.

MR. T. H. BATH (Hannans): One can well understand the opposition of the member for Cue to any proposal to submit a question of this kind to a vote of the people by means of a referendum, because that member has evidenced the fact in this Chamber that he is so enamoured with what he is pleased to call the British Constitution, and the bicameral system, that not the vote of the people from whom he draws his political breath, and not all the influence of popular opinion expressed at half-a-dozen general elections would influence him in adopting the will of the people and voting for a motion which will tend to abolish the power of another place. In this connection the arguments of the member for Cue and the member for Boulder are, I think, throwing a great deal of

weight on the side of the member for the Murchison. The member for Boulder was very ingenious in his attempt to reconcile his attitude of opposition to this proposal to-night to his previous enthusiastic advocacy of the abolition of another place.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** Of the method to be adopted.

**MR. BATH:** He has stated sufficient attention has not been devoted to this question, that the people have not been sufficiently educated and are not sufficiently interested in the question to give an intelligent vote on the matter. The member for Cue has stated that democracy is the expression of the will of the well-informed people, but how are we going to have these people well informed unless we give them an opportunity of exercising their opinions on questions of this kind? The principle of the referendum is an admirable method of expressing the popular will. It enables us to go to our electors and place before them some concrete questions, especially questions of constitutional reform, and it gives us an opportunity of expressing a direct "yea" or "nay" on some explicit matter. On such questions the referendum is one of the best means of finding out the popular will. The member for Cue has talked about the British Constitution, but in all his discussions on this and previous motions where the British Constitution has cropped up, we have never heard him give any idea of what this vague entity or nonentity consists. The British Constitution is simply the affirmation of the will of the people. We know in times past, and at the present time as far as that Constitution is concerned, being an unwritten one, it largely depends upon judicial decisions gathered round the laws of the country to assist the popular will. As far as that Constitution is concerned, I have never heard it compared favourably to Constitutions such as the Swiss Confederation, or the Constitution of the United States of America, or to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia. But I have always heard it advocated by constitutional authorities, other than those who are wedded to the British Constitution, that the constitutions I have named are an advance on the British Constitution, a big advance on the expression of the popular

will in those different countries. The time will come when the people of Great Britain will probably adopt some written Constitution. The time will come when they will desire to abolish the House of Lords, and when that time comes the British Constitution, whether written or unwritten, will have a very material alteration. As far as the argument on this question is concerned, I fail to see where the hon. member can drag the British Constitution into the question at all. We are dealing with the individual Constitution of this State, a written Constitution. The proposal of the member for the Murchison says that we should refer the question to the people of the State and ask an expression of opinion from them as to whether it is desirable that another place shall be abolished, and the Constitution altered in that direction.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** That is the proper thing to do if you have conventions first, as in connection with the Federal Constitution.

**MR. BATH:** The member for Cue and the member for Boulder have inferred right throughout their remarks on this question that the people are not in a position to decide the question.

**MEMBER:** Neither were they on the federal matter.

**MR. BATH:** I entirely disagree with the contention in that respect. They were fitted to decide on the federal question, and at the time the hon. member considered they were fitted to decide on it.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** Because there had been a Convention in every State other than Western Australia.

**MR. BATH:** The people are just as much fitted to-day to deal with this question as they were to decide the question of accepting or rejecting the Federal Constitution. The proposal to have a single Chamber for the individual States of the Commonwealth is not a wild or revolutionary one, adopted by any extreme section of the community; it is held by many people who are not in complete accord with the principles of the Labour party, and men of what may be called a conservative stamp in this community favour the proposal, while prominent politicians of the various States of the Commonwealth favour the abolition

of a second Chamber now we have the Federation consummated. The member for Boulder, when he used to favour the proposal, was never regarded by me as a wild or revolutionary character for doing so. I think he has rather come under the demoralising influence of the member for Cue in the interim. When the State Constitutions of the American Union were first founded, popular representation through the Legislature was regarded as the ideal expression of the people's will. The people thought they could go no farther than elect representatives to Parliament and allow them to voice public opinion and to make the laws. But in the light of experience the people have found many defects in the system; they have found that although they elect representatives, the popular will has never been effectively expressed; and we know that a movement has been made in a number of American States to take more and more matters out of the hands of the State Legislature and place them as explicit clauses in the Constitution; and the retention, the exclusion, or the alteration of those provisions in the Constitution has been made subject to a referendum of the people instead of being left to the decision of the Legislature. That is to say, a referendum has been taken as to whether the Constitution shall or shall not be amended in the direction contemplated. And I say that in this State the question of constitutional reform is eminently one which can well be referred to the people for their definite acceptance or rejection. Of course it is only natural that the question of the advisableness of retaining the Legislative Council should enter into this discussion, and only natural that the member for Cue (Mr. Illingworth), who is such a great admirer of the present Constitution, should argue in favour of the Legislative Council, and of its effectiveness as an exponent of the popular will. He referred to the other States. I know of one instance in particular which showed the Legislative Council of the State of New South Wales in any light but that of a body which was attempting to check hasty legislation. At the time of the big bank crisis in the Eastern States, when a Bill was introduced in the New South Wales Assembly to make bank notes legal tender, the

Government kept the Upper House waiting for the measure, brought in sick and decrepit members on stretchers, and kept them in Parliament House in order that the Bill might be passed through all its stages in one night. When their own interests were concerned, the Upper House members were not at all behind-hand in being as hasty as the most revolutionary legislators of any State in the world. As to my own constituents, I know that the great majority of them hold intelligent views on this question; views which are the result of long thought and deliberation—not hasty conclusions. I say that if this proposal for the retention or the abolition of the Upper House were referred to them to-morrow, they would be able to vote on it intelligently; and I have the like confidence in the constituents of the member for Cue (Mr. Illingworth), knowing what class of men they are. Indeed, if they are sufficiently intelligent to elect the member for Cue to express their views here, then they are just as much entitled, and just as well able, to express their views on this question if placed before them by a referendum. Even if the question were submitted and answered in the affirmative, that would not commit this House to any sudden determination to end the existence of the other Chamber; but we should have the advantage of knowing the express will of the people. We should have a direct vote of the people of the State, so many for and so many against. Even if the verdict was against the abolition of the Upper Chamber, we should know the popular will on the question. But as regards the Constitution of this House, when we see the inequalities which exist, we must admit that even if an overwhelming majority in this Chamber were against, as they have proved themselves to be against, any proposal for the abolition of the Upper House, does that mean that the popular will is with them? Look at the division taken last night. A large minority of 14 members was on the one side, and a majority on the other; but when the electors represented by those members are counted, we find that the minority of members represent an immensely larger number of electors than the number represented by the majority. Such inequalities exist in this Chamber, and

absolutely prevent it from giving on this question a vote which can be taken as an expression of the will of the people. But by submitting this question to a referendum, we shall have a direct vote of the electors, and something to guide us in future discussions of the subject; and members, instead of discussing it in the light of ancient prejudice, will probably discuss it in the light of present-day politics, and will accept the expressed opinion of the people, taken by a popular referendum, as something which should guide them in their deliberations on future questions of constitutional reform.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS** (Hon. C. H. Rason): I cannot help thinking that the member for the Murchison (Mr. Nanson) regarded this motion in a light somewhat similar to that in which I regard it, namely as being premature and impracticable. Had he not so regarded it, I think we should have heard much more than we heard from the hon. member, and there would have been a greater air of sincerity about his remarks than there was on this occasion.

**MR. BATH:** Take the brevity of his remarks as a stronger evidence of his sincerity.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** I am afraid that an adoption of that criterion would not always be to the advantage of the members for the Murchison and for Hannans. I hold that the motion is premature for this reason. I should like to know—and perhaps the mover will inform me—what right we have to submit a question of this sort to a referendum. Surely one should first establish the principle of a referendum, before submitting to the people such an important question. The hon. member (Mr. Nanson) said himself that in the campaign preceding the next general election the people would be educated on this question; therefore he admits that they are not educated now, and proposes, during an election campaign, to educate them sufficiently to enable them to give an intelligent vote on such an important subject. It is true we have had one referendum of the people; but that is the only referendum on a constitution question on record in Australia; and that was taken after years of discussion, after years of opportunity for education, and after an Act

of Parliament expressly providing for a referendum. And in spite of the many years which were afforded for the education of the people, I at all events am of opinion that if they had had yet a little more education, it would have been much better for them. The member for Hannans is to my mind not altogether happy in the illustration he gave of what occurred in the division here last night. He said that although a majority of the members of this House was found on one side, yet really the representatives of the majority of the electors were on the other. But the hon. member forgot or lost sight of the fact that amongst the minority of members were many who represented minorities of electors, and indeed minorities of the people who voted at the elections which returned them. So he can hardly claim that although those members sit for popular constituencies they represent majorities in those constituencies.

**MR. BATH:** Is not that true of your side also?

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** The hon. member advanced the argument: I am giving it for what it is worth.

**MR. BATH:** If you make that allowance, you will still find an immense inequality.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** If we make that allowance, we shall find no such inequality existing as the hon. member wishes to infer. Even if we had the right to submit this question to a referendum—and I dispute that right—then I say the reference would be impracticable and inadvisable. For instance, it has to be submitted simultaneously with the general election. Well, I presume there would be a ballot paper by which the voter would vote for the candidate whom he wished to be elected, and another paper asking the voter whether he favoured the adoption of a single-chamber Constitution for this State. It might be quite possible, and in many cases it would be a fact, that the candidate elected would be so much in touch with the feelings of his electors on other questions that he would be returned though opposed to a single-chamber Constitution for this State. That is quite possible, and indeed probable; and yet the separate voting papers on the question of the single-chamber Constitution might



show that the majority of the electors were in favour of a single Chamber. We should then have a man elected who, by the vote of his electors on a question of great importance—if we admit its importance—would, by the result of the referendum, be manifestly opposed to the wishes of the majority of his electors on that question; and if he had his duty to his constituents so closely at heart as has the member for the Murchison, he would have to resign at once, and there would be another election. I submit that although a few people in this State may have talked about this question of a single-chamber Constitution, there has so far been very little discussion upon it. So far as I am able to judge, it is regarded in many places as a matter of very little importance; and in many other places where it has been discussed the people are distinctly opposed to a single-chamber Constitution. To my mind the time is certainly not ripe for a referendum, even if it was right to adopt the principle of a referendum. I submit that the member for the Murchison, if he is so warmly attached to a single-chamber Constitution as I believe he is, will best serve his views by endeavouring to educate the people still more effectively in the time to come, and not to press for an appeal to the people until some little time has elapsed. If he could have his referendum now, I personally have no doubt as to the result. I may be wrong, and this is simply my own opinion; but I believe that the vast majority of the people in this State, if appealed to now, would decide against a single-chamber Constitution. The hon. member admits that possibly they might; but whether they might or might not, I submit with all respect that before we can have a referendum we must first establish the principle of the referendum. We have no right whatever to submit such a question, or indeed any other question, to a referendum of the people. If we have, why not submit every other question that arises to a referendum? If it is right to do that in one case it is right to do it in another; therefore I submit that the hon. member must first establish his principle, and must then educate the people before he applies the principle. I hope the motion will not be passed.

Mr. F. CONNOR (East Kimberley): I move that the debate be adjourned.

Motion passed, and the debate adjourned.

At 6-20, the SPEAKER left the Chair.

At 7-30, Chair resumed.

#### MOTION — NORSEMAN GOLDFIELD, RAILWAY TO CONNECT.

Debate resumed from 23rd September, on motion by Mr. Thomas, "That the developments of the Norseman Goldfield warrant railway communication, and that a Bill with this end in view should be introduced during the present session."

MR. R. HASTIE (Kalgoorlie): Those who listened to the speech of the member for Dundas (Mr. Thomas) must feel satisfied that he made out a particularly good case for this motion. He showed us that during a number of years the Norseman Goldfield has continued to develop, and he pointed out the great number of inconveniences that those who mine at Norseman were under; how on the one hand they were a long distance from the port of Esperance, being separated from that coast by a long stretch of sand, which made the cost of carriage of all goods they required very high, and how, on the other hand, they were much farther removed from the railway station at Coolgardie; but in spite of that many hundreds of people had continued to live and work at Norseman, and Norseman even without railway communication had continued to be a thriving goldfield. Most of the members of this House not acquainted with mining must have greatly marvelled at the fact that while in the early days thousands of people in this State went down into the goldfields to open out the mines, when there was no road, no communication, and everything they required to eat and drink was almost at a fabulous price, and those prices continued, trade was still carried on in spite of the fact that there was no railway communication. That was the case for a number of years in this State. But we all knew that such period would very soon come to an end. We knew that a boom of prosperity could not possibly last, and that when

the boom was over many of our goldfields would practically stop, because almost every mine had to depend upon its own development and upon its own production. Consequently several places on the goldfields which a few years ago were booming are now practically dead. Some of the fields have no railway communication, but they have not to any great extent slumped, because here it is shown they can support a very considerable population. As I have said, Norseman has been clearly shown to be one of those few, and I think that very shortly there will be before the people of this State, and more especially before the agricultural portion of this State, this most important consideration. The prices of agricultural produce here are probably higher than in any other part of the world, and there has continued to be a very large demand; but agricultural production is very greatly increasing, and it is the fear of almost every one of us—I think I am safe in saying every one of us—that very soon the demand will reach its limit. The agricultural section of this State must recognise, and I know they do recognise, that while we develop agricultural industries in this State, while we develop the industries by which the foodstuffs are being produced, we must also encourage the development of other parts of the State in which there will be consumers for these particular products. Very soon the agricultural production will be at the limit of the market, and we can put back that day, we can avoid the great drawbacks that are likely to come, if we do our best to see that mining and other industries of a similar nature are increased in this State. It has been the experience of all members that in every part of the country where railway communication has been given, and increased transport facilities afforded, the number of consumers of agricultural products has very greatly increased; and no one, I venture to say, will for a moment doubt that the same experience will obtain in Norseman if the facilities asked for are granted. One question will come up when we ask that Norseman should get railway facilities. The question is: shall Norseman be connected with the port of Esperance or with the railway at Coolgardie? My own impression is that it would be a shorter journey

and much better on the whole to connect with Esperance. Very many people who are as able to judge as I am have contrary opinions and believe that the best communication should be made with the railway system at Coolgardie, so as to allow us to continue the present system that obtains. That is a matter that is not for me to decide; it is a matter that the House is not in a position to decide right off; it is matter that can only be decided when the appointed engineers of the Government report on the line. Very many questions of that kind will have to be settled at an early date; but the member for Dundas in his motion has asked that a Bill to authorise the construction of the railway should be introduced during this session. I very much doubt if it would be wise for us to consider the advisability of passing the motion, largely for the reason that we have before us a great many important constitutional questions, all of which will take a large amount of time. We have not yet started to discuss the Budget, and even if the House were to pass the motion as framed it is almost impossible for a Bill of this nature to be brought forward during this session. Therefore it is that I wish to propose an amendment that the last four words be deleted, and the end of the sentence would thus read, "That a Bill with this end in view should be introduced at an early date." If that is done it will meet with, I believe, the views of the member who proposes the motion, and I also expect it will be very largely supported by other members of the House. There is one question that will probably be raised by some members. It is that goldfields can exist even if they have not railway communication. That is perfectly true, but they can exist and do exist only if the richer parts of the reefs are worked and the poorer parts are left alone, and as a consequence comparatively few people will be employed in the mines there and comparatively few consumers will be found in the district. But, on the other hand, if a gold-mining district has easy railway communication, then we find a very large number of men are employed, because the cost of mining is very considerably reduced. We have many cases illustrating this. For instance, take the Eastern Goldfields at the present time and our Murchison Goldfields,

there are throughout the mining districts in this State—more so, I believe, than in any other part of the world—a large number of very large reefs and lodes which if properly worked can produce a very large amount of gold, reefs and lodes that are not any good for small local companies to work, but are good if worked on a large scale either by local or foreign companies. When we have a number of reefs of that kind there is a contest amongst mining companies as to which can work their reefs and lodes the cheaper. On the Coolgardie Goldfield and the fields to the north of it every possible facility is given. It is given so freely in this country that we have to recognise the fact that mining on a large scale is done cheaper in Western Australia than in any other part of the world, outside the Kalgoorlie belt. [Mr. CONNOR: No.] That is an absolute fact, in spite of the surprise of the great geologist and scientific thinker, the member for East Kimberley, in spite of the fact that the member for East Kimberley was in Johannesburg for three days. I would like to reiterate the statement that in the large mines of this State, outside the Kalgoorlie belt, mining operations are carried on at cheaper cost than in any other country of the world—I can hardly say in the world, but cheaper than at Johannesburg. In Kalgoorlie, where refractory ores prevail, mining operations are carried on cheaper than in any other country having refractory ores. That is the case largely because every possible railway facility is given to these large mines, and as a consequence very many people are employed and the business generally of this State is very much increased. I am not aware if at Norseman there is a much larger proportion of ore bodies than obtains elsewhere, but I am credibly informed there is the average number there, and I am confident that in a very short time, if railway facilities are given to Norseman, the population will very greatly increase. We have heard the cry all over the State that we require more population; but more population is only good if the population we have and which we are getting is profitably employed. That is the object we all have in view, and that is why we should do our utmost to get all possible railway facilities to every portion

of the State. I beg to move the amendment I have indicated:

That the words "during the present session" be struck out, and "at an early date" be inserted in lieu.

MR. FERGIE REID (Mt. Burges): In seconding the amendment moved by the member for Kanowna, I beg to refer to the fact that in the first session of the present Parliament an effort was made by a member of this House to pass a Bill for the construction of a line from Lakeside to Esperance by private enterprise. I may say on that occasion, notwithstanding the fact that the people on the goldfields, and more especially the goldfields representatives, earnestly desired the construction of that line, knowing the policy of this country was that railway lines should be constructed, owned and run by the country, members for the goldfields opposed the construction of the line by private enterprise and the Bill was defeated. The member for Dundas having so elaborated all the facts in connection with the proposal, it is not necessary for me to go into details. The Premier has time after time said, where it is possible to place 400 or 500 people on the land the Government would be prepared to construct a line to that place. In conjunction with the member for Dundas I wish to draw the attention of the Premier to the fact that there is settled in Norseman a population of something like 1,500 people, and to far-distant Norseman everything has to be carted on camels' backs 400 miles. Owing to the large extent of sandy country and the expense in carrying goods to that distant portion of the country, very few women and children are to be found there. The work is carried on there mostly by men who have homes either in the coastal parts or in the other States. That being so, if the proposal of the member for Dundas is carried into effect it will mean that we shall have in Norseman not a population of 1,500 but a population of from three to four thousand and even up to 5,000 people. The Premier has said that it would be justifiable to construct a line for the purpose of settling four or five hundred farmers in the country, and I have no doubt it would be justifiable to do that: if that is so it would be all the more justifiable at the present time to build the line asked for

to connect a thriving and prosperous gold centre with the existing railway lines. During every session of the present Parliament the member for Dundas has on every possible occasion endeavoured to get people to assist him in building the Goldfields-Esperance line, but without success up to the present. He realises that it is not possible to get the present Parliament to sanction the Goldfields-Esperance line, and that has modified his demands to a certain degree, modified them as far as it is possible that any reasonable man, having regard to the interests of the country, would be prepared to modify them. One item which I think of great importance has been lost sight of by the member for Kanowna when speaking to this amendment, that between Coolgardie and Norseman there is a most valuable belt of timber.

MR. THOMAS: And the Burbanks Goldfield also.

MR. REID: True. On a former occasion I endeavoured to have a motion passed in this House for the construction of a timber railway 40 miles south of Coolgardie, for the purpose of tapping this enormous timber belt. But owing to the fact that there are other belts of timber in the country, and that private timber railways have been laid to tap them, the want of the timber between Coolgardie and Norseman has not so far been felt, because the supply has been maintained from other sources. But the time is rapidly approaching when it will be absolutely necessary, in the interests of the mines on the Golden Mile, to tap the vast timber area lying between Burbanks and Norseman. The hon. member (Mr. Thomas) says we have there sufficient timber to supply the mines on the Eastern Goldfields for 26 years. On that point I hardly agree with him. I do not think there is sufficient firewood and mining timber in that district to supply the mines on the Golden Mile for 26 years; for we must remember that they are now using 1,500 tons of firewood per day and a large quantity of mining timber also, and we can easily understand that a very large belt of timber indeed would be needed to supply those mines for that period. But I think we are well within the mark if we say there is sufficient timber on

that belt to supply the whole of the mines on the Eastern Goldfields with mining timber and firewood for eight years. Therefore I say it would be only an act of justice to the Norseman district as well as to the Eastern Goldfields that this House should agree to the construction of a railway between Coolgardie and Norseman. Not only is there this inducement to the House to vote in favour of that railway, having regard to the welfare of the mines at present working on the Eastern Goldfields; but we must realise also that the carriage of this mining timber alone will in the period I have mentioned more than pay for the construction of the line. In conclusion, I desire to support as strongly as I can the motion so ably moved by the member for Dundas; and I think we must all agree that he has shown the utmost earnestness and energy in his advocacy of this railway. I hope that for the sake of the district he represents the line will be constructed. We know it has been shown over and over again—even in the Arbitration Court—that the present cost of living at Norseman is extremely high; and that cost cannot be reduced except by a railway to carry goods to that district as cheaply as they can be carried to any other. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion to have this section of railway constructed between Coolgardie and Norseman.

MR. J. ISDELL (Pilbarra): It is my intention to support the motion, because I believe that all railways connected with the goldfields of this State are for the benefit of the State. So far, all such railways have proved successful and have been able to pay interest on capital; so I do not think any mistake has been made in constructing them. Norseman is an old field which has proved to be consistent, and shows probabilities of a wonderful increase in output with the aid of railway communication; and I think it for the benefit of the State as a whole, as regards both increase of population and output of gold, and as an inducement to the British investor to put capital into the country, that this railway should be constructed.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Walter James): Personally I sympathise with the member for Dundas in this motion. I agree that the developments at Norseman ap-

pear to be of such a nature as to justify the construction of a railway from the Eastern Goldfields to that centre, but I think the encouragement of motions of this nature is open to objection. In all these matters the Government must take upon their shoulders the responsibility of bringing down a policy for acceptance or rejection by the members of the House. A private member introducing a motion in favour of the construction of a particular railway does so, of course, without any responsibility attaching to him; and the House when it passes a resolution of that nature does so without any responsibility attaching to it. The responsibility must rest with the Government, if and when the Bill authorising the work is brought in for acceptance or rejection by the House. I think it very undesirable to bring in and press forward motions like this, because they tend to put into irresponsible hands—and members will, I am sure, understand me when I say I use that expression in no offensive sense—the power of controlling the policy of the Government. If the resolution that is passed should have weight with the Government for the time being, and be accepted, in that case the irresponsible majority who pass the resolution are dictating the Government policy; or if the resolution should be disregarded by the Ministry, that I think would be called an act of discourtesy to the House. Motions of this nature can be brought in much more readily by private members than by a responsible Minister, because so many of us want railways in so many places. And without any reference to this motion I may suppose, by way of illustration, that I, wanting a railway say to Norseman, might go to the member for Pilbarra and say: "You want a railway to Pilbarra, and we both have a common object. Both believe in building railways everywhere. You support me and I will support you." I do not say that would happen in this particular instance; but quite apart from the merits of this case, I submit to members that motions of this nature are very dangerous; they very often commit the House without full discussion, and certainly without any sense of responsibility which should exist on such occasions. They lead, or at all events open the door, to

log-rolling. I do not say that of this motion; for the member for Dundas (Mr. Thomas) has always been so unqualified an advocate of this railway, and has so freely expressed his own opinion on other suggested lines—

MR. THOMAS: What opinion?

THE PREMIER: That their construction should be carried out.

MR. THOMAS: Yes, anywhere; and I will support every one of them.

THE PREMIER: I wish to point out to the hon. member, who has evidently not been listening, that having taken up that attitude, it cannot be suggested, so far as he is concerned, that he would be likely to vote in favour of some other railway merely because its advocates were willing to vote for his particular railway. But conditions might arise where those influences would be at work; and I would ask the House, in dealing with this motion, to bear that in mind. In these matters are we to have responsibility taken out of the hands of the Government for the time being, and placed in the hands of the majority of the House, or is the responsibility to rest with the Government to bring forward their policy in due course? Now there are no doubt a great number of public works which ought to be done, and must be done, in this State. On this (Treasury) bench Ministers have been controlled in their policy during the past 12 or 15 months by the fact that we have had before us the spectacle of an increasingly unfavourable and hostile financial market. That must be borne in mind; and bearing it in mind, we have had to listen to great numbers of people who urged upon us the need of a public works policy, and who twitted us with showing a want of faith in the State merely because we did not bring forward a policy which we thought was inadvisable, having regard to the existing financial outlook. In debating this motion there has been no discussion and no suggestion of that aspect of the case. Members have had before them one point and one point only, that is whether the circumstances justify the extension of the Eastern Railway to Norseman. We have not been dealing with the question whether this is, having regard to the financial market, a proper time to commit ourselves to this particular work, nor with

the much wider question of what are the other public works which may have to be constructed. Surely members will agree with me when I say that in dealing with a work like this, involving so large an expenditure of public money, we must always have regard to what other works may or may not be necessary. The question is, not so much whether a particular work should be constructed, but whether, in comparison with other works, this particular work is the most important. And once we begin to enter upon the discussion of this motion, are not all those issues raised? How can we avoid opening up the whole of those questions, and in fact in one sense discussing the whole of the financial and public works policy of the Government? A motion of this sort is brought forward; the majority pass it, and naturally expect the Ministry, out of respect to members, to recognise the resolution as the expression of the opinion of the House. Then to-morrow some other member brings forward a motion which is passed, and yet another does likewise. What would then be the position? If members intend to deal with each question which involves the consideration of whether a particular work is or is not advisable, are they not really bound to take each case on its own merits, quite apart from other demands, or to place themselves in the position of saying in regard to new public works, "First come first served"? Otherwise, in dealing with such a motion as this, members must ask themselves whether this is a work which should be done, whatever other demands there may be upon the public exchequer. The consideration of that question necessarily involves the consideration of every other proposed work; so that, while I agree that the developments of Norseman are of such importance as probably to lead to the construction of a railway at an early date, I do not think it wise for the House to encourage the practice by which the House commits itself to the construction of a work of this nature, and thereby pledges itself beforehand to the expenditure of public money on the construction of that work. When we dealt with the Transcontinental Railway, the work then proposed was proposed by the Government as part of their policy; and they took the responsibility. But that cannot be said of this

motion. In such a matter I certainly expect to have the strong support of the members for Cue (Mr. Illingworth) and Beverley (Mr. Harper), for they always insist that the responsibility for initiative work of this nature shall rest upon the shoulders of those who have to find the money, and who have to treat this proposal as but one of the many items which will need consideration when the public works policy of the State is to be laid before the electors.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The passing of this motion would indicate no more than that. It is only a question for the consideration of the Government.

THE PREMIER: I should say at once, and with no disrespect to the House, that whether the proposal is passed or not, it will not influence me a rap. I shall follow out the policy I have determined with regard to the subject of the resolution before the House, and I have a right to do so because I have to accept the responsibility of my policy while I am Premier.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Could it not unconsciously influence you?

THE PREMIER: I do not think so. I have my own views, and they were not born to-day nor a week ago. There might be the responsibility that, if the House has passed the resolution, I would not oppose bringing the measure forward; but this is the consideration to be borne in mind, that this motion is opening the door to a practice of encouraging the introduction of proposals particularly of this nature which might commit the Government to certain public works.

MR. THOMAS: A proposal was lately brought into the House to bind the State for 10 years.

THE PREMIER: I am not dealing with the merits of the case at all. I am simply dealing with the advisability of introducing motions of this nature.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: How could members indicate the needs of their districts to the Government?

THE PREMIER: I think they could bring forward motions of a less definite nature than this. I should certainly say that when a motion is made and discussion takes place on it, all that is necessary is done. We want not a mere vote of the House, but we want discussion and the information given in discussion

that may arise. Their ends could be attained by members refraining from going to divisions on such motions. Members can see, from the discussion and the arguments used, whether a case has been made out for the matter which is the subject of the particular motion; but when we go beyond that and say we want to have a division to commit the House, I think the practice is open to serious objection. I hope the House will bear this in mind, that whether this motion is carried or not, I myself and the Government will retain the opinion we hold in regard to it, which we shall announce in due course, and that opinion will not be affected by the fate of the motion.

MR. F. CONNOR (East Kimberley): I think the attitude of the Premier is a dangerous one. He tells us that, no matter what is carried in the House, he will flout it. What is then the use of our coming here if, no matter what resolution is carried, the Government will take no notice of it? If the majority of the House are going to carry that out, I do not see what is the use of our being here. I am perhaps rather badly filling the place which the hon. member filled on this side of the House. I do not do it so unscrupulously as he did. I do not appeal to the prejudices and passions of people to get into power, and like him I do not crawl into power on the backs of a party to which he now gives no consideration. I am sorry the Premier made that remark, because I have a kindly feeling towards him, and do not want to jar with him. If I ever get over to the Government side of the House I will look back and see what I said on this side, and I will carry out what I said and will not flout motions carried by the House, if I have the power. It is an untenable position for the Premier to take up. He has no right to say that whatever resolution is passed in this House he will not carry it out. I shall support the amendment. I do not think there is any chance of this line being built, because there are other works in front of it; but I think it is necessary the line should be built; and I think that is all the hon. member is asking for. By affirming the necessity for the railway we do not influence the matter in any way. We must build the

railway to Esperance some day, and must not get away from that position. The member for Kanowna, in moving the amendment and discussing the reasons why the resolution should be passed, told us that ore was treated cheaper in this country than anywhere else in the world. I cannot go into details like the hon. member can, and I am not going to try, but I can tell him that, at the present time, ore is treated in South Africa at a profit and big dividends are paid out of 4½dwt.

MR. HASTIE: Coolgardie is not in South Africa.

MR. CONNOR: Why does not Coolgardie go there? Why is Coolgardie comparatively bankrupt?

MR. HASTIE: Why don't you take Kimberley there?

MR. CONNOR: Kimberley is in the unfortunate position that we cannot get labour there. Anybody who knows anything about the question will take no notice of men who say that 3½dwt. can be mined, the gold taken out, and the mine made to pay. I hope the time will not come when they can do it in this country, for we will have miners working at starvation wages.

MR. BATH: It was done at Tyndal's for several years.

MR. REID: And they paid the standard wages.

MR. CONNOR: I made a somewhat innocent remark in connection with mining some few nights ago, and I have been longer connected with mining than the member for Kanowna. My remark was about the labour required for a mine. I said that one man could hold six acres under the regulations. The member for Kanowna raised an enormous laugh at my expense. I have the regulations here, and I will show the utter ignorance of the hon. member, and the unreasonable way in which he attacks other hon. members who talk about something they know. The regulation deals with the labour conditions on leases. It says:—

All ground held under mining lease shall, at the expiration of 30 days from the notification in the *Government Gazette* of the approval thereof, be efficiently worked by not less than one man for every six acres or fraction of six acres.

MR. HASTIE: Read on.

MR. CONNOR: I do not want to read any more. One man can hold six acres. I cannot do any more than support the amendment the hon. member has proposed on this occasion. I am sorry if something I said has rather ruffled his temper. In support of this amendment I again want to reiterate this fact, that it is not within the province of any man, let him be a private member, a Minister, or even the Premier of this country, to say that any resolution passed by this House will not have any effect upon him, and that it will be flouted.

MR. C. HARPER (Beverley): I do not understand the line taken by the Premier on this matter. He addressed a note of warning that appears to be a good many years too late. I understand the principle that actuates most private members is that, if there is something required in their districts, they bring it before the notice of Parliament. If they do not, the matter is almost sure to be neglected. It does not affect the other question in the slightest degree, as to the responsibility of the Ministry. When the information is brought to their notice, then is the time for them to make their selection. The House has no responsibility over what should be taken first, as it has no responsibility over the finances.

THE PREMIER: Look at this motion.

MR. HARPER: I think it is rendered indefinite by reason of the amendment.

THE PREMIER: The motion provides "that a Bill to this end should be introduced at an early date."

MR. THOMAS: The previous motion was worded to the same effect. It is the usual phraseology.

MR. HARPER: I take the motion in the particular sense that it is indefinite, and that it rests entirely with the Ministry to say when a Bill should be introduced. If the motion does not mean that, there may be some danger in it; but my view is that it presents the matter before Parliament and leaves it to the Ministry to fix the definite time for the introduction of the Bill.

MR. THOMAS: It simply brings it within the region of practical politics, and leaves the decision to the Government.

MR. HARPER: It does not provide that the Ministry should waive all other matters.

THE PREMIER: I want it clear that that qualification should not be there.

MR. HARPER: As far as I am concerned, I look at it in a different light.

THE PREMIER: You say that it is one of those works that need consideration. That is the way to put it.

MR. HARPER: Another point put by the Premier is beside the question, that the Ministry may say they are not to be responsible for it, but will introduce the Bill and not push it forward. The Ministry who did that would not be long in power.

THE PREMIER: In the passage of a Bill a matter like this ties their hands. How can the Government turn round afterwards and oppose a work which the House has asked the Government to introduce?

MR. HARPER: It simply puts it down as a work to be done. The question of priority rests with those in charge of the finances.

THE PREMIER: The member for Dundas says that it is a work that requires early attention this session.

MR. THOMAS: There is an amendment to that.

MR. HARPER: It is right for a member to make a case and urge it as strongly as possible. I simply rose to say I do not think it is quite fair to say that private members must not introduce a motion for a work within their districts, because I think it is within their province to do so.

MR. S. C. PIGOTT (West Kimberley): I think the position of this matter is very exceptional, because if the Ministry do not agree with the motion they have their remedy and can refuse to accept it. The Premier is taking exception to this motion, and urges that if it be passed the House will be dictating a new policy to the Government. I understood the Premier to say that, and I feel quite certain other members of this House render his words in the same way. The matter is very simply put straight. If the Ministry do not care about this motion, they have simply to get up and say so; but let them not say, "We accept this motion; we will allow it to go on the voices, but we will take no farther notice of it." I say, let them either accept the motion in the spirit in which it is moved or refuse to



accept it. I do not say that because a motion of this kind is passed the Ministry are absolutely bound to carry out the policy directed in that motion. They can please themselves about that. I presume that as soon as they have not the confidence of this House, they will give up their portfolios. I do not think anyone will be more ready to do that than the hon. gentleman, but I submit that it is not a fair thing for the Premier to say "I object to this sort of motion, because I take it that by a motion of this kind being passed the House is dictating a new policy to my Government," and then turn round and say, "You may pass it, but if you do we will not take any notice of it." I think the position is very simple, and in order that the matter may be farther discussed, I beg to move the adjournment of this debate.

MR. THOMAS: No.

Motion (adjournment) put and negatived.

MR. J. C. G. FOULKES (Claremont): Already there appears to be some misunderstanding in various quarters of the House as to the effect of the motion and amendment. The member for Beverley (Mr. Harper) states that if we pass this motion it only means that it is a question which should receive the serious consideration of the Ministry. The member for East Kimberley (Mr. Connor) goes farther and says that the motion, if passed, will be binding on us. The member for Dundas (Mr. Thomas) has all along shown a great deal of astuteness with regard to railway communication, not only with regard to Dundas but also Esperance. He is inclined to the opinion that if we pass this motion it will be taken as binding on the Government, and he has also taken care to strengthen that view by adding that this line should be made "at an early date." I have shown already that although we have had only four speakers upon this subject, three different interpretations can be placed on the motion. I have no doubt that other members may give us fresh opinions. We shall find this happy state of affairs if we assent to the motion, that the mover will regard it as a pledge on our part that this shall be the first railway made.

MR. THOMAS: Are you the member for Dundas, or am I?

MR. FOULKES: I need not answer that. This is the point, that he has asked this House to assent that this practically shall be the first railway measure. There are in this House advocates of other railways. For instance, there is the railway to be made—which I hope will be made—from the Collie to some point on the Great Southern Railway.

MR. THOMAS: That is in the Governor's Speech, and is provided for.

MR. FOULKES: I know that. There is also the railway of the member for Pilbarra, and there is the railway for Jandakot. I am reminded, too, that there is a railway to Wanneroo. When those advocates find that, according to the member for Dundas, if they are to have any consideration for the construction of their schemes, it will be necessary for them to table motions in support of their particular pet railways, those particular advocates will rush forward and introduce motions for the construction of their particular railways; otherwise, according to the interpretation placed upon this matter, they will run the risk of losing their particular railways. I am a strong advocate for the construction of the railway from the Collie to the Great Southern line, and if this motion is to be passed I shall at once table a motion for the construction of that railway.

MR. THOMAS: They have promised that, and are bringing in a Bill, I understand.

MR. FOULKES: I do not know that they are going to do that.

MR. THOMAS: The Premier has just said he is going to.

MR. FOULKES: Anyhow, there would be no harm in passing a motion that it should be brought on.

MR. THOMAS: Except that it would be unnecessary.

MR. FOULKES: I shall bring in a motion that it shall be introduced next week, so that it shall take precedence of the hon. member's motion. There is also another matter which requires consideration—we seem to think we have unlimited funds. I saw only this afternoon that the three per cents. of this State have come down to as low a price as £87.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Consols have come down.

MR. FOULKES: I am reminded that consols have come down to the lowest amount for the last 20 years.

MR. THOMAS: Then that argument of yours rather falls to the ground.

MR. FOULKES: I forgot to mention that it is extremely likely with regard to the State of Victoria that when they deal with their loan of five millions, which falls due next year, they will have to pay  $4\frac{1}{2}$  or even 5 per cent. for arranging that loan. We are all in favour of a great number of public works in this State, and we are all anxious that they should be constructed as soon as possible, but we have to consider anxiously where the money is to come from. According to the motion as tabled here, in the opinion of some members the mover is asking us to affirm the principle that this railway shall be the first charge upon any loan moneys raised. [MR. THOMAS: Nonsense!] That is the construction to be placed on this motion, and we shall find that there will be a great change of front on the part of the member for Dundas. If we pass the motion we shall find that when anyone else brings forward a motion for constructing some other railway, the member for Dundas will say, "The House passed at the end of September a resolution that my railway should be made at an early date. You will have to wait until my railway is made." And we shall find him doing his best to block and obstruct various public business brought forward, as he blocked business last session.

MR. THOMAS: I characterise that as an untruth.

MR. FOULKES: I am only judging by his conduct last session, and I have no doubt we shall have a repetition of it this session. Of course this evening he is fairly quiet. We know he wants to put this thing through, but I feel quite certain that if this motion is carried and any other schemes are brought forward for the construction of any other railways, we shall have the same kind of obstruction from him as we had last session. I hope the House will listen to what the Premier has said this evening. Of course any Ministry has to consider the question of funds. No Government is fit to remain in office unless it gives most anxious consideration to the subject of our finances. It is quite easy to pass a motion of this kind with the small num-

ber of members we have here now; but there is a great deal of responsibility attached to it. There are 50 members in this House, but I do not suppose that at the present time there are more than 18 or 19 present, and it is ridiculous for the small number of members here to take upon themselves without more consideration the responsibility of pledging this country to the large amount of expenditure involved in the cost of this railway.

MR. F. WALLACE (Mount Magnet): I think members are pretty well agreed that the necessity for this line has been fairly well established by the member for Dundas, and by the speeches of the member for Kanowna (Mr. Hastie) and the member for Mount Burges (Mr. Reid).

MR. THOMAS: And the speeches delivered in this House for years past.

MR. WALLACE: Realising that members are fully seized of the accuracy of the statements made, I fail to see why we should debate the question at length. The question which disturbs me is the announcement made by the Premier; because during the years I have sat here I have always been under the impression that matters of this sort were brought about by motions made by private members. If the Premier, the leader of the Government, is going to take the stand he has announced to-night, I would like to know how private members are to bring matters of such importance before the country. Will it be necessary to go to the Premier's office, and there barter with him for the construction of public works before daring to say a word in this Chamber? I see no other course than that to adopt, if the Premier follows out the principle he has announced to-night. I have always supported this line every time the subject has been discussed in this House, because I believe that with the rapid increase of our land settlement which is taking place, it is equally our duty to develop the resources of the State, which finds markets for the products of other portions of Western Australia. Here we have an isolated goldfield which, under the trying circumstances that surrounded its development for years, has progressed, and to-day they have a mine there paying handsomely. Unfortunately there are only a few of such instances, because of the high cost of getting their material there. If the

policy of railway construction is going to be guided by the tactics of the Government on this particular occasion, those members who have railways in their minds—and amongst those members I include myself, because it is well known that we desire to have communication with Mt. Margaret—had perhaps better take warning at once and withdraw all their intentions of advocating the construction of these lines.

MR. THOMAS: Abolish private members' day altogether.

MR. WALLACE: I am sorry the announcement was made by the Premier, and I say again I do not think there are half a dozen members in the Chamber who do not hold the opinion that this railway line for connecting Norseman with the railway system of the State is justifiable. Therefore I think the member for Dundas would find it prudent after the expressions of opinion to withdraw his motion. [MR. THOMAS: Why?] I suggest that because if the Premier desires to flout a resolution of the House, he can do so, and may bring very good reasons for taking such a stand. Those members who understand finance, more particularly the member for Cue who has been Colonial Treasurer, will admit that there are perhaps very large difficulties in the way of constructing public works which are deemed by members very important. If the Premier had made an announcement of that sort and expressed regret that he failed to realise the near probability of the construction of the work, members would have been less disturbed; but such an announcement as the Premier made is startling to everyone and places us in the position that in future sessions those who have the honour to sit under the leadership of the Premier will find it difficult to make themselves heard, or place before the House the permanent works which are necessary to make the portion of the State they represent progress as they should. In giving my vote for the motion of the member for Dundas, I feel that I am casting a vote to the wind, because having heard the remarks of the Premier I do not believe there is any probability of the motion being carried into effect.

MR. T. H. BATH (Hannans): I intend to support now, as I always have sup-

ported before I entered the House, and since I have been in the House, the proposal to extend railway communication to the goldfield at Norseman. As far as the goldfield is concerned, I think for a long time past it has been the Cinderella of the goldfields of the State because of its unfortunate position, on what should be the highway from the Eastern Goldfields to one of the natural ports of the State. For some time the powers of centralisation have denied to Norseman the railway communication which the developments and prospects of that place quite entitle it to. It is about time this House reversed the centralising policy of the members of the House, and extended to the Norseman Goldfield railway communication and other facilities to enable it to develop its resources, and to enable it to show that it is one of the best goldfields in the country. Members have stated that they are not desirous of seeing low-grade propositions worked in the State, because members seem to think that the working of low-grade propositions is synonymous with a low rate of wages. I do not think even if we provided railway facilities for Norseman—and I say in considering where the railway should come from, we should take into consideration the Norseman field as the primary consideration and the conveyance of goods, of fuel, and of other things necessary to its development at the cheapest cost—we need be the least afraid that the working of low-grade propositions will entail a lower rate of wages. As far as the United States are concerned one of the biggest mines in that country and one of the low-grade propositions is worked at an extreme minimum of cost, yet that mine pays higher wages than any other proposition in the United States. The lowness of cost does not go hand in hand with low rate of wages. It depends upon development and inventive genius. It means that labour must be paid a higher rate in order that the best possible results may be obtained. Where mine owners are in a position to secure cheap labour they do not pay so much attention to a reduction in cost in the handling of the goods as they do if a higher rate of wages is paid. The member for East Kimberley states that no proposition showing an average of  $4\frac{1}{2}$  dwts. has been made to pay in this State. I can tell

the member of one mine, the Tindal, situate in the Coolgardie district, that is made to pay with a considerably less amount of gold per ton than 4 dwts. I think the vein of the Coolgardie mine in the Bonnievale district is also paying at least working cost on a less production per ton than that. In regard to the quotation by the hon. member for East Kimberley of the amount of labour required, that member was inaccurate in his statement. No one will accuse the member for East Kimberley of lacking a general knowledge of mining. He has been a member of this House for a sufficient length of time to be made acquainted, from the expression of views of members for mining electorates, with mining, and to give him a grasp at least of the general principles of mining to enable him to talk intelligently on the question in the House. Therefore the member for Kimberley need not have been so angry when the member for Kanowna made a slight mistake on a previous occasion. In reading the section from the Goldfields Act the hon. member neglected to read it in its entirety to justify his statement, therefore he only told practically half the truth. While it is true the labour conditions for leases are one man for every six acres or a fraction of six acres, the provision also goes on to provide farther, subject to extension, that no lease shall be worked by less than two men, so that if a mine has 12 acres or less than 12 acres, say eight or six acres, that mine will still require two men to work it. That is where the inaccuracy of the hon. member's quotation came in, and it is just as well to place the House in possession of the accurate particulars. In regard to the intention of the Premier that any decision of the House would not bind him in the proposals of the Government in regard to this railway, I say as far as the House is concerned, what we are concerned with is the motion brought forward by the member for Dundas. It is for us to consider whether that motion is advisable, whether it is wise to support it or not, and having done that the responsibility of carrying it into effect rests with the Premier. There is no railway which has been brought forward or suggested by any member of the House that is so worthy of consideration, and has been so long neglected, as the pro-

posal for a railway to connect the Norseman field. If this Parliament neglects to do that, or casts out this motion, the popular opinion and the expression of opinion amongst the members of the next Parliament will be so pronounced that any Government in power will no longer be able to delay extending communication to the Norseman field, which its prospect and development warrant. I have much pleasure in supporting the amendment of the member for Kanowna.

MR. A. E. MORGANS (Coolgardie): I also have much pleasure in supporting this amendment. It is quite unnecessary for me to state that I have been an advocate for years for the construction of this railway. Two or three sessions ago it was brought before the House, and we all know that a motion was brought forward in another House and actually passed, and came to this House and was lost by one vote. I think at any rate I have been an advocate for this line from my entry into parliamentary life—from my first presence in this House. I am only too glad now to support this motion, and I should have been much more glad if the motion had been more definite than it is. I listened with some surprise to the remarks of the member for Claremont. He debated this question rather on the ground that there were other railways more important than this one. That is a matter of opinion. I can quite understand the member objecting to this motion, because it is part of the political principle of the constituents he represents to oppose the construction of the Norseman railway. In fact it has been a political principle not only with that particular section of the community represented by the hon. gentleman, but also the members for Perth have opposed the construction of this railway, the main reason being, I suppose, a fear that exists that once a railway is constructed to Norseman from the railway system of the goldfields the line will go on to Esperance, and we know quite well the Esperance railway has always been a bogy to many of the members for Perth and Fremantle and some other coastal districts. Many of us believe the construction of a railway to Esperance will not interfere in any way with the rights or claims of Fremantle. This motion does not affect the question of the con-

struction of the railway to Esperance. The motion before the House is one for the construction of a railway to Norseman connecting the present railway and the goldfields to that important place. I could occupy the attention of the House for hours giving facts respecting the Norseman field. I could show beyond all doubt the importance of that field and the necessity for building this line. I could show that the construction of this railway is justified; but so much has been said in the House in regard to it, and the member for Dundas has given statistics galore, that I think there is information sufficient to convince the House and the country that the construction of the railway is an absolute necessity. Therefore I do not propose to take up the time of the House in giving farther details of information on that point. I am not surprised that some of the members representing the coastal districts oppose this line because, as I said before, it is a matter of policy for them to oppose the construction of the railway, fearing the boggy of Esperance. This House is now called on to vote on an amendment to the motion proposed by the member for Dundas. I was a little surprised to hear the expressions by the Premier that there was an element of danger in asking the House to vote for the amendment, and I am bound to say that if ever there was an amendment or a motion brought before the House more indefinite than this one I should like to know what it could be. All that the House is asked to say is that a Bill with this end in view should be introduced at an early date. If there is anything more indefinite than that I should like to hear how it can possibly be expressed. That to my mind is the defect of the motion. It is so indefinite that it is of very little value. Although I am going to vote for the amendment I think something in the shape of the motion itself would have been more definite. The motion itself says, "that a Bill should be introduced during the present session." There is something definite about that; and if the member for Dundas had pressed his motion, I certainly should have supported him. However, he has consented to withdraw his motion in favour of an amendment which is the compound essence of indefiniteness; and I ask, what pos-

sible objection can the House take to the amended motion? The Premier seems to think that it will throw a serious obligation on the Government. It does not bind the Government to anything, nor does it even bind the House. The only possible effect it can have, either in this House or in the country, is to make it clear that the construction of the Norseman railway has received the attention of the House. Nothing beyond that could possibly result from its passing. It binds the Government to nothing, the House to nothing, and the country to nothing; so what is the objection to its passing unanimously? The member for East Kimberley (Mr. Connor) spoke in very flattering terms of the constituency I have the honour to represent—Coolgardie. He said it was bankrupt. I regretted to hear the hon. member express himself so strongly; because as a fact Coolgardie is one of the solidest commercial places on the whole of the goldfields. I do not suppose any place in this State is in a more solid financial condition than is Coolgardie at the present time. I speak on the authority of the bankers of this State. I have had conversations with some of them; and surely if there be any class of men in Western Australia knowing anything about the financial solidity of any particular person or place, the bankers are that class. And I am assured by bankers that Coolgardie, from a commercial and financial point of view, is to-day one of the solidest places in Western Australia. There are fewer dishonoured bills passing through the Coolgardie banks, fewer dishonoured cheques in proportion to the number of cheques presented; and the position of the commerce of Coolgardie is absolutely sound. I am glad to be able to state this here, and especially for the information of the member for East Kimberley, who is now absent. No doubt I shall have an opportunity of communicating these facts to him, when I am sure he will be sorry that he libelled Coolgardie in the strong terms he used this evening. With regard to another question, I am glad to confirm what the member for Hannans (Mr. Bath) said as to the working of the low-grade ores; and I mention this because it is of interest in reference to the construction of this railway. The Norseman Goldfield

abounds in gold ores of very low grade; and what the member for Hannans says is perfectly correct. It is not a question of the cost of labour in the working of low-grade properties; it is a question of the cost of supplying the material for working the ore; a question of the application to the work of machinery instead of labour. The hon. member was correct also when he said that ores of only  $3\frac{1}{2}$  dwts. in value have been successfully worked—I do not say with any profit, but at any rate such ores have been worked without loss at the Tindal's mine in Coolgardie. If the grade of those ores had been  $4\frac{1}{2}$  dwts. instead of  $3\frac{1}{2}$ , not only could they have been successfully worked, but a very handsome profit would have resulted; so I think that settles the question of the successful working of our low-grade ores. As to low-grade ores generally, their working has not the effect of reducing wages at all. I can cite a case. In the United States there is a well-known mine at Douglas Island—the Alaska Treadwell mine—which has had an average yield of 4 dwts. for the last 10 years. The wages paid were the highest paid to miners in the whole of the United States, and the mine has paid enormous dividends during the last 15 years. That disposes of the question of wages. Now I am perfectly sure that when the Premier considers the indefiniteness of this amended motion, which reads “at an early date,” he will see his way not to oppose the motion, which binds neither the Government nor the House to anything. I think the Premier might with very good grace withdraw his opposition to this motion, and let it pass unanimously. That the Norseman railway will be built there is no doubt. Whatever the opposition of the coastal districts may be, all their power cannot prevent the construction of that railway some day. I do not say when, but it will be built. I know that the Premier is opposed to this railway.

MR. THOMAS: He told us to-night that he is not.

MR. MORGANS: I was judging by the attitude of the Premier when I had the honour of fighting an election at a time when I was Premier of this State. I know that the hon. member, who fought me very vigorously, then expressed himself quite as strongly against the Norse-

man railway as he expressed himself in opposition to my political status.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: That railway ruined you politically.

MR. MORGANS: I think it had something to do with my non-success. I am glad to hear that the Premier has been converted to the view that this railway is an absolute necessity, and that he will give it his support. I hope he will let it pass through the House without a division.

MR. J. J. HIGHAM (Fremantle): I rise to move a farther amendment, which I trust will be generally acceptable to the House, and will induce the mover of the first amendment to withdraw it. It is—

That all the words after “communication” be struck out, and the words “that such a work should be taken into early consideration” be inserted in lieu.

I think this will remove any little difficulty which may remain in the minds of members. The majority desire to affirm the necessity for connecting the Norseman Goldfield with the Eastern Goldfields Railway. They recognise that the development of the mines fully warrants the connection; that such a result would lead to a large increase of settlement in the Norseman district; and that, pending the arrival of the new settlers, the firewood trade would be a source of considerable profit to the Railway Department, and to the gold-mining industry both at the Norseman end and at the other terminus, whether situated at Coolgardie, Lakeside, or at any other centre. I hope my proposal will commend itself as being quite as indefinite as that of the member for Kanowna (Mr. Hastie).

MR. ILLINGWORTH: A good deal more definite.

MR. HIGHAM: Then if it is more definite, I hope it will be still more acceptable to members.

HON. F. H. PIESSE (Williams): In seconding the proposed amendment, I say, as one who some years ago supported the construction of this line and subsequently opposed its construction, that I feel the time has now arrived when the project should receive farther consideration.

THE SPEAKER: I notice that this amendment, unless the first amendment be withdrawn, cannot be put; because

this proposes to deal with an earlier portion of the motion, and that cannot be done.

MR. HASTIE: Then, to facilitate discussion, I have no objection to withdrawing my amendment, especially as the farther amendment seems to be stronger in expression than mine. The House may permit me to say that I moved my amendment seeing that this was the last chance the present Parliament would have of expressing to a future Parliament an opinion on the subject. If the House desires the hon. member's amendment, I shall be glad to withdraw mine.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Since the time when I opposed this railway project, the circumstances have not altered very considerably; but some years ago, at the time alluded to by the member for Coolgardie, I felt when this project was before the House that we were starting a line which would ultimately result in the development of the Norseman field. At the time I subsequently opposed it our financial condition had altered, and it was then thought that the matter should be farther deferred. Of course our finances are at the present not much more promising than they were then, and there may be as much difficulty in raising funds; but it seems to me that this field which has continued to prosper, and as has been pointed out is in a very satisfactory state, is in a position to warrant the construction of such a line, and that the proposal should certainly receive consideration from the Government. The object of the motion is, I take it, to enable the Government to make such inquiry as may perhaps justify them in presenting to this House a favourable report on the condition of the field, with the prospect of ultimately carrying out this desirable work. I feel, too, that many members seem to fear that this will be the commencement of a line which may ultimately terminate at Esperance Bay. We who have for some time opposed the construction of the Esperance line have done so for the reason that we have already, at a very great cost, built a line from the chief port of the State to the Eastern Goldfields, which line is working satisfactorily. Now although I am not pre-

pared at this stage to agree to the construction of a line from Esperance to the fields, yet even if this proposed line from the fields to Norseman were the means in future of connecting Esperance with the fields, I do not think the interests of the State would then be so materially affected as they would have been had such a line been built in the past, or would be if it were built now. Our agricultural resources have developed apace; a large area of land has been brought into cultivation, with a prospect of producing all that will be required for consumption on the goldfields. Therefore, having a good market on the fields, with easy means of communication, the producers of this State, even if the Esperance line were constructed to the fields, would be in a far better position to supply the goldfields market than would any outsider. I therefore think we are perfectly safe, not only in making this inquiry, but perhaps in carrying out the work; hence I have not such a strong objection to it as I had in the past, and I have much pleasure in supporting the amendment as moved by the member for Fremantle.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. J. M. Hopkins): I am sure the words that fell from the Premier this evening will be received throughout the Norseman Goldfield with a deal of interest, and I venture to say with a deal of satisfaction. Those persons who opposed the proposal for giving railway facilities to Norseman on the ground that the railway might go to Esperance might just as well have had that portion of the map written over as being blank, and have prohibited it for ever from land settlement or mining development. I agree with the Premier that there is an element of objection to independent members introducing what may be termed mandatory proposals, and to these proposals being carried.

MR. MORGANS: But this is not mandatory.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I know that, for I am supporting the amendment, which is highly satisfactory to those persons interested in the construction of this railway; but I have the same view of the matter as the Premier. The Cabinet bring forward their policy, but while it is right that individual mem-

bers who are in favour of the building of any work of importance should give it prominence on the floor of the House to make it mandatory at the same time that a Bill should be introduced almost immediately is, I think, going a little bit too far. A railway is the same as a special grant for building a road, and we all must come back to the position that Western Australia comprises about one-third of the Commonwealth, that it practically represents on the western side of Australia the States of Victoria, New South Wales, and Queensland, that it has a small population, and generally speaking when that territory is taken into consideration a small revenue, and that consequently a small revenue means a small loan expenditure. We have thus to take into consideration the whole of the requirements of the State, the cue with the other. Only to-day I received a letter from South Australia. An overlander writing to me says that if the people who advocate the cause of the Trans-Australian Railway were only practical people with a practical knowledge of the value of the interior, there would be very little opposition to the railway.

MR. THOMAS: That interior is pretty well all in my constituency.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: If the member for Dundas held it in fee-simple he would be a wealthy man.

MR. THOMAS: I have been urging its development for years past.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I hope the Government will be able to do that, if not now, in the very near future. I am sure our endeavours have not been confined to any particular part of the State. There has been, I think, a generous desire to develop all portions of the State, where there appeared to be some reasonable prospect of development. I particularly desired to have read that letter this evening; but, since leaving my office, I have mislaid it somewhere. It was very gratifying to me, and I am sure it is gratifying to every hon. member, to have that statement. It has been made to me on three different occasions by persons who have travelled overland, persons who are practical graziers, who understand the country, and who are in a position to make the statement with some degree of authority. With regard to the proposal to build a railway from

our Eastern Goldfields system on to Norseman, those persons who looked upon the Esperance railway as a boggy, and as being opposed to their vested interests, need have no more concern over it than they would have over a proposal to extend the Eastern Goldfields system to Mount Magnet. It is precisely the same thing. In building the railway to Norseman we will certainly develop that district, and perhaps industries latent to-day will spring up on the line of communication. It is only by providing facilities for people to get to the interior of a country that the country will be developed. Who knows what the resources of that particular tract of country will be? I believe money was voted towards building this line twice previously. When Sir John Forrest was Premier a sum of £2,000 was voted by the House to pay the cost of survey from the Eastern Goldfields railway system to Norseman; and at a later time I believe the sum of £60,000 was passed by the House for the construction of a line of railway to connect Norseman with the Eastern Goldfields. A railway from Esperance to Norseman is a very different proposition, because it would mean the carrying of the rails, sleepers, rolling-stock and everything else to the port of Esperance, and the establishment there of separate workshops; whereas by connecting Norseman with the existing railway system we do not need additional workshops, and we get the full value of the rolling-stock through having none of it in an isolated position. It is unfortunate to those who have interests in Norseman that they should have been shut off for so long a period from means of communication. I have long hoped and still hope to see the establishment of means of communication to that part at no very distant date. It has been said that the building of this railway may mean a loss. All those who are in the habit of travelling to the Eastern Goldfields, more particularly in summer time, and know the heat and the fatigue of travelling even to Kalgoorlie or Menzies in the hot weather, I think should give consideration to this aspect of the Trans-Australian Railway, that people coming from the old world will be much less fitted in the summer time to stand the trip through the Eastern Goldfields and



on past Victoria Springs, if the railway was to go in a direct line. I believe the advantages of the railway going in a direct line would be almost nominal, and that when the time comes to build that railway the people who are inclined to cross the continent will be also inclined to see the goldfields and deviate to Norseman on a line which may eventually become part and parcel of the Trans-Australian Railway. It would be a deviation of only a two hours' journey, and would carry the railway through a pleasant climate which to people travelling to the other side of the continent will for all time be an inducement for them to go by rail instead of by boat. At the same time, the line will tend to develop a tract of country of which I do not know a great deal myself, other than that I have been through the Norseman country; but from what I have heard of the country lying between the South Australian border and Norseman, I have not the slightest doubt that the developments which would follow the construction of the railway would more than warrant the action which the proposal before the House would cover. The timber traffic is a matter which is also worthy of very much consideration, and I believe the enormous belts of timber country lying between the Eastern Goldfields and Norseman will be most important factors in the construction of the railway. I think it was estimated by the engineer some time ago that the building of the railway would probably run into £240,000 sterling. I understand the original estimate was £290,000, but against that I think we have expended £50,000 in the construction of two dams. The interest on £240,000 would be about £10,000 per annum. That is not a very heavy item, and I have no doubt that, when the time comes, we will have ample justification for the construction of this work. I think the member for Dundas might well congratulate himself that the proposal he has submitted to the House to-night, for the extension of the Eastern Railway to Norseman, has been successful. It is gratifying to find that in this Assembly we have so many members who recognise to-day the importance of the Norseman Goldfield, and the development that is likely to follow on the building of a railway to that important centre.

MR. W. J. BUTCHER (Gascoyne): I would like to say that it is my intention to support this amendment, because I consider a policy of this description is one that our Government should take up. If there is one thing in which our prosperity is seriously involved, it is in such a policy, because I consider every industry in this State is now, and has been for some years past, dependent absolutely upon the prosperity of our goldfields. Take away at the present time the population of our goldfields and where will we find our agricultural industry or our pastoral industry, or any other industry in the State? I am right in assuming they are entirely dependent on the goldfields. It is quite impossible for any man at present to realise the value of the Norseman Goldfield to this State. It has been for many years practically lying dormant, in spite of the energy displayed by its representative in bringing it prominently before the Government and the country. I sincerely regret the standpoint which the Premier has taken up in this matter, or probably I should say from the position I hold that I am pleased at the attitude he takes up, because if he is going to stand by the position he appears to hold, it must have the effect of stifling any farther encouragement to members to bring prominently before the country and the House the necessity of various works within their constituencies, and also the effect of reducing rather than increasing the magnificent majority the Premier has enjoyed for so long. I should rather enjoy the position than otherwise. However, I will conclude by saying it is my intention to support the amendment.

MR. J. B. HOLMAN (North Murchison): I desire to support the amendment moved by the member for Fremantle, because I think the construction of the line to Norseman would be of great benefit to the State as a whole. Any step that will tend to double the population of a centre like Norseman would of necessity benefit the whole of the State. I have been to Norseman, and I have travelled through almost all the other goldfields of this State; and in few centres have I seen such encouraging prospects as I have seen at Norseman. The building of the line to Norseman has a great many advantages over the building of a line to other

centres, because we find as a rule that the whole of the loading is carried one way. On the other hand we have, in regard to the Norseman line—and I know this because I have seen it myself—an enormous quantity of timber right along the route, and no train load of goods need be sent to Norseman and the trucks brought back empty, because they can be reloaded with timber for the use of the Kalgoorlie mines. We have had a great amount of information from the member for that district as to the gold returns from Norseman. Many of the members seem to be under the impression that Norseman is a low-grade proposition; but if we look back at the gold returns for the last 18 months we find that the average for Norseman is almost as high if not higher in some instances than in every other field which is producing gold at the present time. During the last 18 months the product has been from 25 to 30 dwts. per ton, and I think mining members will agree that it is a pretty high-grade instead of being a low-grade ore. If this line were constructed to Norseman it would induce a great number of companies to erect machinery on their properties on very promising lodes, which they are afraid to do at the present time. At present only the higher-grade mines are being worked down there, simply because people who own various properties are waiting until such time as railway communication is afforded. It has proved itself to be a fairly good gold producer, and the figures given by the member for the district go to bear that out. If we look through the records of this State we find those figures are absolutely correct. The present conditions of living at Norseman are perhaps worse than those in a great many centres of this State. I have gone very carefully into the matter, and I have had the whole of the figures brought into the Arbitration Court. It was there proved that the cost of living at Norseman was fully 25 per cent. higher than in Kalgoorlie. There are very many people in this State who are going on the land, and who are interested in the production of fruit and vegetables, but these things are practically unknown in Norseman, for the prices of fruit, potatoes, onions, and other vegetables are fully 200 per cent. higher than at

Kalgoorlie, because it takes perhaps eight or nine days for those goods to get to Norseman by team, and by the time those perishables arrive at Norseman more than half of them are absolutely useless and have to be thrown away. I think storekeepers at Norseman charge fully 200 per cent. higher for their perishable goods than people on the goldfields in and around Kalgoorlie; yet they have to sell all those goods at a loss, and they make nothing whatever from dealing with them. There are a great number of people getting a living in Western Australia directly from the land by producing fruit and vegetables, and if we can encourage an increase of population in and about Norseman to the extent of more than double what it is at the present time, it will open up a market for those who are producing these things in this State, and I maintain that everything which will tend to encourage an increase of population by inducing people to go on the land, when they know they have a home market, must of necessity be of benefit. There is a desire to open up that country and to encourage our greatest industry. I support the motion as amended by the member for Fremantle.

MR. W. D. JOHNSON (Kalgoorlie): To those of us who have been advocating for many years that Norseman should be connected by railway with the other goldfields this debate has come as a pleasant surprise, because up till to-night we have never had this House taking a deep interest in the question. The people on the goldfields for many years past have been claiming that the developments of the Norseman Goldfield justify the building of a railway to that centre; but the fact remains that although the goldfields people, those who knew most about this goldfield and who were mostly interested in the building of this line, were satisfied that the developments of the goldfield justified the building of the line, and were unanimous on this point, they could never get Parliament to take the matter into earnest consideration. The speeches of the member for Dundas (Mr. Thomas), the member for Kanowna (Mr. Hastie), and the member for Mt. Burges (Mr. Reid) have undoubtedly proved that the Norseman Goldfield is entitled to have a railway

built to it, because since those members have spoken we have not had one word in opposition to the building of this line. Since they have spoken the whole debate has hinged on the manner in which the motion and the amendment have been framed; and it shows to us that at last we have evidence that the time has arrived when Norseman should get some consideration from members. This is particularly pleasing to us, and it is more pleasing to us to hear the utterances of the Premier to-night, because he has given us some little hope that at last the Government will give some consideration to this centre. As to the question how the motion has been brought forward, I do not think it need be taken very seriously, because it has been pointed out by the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Morgans) that this is not a definite motion. I think that the member for Dundas (Mr. Thomas), in accepting the amendment, has proved that his object is simply to get the question considered by this Parliament with a view of its receiving more consideration at the next general election from people outside the goldfields than it has done in the past. After the debate which has taken place here, unquestionably this railway must receive most careful consideration at the hands of those members who stand at the next general election for re-election, or even those who are outside and who aspire to get into this House. After the debate we have had it is not for me to go into any argument, because there is no opposition to the amendment as now framed, and I take it that it will be carried on the voices. I believe that at the next general election the line from Coolgardie to Norseman will receive the consideration of the people not only on the goldfields but in the coastal and metropolitan areas. I shall support the amendment, and I trust that at the next general election we shall have a little more consideration given to this line by the agricultural and metropolitan members, and that they will give the same consideration to it as the goldfields members give to agricultural lines. In their policy speech the Government say that certain agricultural lines should be built. We find in the speeches on the Address-in-reply practically the whole of the goldfields members getting up and

saying they are in favour of these lines. I said I was in favour of any line in agricultural areas which would open up those areas, and I think that the other goldfields members were with me in that. It only goes to prove that goldfields members take an interest in the whole State, and that lines in the agricultural areas receive consideration from goldfields members. The fact remains that until to-night the agricultural and metropolitan members had not given the consideration to the Norseman line which it deserved. However, we have that consideration now, and I hope that it will bear good fruit.

MR. THOMAS (in reply as mover) : It is indeed a pleasure to find that at last, after three years' hard work in this House, some points which I raised meet with the approval of sections of this House. I take it that the Premier will accept the amendment moved by the member for Fremantle (Mr. Higham), in which case, when I have finished the few remarks I wish to make to the House, I desire, with the permission of the House, to withdraw my motion in favour of the amendment, or rather to offer no objection whatever to the words being inserted in lieu of those which I had originally intended should be inserted in the motion. I would like in this connection to thank members of the House for their expression of opinion, because during the whole of this debate every member who has spoken has stated that he thoroughly believes that the developments of the Norseman Goldfield legitimately warrant railway communication being granted to that centre.

MR. FERGUSON : And members who have not spoken think so too.

MR. THOMAS : As the member for North Fremantle interjects, other members who have not spoken think the same. There is only one man in this House who dissents. That member, who is noted for his narrow-mindedness, raised one point of dissention. I need hardly say which member I refer to. I allude to Mr. Foulkes, the member for Claremont, who has no eyes for anything beyond the narrow limits of the constituents of Claremont, which he has the misfortune to represent. I thank members for their expression of opinion. I am glad to find that at last every section of this House, with the exception of one member, is satisfied that one section of the district which I have the

honour to represent, the Norseman Gold-field, has developed to such an extent as to warrant the question of a railway connecting it being taken into the earliest possible consideration, and I would urge upon the Premier in that connection that it should be taken into consideration at the earliest possible moment, so that the railway can be constructed as soon as possible. The member for North Murchison (Mr. Holman), in speaking, denied the statement that Norseman was a low-grade proposition, a low-grade field. There are big lodes, but—and I speak as a mining man intimately acquainted with the district for eight years—I say that on the whole the lodes in this field are low-grade, with rich bunches and rich chutes; but unfortunately during the last few years, owing to stringent economic conditions and lack of communication, the prospectors have had to stope the richest ore to obtain a livelihood, in the mean time developing the whole, but necessarily leaving the low-grade ores until such time as a railway will reach them. I have said that the district has enormously improved during the last 12 or 18 months, and I am satisfied that in stating this I have been stating nothing but the absolute truth, which any experienced mining man can verify for himself if he chooses to go to the district. It will be a great pleasure to me—and I feel satisfied I shall be able to do so—to wire to those people to-morrow that a proposal for early consideration of the question of providing railway communication was carried on the voices after an expression of opinion from every section and almost every member of the House; and that one week later they will be able to see from *Hansard* that the House was satisfied that the development of Norseman warranted the construction of a railway.

MR. FOULKES rose to speak.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot speak again.

MR. FOULKES: I have not spoken to this amendment.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot speak after the original motion has been spoken to by the mover. I have laid down that rule before.

Amendment passed, and the motion as amended agreed to without dissent.

MR. THOMAS: I beg to move that the resolution be transmitted to the Legislative Council for concurrence.

Question put and passed.

#### MOTION—TIMBER WASTED, HOW TO UTILISE.

Debate resumed from 19th August, on the motion by MR. HARPER, "That much benefit might result if a substantial reward were offered by the Government for the discovery of some practical method by which the waste timber from the saw-mills of this State may be utilised by its conversion into some commercial product or products."

MR. T. F. QUINLAN (Toodyay): I have pleasure in supporting the motion, and in doing so I can only indorse the opinions expressed by the member for Beverley, who stated that so much waste takes place at the various mills that anything which would tend to utilise that waste would be of benefit to the country. The wording of the motion is explicit enough to ask the House to make farther investigation to try and prove whether the waste from the timber mills can be utilised with advantage to the State.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. J. M. Hopkins): The Government have no objection to the proposal of the member for Beverley. I may point out that I have not given the matter any particular consideration from this standpoint, preferring to deal with the whole of this question when the final report of the Commission dealing with forestry has been received. If, as a result of the proposal of the member, some benefit may eventuate, there are good reasons for the motion being carried. Only the other day I was speaking to a person holding a prominent position in the timber industry, and he stated that there was a possibility of turning the waste timber to account in the production of calcium carbide. If that is so, the difficulty will be overcome. At the same time I have had inquiries made, but the report has not yet reached me, with a view of ascertaining whether the timber now going into the fires may, by a reduction of the railway rates on that particular class of timber sufficient to pay working expenses, be conveyed to

settlers in other parts of the State, particularly to the farming community, in order that the waste may be fully availed of. I have no objection to offer to the proposal of the hon. member.

**MR. R. HASTIE (Kanowna):** I would like to say, having visited very many sawmills in the State, that the idea of making some use of this timber has been impressed on my mind, especially when I think of the very large quantity of timber that is cut in the State, more especially in the jarrah districts. Although jarrah is one of the best timbers in the world, in the very best jarrah one-half is absolutely wasted at the present time, and that waste is burnt. It is no use whatever to this State. If by offering a reward we can get some process by which use can be made of the waste product it will be of benefit to this country. In Germany and other places, I believe the waste product of the sawmills is utilised. In this State the principal thing that prevents the use of the waste timber is that it is of the eucalyptus order, which prevents its being serviceable in certain directions. There are always prospects, if a suitable reward is offered, that some use may be found for the timber which at the present moment is absolutely wasted. I hope the Minister for Lands will be able to offer a reward that will result in something being done with this waste product.

Question put and passed.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at nine minutes to 10 o'clock, until the next day.

## Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 1st October, 1903.

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

#### PRAYERS.

#### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the **TREASURER**: Subsidies and Grants to Municipalities last five years, Return on motion by Mr. Hastie.

By the **PREMIER**: Correspondence between the Governments of South Australia and Western Australia as to the Trans-Australian Railway.

By the **MINISTER FOR WORKS**: Report on Water Supply for Perth and Fremantle, including townships between Midland Junction and Fremantle; also Report on Sewerage for Perth and Suburbs.

Ordered, to lie on the table.

#### QUESTION—LAND LEGISLATION.

**MR. JACOBY** asked the Minister for Lands: Whether it was the intention of the Government to introduce an amending or consolidating Land Bill this session.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS** replied: If the present congested state of the Notice Paper continued, the expressed desire of the Government to introduce an amending and consolidating Land Bill would be impracticable.

#### QUESTION—RECREATION RESERVES, HOW VESTED.

**MR. JACOBY** asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Whether it is a fact that the Government have decided to vest all recreation reserves in the local governing bodies. 2, Whether the decision applies to the Smith's Mill recreation reserves in view of the decision, six months ago, of the Colonial Treasurer, who accepted Messrs. Pittersen, Ingram, and Kiese-