

moved that all the words after the word "purpose," in the sixth line, be struck out.

Question put and negatived.

MR. JAMES asked why the clause, while empowering the council to contract for lighting the city with "gas, oil, or otherwise," only empowered them to manufacture gas and no other illuminant, if they wanted to make it themselves?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said that the Electric Light Act dealt with that illuminant.

MR. JAMES said there were other illuminants besides gas and the electric light,—such as gasoline, which might answer very well in small municipalities.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said other illuminants might be dangerous, and, if some new illuminant were discovered, the Act could be amended hereafter if necessary.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 142—Lighting Rate:

MR. JAMES said he had given notice of an amendment in this clause, the object of which was to put those who enjoyed the benefit of having their particular part of the town lighted at the present time, in the same position—as regards having a moiety of the expense defrayed out of the general rate of the city, the other moiety being defrayed of a special lighting rate—as those who might enjoy the same benefit in the future.

MR. RANDELL said he also intended to move some amendments dealing with the distribution of the cost of lighting.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) moved to report progress, and for leave to sit again.

Motion put and passed.

Progress reported.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at thirty-five minutes past 5 o'clock p.m.

## Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 29th August, 1894.

Release of Prisoners before the expiration of their sentences—Management of the Colonial Hospital—Excess Bill, 1893: in committee—Appointment of Joint Select Committee to inquire into the working of the Scab Act—Water Rights on Goldfields—Loan Bill (£1,500,000): adjourned debate; second reading—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 4:30 p.m.

#### PRAYERS.

#### RELEASE OF PRISONERS BEFORE EXPIRATION OF THEIR SENTENCES.

MR. LEAKE, in accordance with notice, asked the Attorney General by what rule prisoners convicted of felony were released from custody before the expiration of the full term of the sentence pronounced by the Court; and to inform the House for what period a prisoner sentenced to penal servitude for life would serve in the absence of any breach of prison regulations?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) replied that under prison regulations made by His Excellency the Governor for the time being, a prisoner sentenced to penal servitude for life would serve, in the absence of any breach of the regulations, seven and a half years. Prisoners sentenced to "hard labour" served their full sentence in prison, less such remissions as they may gain for industry and good conduct on the recommendation of the Inspector of Prisons. He might add that this question had been under the consideration of the Government, and they proposed to submit some new regulations for the approval of the Governor, which would very considerably extend the time to be served in prison.

#### MANAGEMENT OF COLONIAL HOSPITAL.

MR. LEAKE, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier whether it was the intention of the Government to propose any alteration in regard to the management of the Colonial Hospital?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied that the Government proposed to introduce a Bill dealing with the subject

this session, and that the Bill was already in print, and would shortly be laid before hon. members.

# EXCESS BILL, 1893.

## IN COMMITTEE:

Clause 1:

Agreed to.

Schedule—*Legislative Assembly*: Refreshment Room, £126 18s. 2d.

MR. LEAKE protested against keeping the refreshment room of the Legislative Assembly open during the recess. It should not be made a burden on the public chest during the time the House was not in session. It was not as if the city was badly off for refreshment rooms. There were places where hon. members could get a sausage roll and a piece of bread, and a glass of water, with possibly something in it. It was not as if the refreshment room were kept up by the subscriptions of hon. members. He did not see why the country towns and districts should have to pay towards the feed and refreshment of hon. members.

MR. A. FORREST: They don't pay for our feed.

MR. LEAKE did not suppose the hon. member could eat £126 worth. But he could get his friends in to help him.

MR. A. FORREST: We pay for it.

MR. LEAKE: You contribute to it. You get cheaper living at the refreshment room than anywhere else in Perth. I shall move, when the Estimates come on, that this provision be struck out.

MR. A. FORREST said that the upkeep of the refreshment room was not altogether for the benefit of town members, but for the country members. During the recess there must be someone to look after the premises, otherwise the place would fall into disrepair, and cost more to improve it than the vote. Members would not like to see new servants after each recess. During the recess members came to the House to transact their political business and met Ministers at lunch. He thought it was a pity the time of the House should be taken up on a subject of paying the wages of the servants of the House.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said it was only during the last twelve months that the refreshment room had been kept open during the recess, and it used to be the

practice to discharge the servants of the House, except the caterer. He agreed with the hon. member for Albany.

*Miscellaneous Services*: Incidental expenses, £2,190 1s. 7d.

MR. ILLINGWORTH asked what this item represented. It had a suspicious look about it.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied that it was caused by the purchase of 280 acres of land near the Midland Junction at a cost of about £2,000; a grant in aid to the Western Australian Committee, International Exhibition, Melbourne; Crown Agents' commission on payment of interest, and expenses connected with opening ceremony of Fremantle harbour works. The whole of this information could be found on page 135 of the Auditor General's report. [MR. RICHARDSON: What idea had the Government in purchasing this land?] They thought it a good opportunity to acquire land in that locality. There was a question occupying public attention in connection with the removal of the railway workshops, but the Government did not acquire the land with that special object. It was considered advisable the Government should have some land in the locality of the Junction. It was an open space, and was the only piece of land the Government now had between Greenmount and — [MR. RICHARDSON: Is it between the two lines?] [MR. LEAKE: Oh, is that the snug little property up there?] It was between the Government railway and the Helena River. It was a splendid piece of land, and was considered advisable the Government should have the property; it was in the market at the time, and they got it at what they considered a cheap rate.

MR. ILLINGWORTH thought it undesirable such an item should appear under "incidental expenses." It would have been better to have let it appear straightforwardly under a separate head.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said it appeared in the Auditor General's report. There was a difficulty in classifying such items. He always liked to place any item of expenditure under a distinct vote, rather than manufacture a special vote; that was why he did not do as the hon. member for Nannine had suggested. There was no intention of keeping the purchase of this land a secret;

indeed, it was generally known at the time, and, he believed, was published in the press.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said it showed the necessity of having the Auditor General's report before them when dealing with these Excess Bills, and hoped the Government would endeavour to have the Excess Bill for 1894 and the Auditor General's report placed before the House before the prorogation, because it seemed absurd to have to consider excess votes twelve months after they occurred.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) was glad the hon. member had called attention to it, because it might be understood from the remarks he made the previous day, that the Auditor General had been behind in publishing his report. That was not so. He had to publish it within three months after the financial year, according to the Audit Act. [MR. R. F. SHOLL: He can do so sooner.] Yes, but it was not done in time for the last session, for the reason he had already explained. As to whether it would be possible to do so this year, he was not prepared to say. He should prefer to have the Excess Bill dealt with soon after the financial year, and if it was possible to do so he would, but he did not think it would be.

MR. RANDELL believed it was almost impossible to furnish the Auditor General's report within a lesser period than four months after the close of the financial year, which was, he thought, the same as in the other colonies. With regard to the purchase of the land at the Midland Junction he congratulated the Government upon the purchase, which he thought would be of use in the future. He did not think nature could have better adapted a piece of land for the purpose he had in his mind, and, if not used for that purpose, it could be utilised for other purposes.

Schedule agreed to.

Preamble and title:

Agreed to.

Bill reported, and report adopted.

#### WORKING OF THE SCAB ACT.

MR. LEFROY: I rise, sir, to move the motion standing in my name,—“That owing to the continued existence of scab in sheep in the Victoria District, and its

further introduction South of that district, it is desirable that a joint Select Committee of both Houses of Parliament be appointed, with power to call for persons and papers, to inquire into the working of the Scab Act, with a view of eradicating the disease.” I trust the motion will commend itself to hon. members. The Attorney General, when moving the Scab Act Amendment Bill of 1892, told the House that members who resided in these Southern parts of the colony did not seem to care whether scab was introduced down South or not, but that it was the intention of the Government at any rate to keep it out of the North. I am sorry to say that Act has not been successful so far as the South is concerned, and I think it is most desirable that some steps should be taken to eradicate the disease altogether. The Government have been warned on several occasions about the unsatisfactory manner in which it was reported that sheep coming from the North were dipped at the Irwin. It is said that sufficient care is not taken, and that in this way scab has been allowed to come to these Southern districts. Be that as it may, the fact remains that at the present moment there are two flocks in the district which I represent infected with the disease, and this Central District has been declared an infected district. Every member who has had any experience of this disease must be fully aware, and even those who have had no practical experience must be fully aware, of the terrible scourge it is to flock owners. I think that at the present moment the wool industry has quite enough to put up with without having a scourge of this sort to put up with as well. I think it is the duty of the Government to look after matters of this kind. It is a matter of administrative policy, and I regret to say that the continuance of this disease among our flocks does not reflect very creditably on the administration of the department charged with the inspection of scab, when we find this disease making its appearance, as it has done, in this part of the colony. I do not know what steps the Government intend to take in the matter, but all who are interested in sheep in the Southern districts feel extremely anxious on the subject, and

the object of introducing this motion is to try to get the matter sifted to the bottom. I am sorry the Attorney General is not present this afternoon. We know he has a rooted objection, as a rule, to these select committees, but I think they very often do a great deal of good. They get behind the scenes (as it were), and perhaps sometimes get hold of matters which the Government do not wish brought before the country. [The PREMIER: Not that, at all.] It happens so occasionally. I know the Attorney General, who is very learned in scab as well as in the law, will be with me on this occasion. I have been induced to bring this motion before the House by a number of gentlemen who met together a short time ago to talk over this question of scab in sheep, and we decided then that we should move in the direction I am now doing, and ask for a joint committee of both Houses to inquire into the subject. Scab, as I have said, is undoubtedly present in these Southern districts, and it has been here for the last 12 months, and we have no assurance that the matter has been properly attended to, and that it will not spread throughout the flocks of the colony. The dry season we have had this year has been very much in favour of keeping back the disease. Had it been a wet season, the disease now in these districts would no doubt have spread much more rapidly. I should like to have some assurance that the disease is not to be allowed to go unchecked throughout this part of the colony. As I said before, the wool industry is a most important industry for this colony, and it ought to be fostered and protected as much as possible. I know some people do not seem to think that the industry deserves much consideration. They appear to imagine that anyone who has anything to do with wool is a millionaire, and can very well afford to have an occasional flock of sheep decimated. That, however, we know is not the case. I believe at the present moment there are no people in this colony who are harder hit than those who are interested in the wool industry, and I think it is only right they should be protected against this destructive scourge. We do not want any coddling, or anything of that sort; we merely wish the Government to see that the Act which is

now in force is strictly administered, and that those whose duty it is to carry it out perform their duty properly. It is impossible for individual members to know how the Act is carried out; we are not behind the scene. The fact remains, and stares us in the face, and in spite of the promises we have had, in spite of the legislation adopted, in spite of the money expended, scab is allowed to find its way into the Southern districts. The cause, to my mind, is that the dipping at the Irwin is not carried out properly. I do not lay the blame so much on those who are at the dip, because they are only men in the employment of others whose duty it is to look after these men, and see that the Act is properly administered. I know very well, and everyone who has had anything to do with sheep knows very well, that before you can get rid of scab you have to dip, and use sulphur and lime, week after week, which is not a very pleasant occupation, as I can speak from experience; and I am happy to say that in my district we succeeded in stamping out the disease by hard work and perseverance. But, after all our care and trouble, and after all our expense for years, here we have it brought back to us; and we do not know how far it is going to spread. If one individual flock owner only needed protection it would be a different thing, but we know that once the disease makes its appearance there is no knowing how far it will spread. These infected sheep may become scattered all over the country, and cause no end of trouble and expense; and I think we have a right to look to the Government in this matter, and call upon them to see that this terrible disease is got rid of. As I said before, those gentlemen who met the other day and who are interested in this wool industry, thought that possibly if a select committee such as I now propose were appointed, we might perhaps be able to get at the root of the matter, and devise some means to eradicate this evil. No one seems to know what the Government is doing. We know this, that sheep have been infected for twelve months at their very door, as it were, and not reported. They had them dipped, but other sheep which had been in contact with them were allowed to go about spreading the disease. It must be the fault of those who have the carrying out

of the Act, or the disease would not be in our midst now. I shall be glad to have the views of other members on this subject, and, of course, if any better means of attaining the object in view than the one I am now proposing can be suggested, I shall be happy to fall in with the views of members. I beg to move the motion standing in my name.

MR. HARPER: I have much pleasure in supporting the motion, and I may say I have been expecting a motion of this kind for some time. On several different occasions I have myself urged in this House that an alteration of the Act was necessary before we can thoroughly eradicate this disease. Perhaps members are not aware that I and several others, for some years, held office as members of a Board of Advice under this Scab Act, and that the conclusion we came to was that the disease would never be stamped out until there was one small alteration made in the Act. Subsequent events have quite borne out that opinion. It is not an offence at the present time for an owner of sheep to have scab in his flock, so long as he is able to satisfy the bench that he was not aware of it. If he does that, he escapes punishment; and, so long as that provision of the Act continues, we shall have no guarantee whatever that some owners will exercise the care and caution necessary before this disease can be eradicated. I am quite certain that if the Act were altered so that the mere fact of the disease being found amongst a man's sheep would render the owner liable, the result would be more satisfactory, and we might hope then to get rid of this pest. Time after time the inspectors have brought cases before the magistrates, seeking to have sheep-owners punished for neglect, but, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the offenders have got off. The case is either dismissed or a merely nominal fine is imposed, because the owner pleaded that he was not aware of the disease being in his flock. Of course this is simply offering an incentive to the man who is not particularly careful or honest to keep himself in ignorance of the condition of his flock; and I feel confident that, until the Act is altered in that direction, outbreaks of scab will constantly occur. The objection that has always been taken to this alteration of

the law has been that it might cause hardship in some cases, and that a man might introduce the disease into another man's flock for the sake of getting him punished, without his knowing of it. But we know that, in framing our laws, we must have some other considerations than the possibility of causing hardship in some cases to individuals. I consider that some very much harder cases have occurred under existing circumstances; and I think the sooner we alter the law in the direction I have indicated the better.

MR. CLARKSON: I rise to support the motion. I consider that the present Act is quite stringent enough, provided the Act were carried out in a proper manner. The fault lies with the dipping. I speak with some authority on this subject, because I have conversed with many shepherds and drovers who have brought sheep down from the North, and they have told me that sheep are not properly dipped at the Irwin. It is from that unfortunate scab district that the disease has been introduced into these Southern districts. For something like twenty years we had been free from it in this part of the colony, and no doubt would always have continued so, had the disease not been brought down from the Geraldton district. Scab has been kept alive in that district during all these years, and it does seem an extraordinary thing that it should be so. There must be something radically wrong somewhere. The chief inspector told me not very long since that he found it impossible to eradicate the disease in that district, because he found the greatest difficulty in obtaining a conviction before the magistrate at Geraldton when he brought a case before him. I am not prepared to say that the magistrate is not right to a certain extent; but I feel quite confident that if that dip at the "8-mile water" was properly superintended, and the dipping was done under the direction of an experienced inspector, we should not have any scab down here. Shepherds and drovers have told me that the dipping is done too carelessly, that two or three flocks get there together and are kept waiting about for their turn, and possibly the dipping is consequently rather hurried, and, while these sheep are waiting to be dipped, some of them get astray,

possibly Southward of the dip, and they may pick up with infected sheep, which possibly may have been put out of the way whilst the others are being dipped. My opinion is that if that Irwin dip were properly superintended, all this would be avoided. Using sulphur and lime is utterly worthless, unless it is used in a proper manner, and at the proper temperature. If the sulphur is not properly dissolved, you may as well dip the sheep in cold water. I think it would also be advisable, considering the number of strayed sheep there are always knocking about the overland route, to have a second dip farther South. [MR. A. FORREST: It would kill them.] Would it not be better to carry out the Act strictly, and stamp out the disease once for all than to have these outbreaks among our flocks? It is a standing disgrace to this colony that scab has not been eradicated before now; and we all know it has been kept alive in two or three paddocks at Champion Bay. That's a fact that cannot be disputed. I suggested before in this House that these sheep should be all destroyed, as they ought to have been long ago. You cannot do anything with them unless you destroy them. The inspector told me that the owners do everything they possibly can to defeat him. One owner, he told me, instead of reporting the disease, cuts the throats of those he finds infected, and hides them. Of course, the difficulty is to prove these things. But so long as this sort of work is going on, we shall never get rid of the disease. I think we cannot deal too severely with these men who have kept the scab alive all these years. But the remedy suggested by the hon. member for Beverley is, I think, rather too severe, namely, to hold an owner liable whether he knew the disease was in his flock or not. Had this been adopted before the disease spread it would only have affected one or two owners perhaps; but many people in this part of the colony do not know what scab is when they see it. What we want is a strict and capable inspector at the Irwin dip. I understand that the man who superintends the dipping there now is simply a man employed by the inspector at so much a day. Of course, that man does not care how the sheep are dipped. He knows he has no

responsibility. That is a nice state of affairs, a man like that placed to superintend such an important operation as the dipping of all sheep coming down through an infected district to a clean district. I think the present Act is quite stringent enough, if properly carried out by those whose duty it is to administer it. I hope that the suggestion of the hon. member for the Moore, to have a committee of inquiry into this subject, may result in the adoption of some measure that will stamp out the disease, the continued existence of which all these years is, I say, a disgrace to the colony.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): It has been, I cannot say my pleasure but rather my pain, to have had to listen for a great number of years to speeches from members in this Assembly, as well as in the old Council, upon this subject of scab. I have heard various schemes proposed for dealing with it. Select committees innumerable have sat, and amendments innumerable have been suggested, yet we find there is very little change. About the same state of affairs exists now as existed twenty years ago. [MR. PRESSE: No.] They may be a little better. I believe the disease has been wiped out in the Williams district, where it was very bad in those days, and there are some other parts of the colony where it has been wiped out. Still the fact remains that it is with us to this day. I have no wish to throw cold water upon this motion; I only hope this select committee will be more successful than those that have sat in the past, because my experience of this subject has been that it has come to be regarded in the House as a sort of standing joke. It has been a standing dish anyhow. For the past twenty years there has scarcely been a session that there has not been some allusion made to the Scab Act, or some amendment suggested, or some select committee appointed. Perhaps we have not had so many committees during the last year or two, because the last amended Act was supposed to meet the wishes of all those who knew most about the disease—I know nothing about it myself. Nor can I congratulate those who do know, and who have made it a study, upon the success of their efforts to eradicate it. [MR. CLARKSON: The fault of the Minis-

try.] It is very useful to have a Ministry to fall back upon. I only hope that this committee, if it be proved that the Act is badly administered, will be able to suggest such alterations in it as will bring about a better state of things in the future than we have had in the past.

MR. PIESSE: I am quite in accord with the hon. member for the Moore that this subject is one that deserves our gravest consideration. The hon. member for Toodyay suggested just now that the fault lies with the dipping at the Irwin. Only a few days ago I had a conversation with a gentleman who had just come from the Irwin, and who had something to do with the dipping of sheep there, and he informed me that, although the dipping itself may be carried out satisfactorily, the trouble arises from the fact that some of the sheep escape from the flock while passing through the district, and afterwards come in contact with infected sheep, and so carry the disease with them. The only remedy that gentleman suggested was what has been suggested by the hon. member for Toodyay,—that there should be another dip farther South. Probably if we had a proper system of marking dipped sheep there would be no necessity for this second dip. It would enable the undipped sheep to be detected at once. I must object to the remark that fell from the Commissioner of Crown Lands, who said that the disease is nearly as bad now as it was twenty years ago, notwithstanding all the select committees that have sat upon it. I must contradict that. I think members will recollect that some years ago there was no worse place for scab than the Williams district, which was a hot-bed of disease for many years. I have been connected with the district for the last twenty years, and I may say that during ten years of that time there were more fertile cases of litigation in the Williams court, arising from this disease, than in any district of the colony. But for the last ten years that district has been kept clean. An efficient inspector was appointed, and the measures which he adopted, and the law strictly enforced, had the effect of entirely eradicating the disease. But although ten years have elapsed since its disappearance from the district, it seems we are now in a fair way

of having it reintroduced. It is already in the Newcastle district, and sheep are now being drafted down South, along the line, to Albany, for butchering purposes, so that we may expect to have the same difficulty in coping with it as we had years ago, the district being such an extensive one, and the flocks so scattered. I think every measure—even the most extreme measures—should be adopted to prevent the disease spreading farther South than it has at present. I trust that this joint committee, with the evidence it will have before it, will be able to suggest some effective measure for the eradication of the disease.

MR. LEAKE: Severe and drastic as this Scab Act is, I do not think it is quite severe and drastic enough. It is all very well for members to talk about curing the disease by having a first and second dip; what we want is to prevent it altogether, and I do not know of any better course than to declare that the sheep shall be destroyed. The hon. member for Beverley has suggested there should be a penalty upon any owner if he has scab in his flock, knowingly or otherwise. I know from my experience of the administration of this Scab Act how difficult it is to secure convictions; how easy it is for the offenders to wriggle out of the charges brought against them, and how hard it is for the inspector to secure a penalty, especially any heavy penalty. It is useless in a matter like this to have light penalties. If a man persists—and some of them do persist—in having scab in their flocks, their sheep should be taken from them. There was that little incident that was reported in the papers a few weeks ago, about a certain gentleman in the Toodyay district who was aware, I believe, that there was scab in a certain flock, and who advised the owner to cut the throats of those that were affected, and send the rest to the gold-fields. [MR. CLARKSON: That was untrue.] It was published in the papers, and it affects the principle under discussion. I think I would be disposed to go a step further than the hon. member for Beverley, and make it penal if any person—not only the owner but any other person—knew of the existence of scab in a flock and did not report it to the inspector. It is necessary that almost every farmer and settler should become a detective for

the purpose of discovering and eradicating this scab. It is the only way. The sooner the information goes to the inspector, the more readily shall we see this terrible scourge removed. The fault lies not so much in the Act as with the settlers themselves. They won't report, and you cannot persuade them to report. I say if they won't report let them suffer a penalty, and the best way is to kill the sheep. It is a terrible disease, and it requires a severe remedy, and you have to make your Scab Act a terror to the evil-doer.

**MR. CLARKSON:** I should like to say a word in explanation. The hon. member for Albany, who seems to be an authority upon scab, mentioned my name—

**MR. LEAKE:** Pardon me, I mentioned no names.

**MR. CLARKSON:** You alluded to a case that appeared in the paper, and—

**THE SPEAKER:** The hon. member must confine himself to a personal explanation in reference to himself.

**MR. CLARKSON:** Well, what appeared in the paper was contradicted in the paper afterwards, and I thought it would not have been necessary for me to explain it here again. The hon. member said that a settler in the Toodyay district had advised another settler to cut the throats of his scabby sheep, and send the rest to the goldfields. That is not true.

**THE SPEAKER:** The hon. member is not making a personal explanation. He is now remarking upon a statement made by the hon. member for Albany, and not in explanation of what he himself said. He cannot contradict what is said by another member.

**MR. CLARKSON:** I only wish to say that the sheep I advised should be sent to the Eastward were not affected at all. The sheep I referred to had simply crossed a certain run where there had been some infected sheep, and I advised the owner to have them sent to the goldfields as soon as possible for killing. They were perfectly clean at the time, and I thought it was the best advice I could give him. Twelve months afterwards a flock of sheep belonging to the same man showed scab, but the funny thing was, it was not the same flock at all, but a flock he had bought subsequently.

**MR. A. FORREST:** I am sure everyone must be interested in trying to eradicate this disease. I was sorry to hear the Commissioner of Crown Lands saying that the present state of affairs is not much better than it was twenty years ago, and that the select committees appointed have done little or no good. So far as I know, at present this disease is only present in one or two districts. The whole of the Northern districts were scabby some years ago, but there has been no scab there during the past ten years. The Southern districts, too, are clean, and the Williams district, and York, and everywhere this way, except two or three flocks in the Newcastle district; and the Geraldton district, which has been scabby since I was a boy. The hon. member for Toodyay thinks that another dip on the route from the North would be an improvement. Most of the flocks that come down from the North come from a clean district, not from the Irwin district. When these flocks arrive at the Irwin they are clean, but they are kept at the dip for two or three days, mixing up, perhaps, with other sheep—there may be 30,000 or 40,000 sheep there—and there is very little grass about the place, and the owners have to pay a penny a head for dipping them. Now it is proposed that there should be another dip as well, for dipping sheep that are presumed to be clean, simply because they may possibly have come in contact with some stray sheep on the road. Before this dipping at the Irwin came into operation, scab was not known in these districts, and I fail to see, myself, that dipping does any good at all. Sheep from the Northern districts generally pass down along the coast, and, after they arrive, the majority of them pass into the hands of the butchers. Until the other day there had been no scab in these districts for many years, and it cannot be said that the disease is very bad at present. Still, I think if the hon. member for the Moore should succeed in eradicating it with this motion, he will deserve the thanks of the country. The Victoria district has been the curse of this colony as regards infected sheep. There are sheep-owners in that district who, unless you compel them to destroy their sheep, will never get rid of scab. They won't assist the inspector in any way. Only the other day the



inspector told me he had been waiting for a long time to catch some of them, and that he had found sheep outside their fences rotten. The only way to deal with such people is to take their sheep away from them, or destroy them on the spot, otherwise you will never get rid of the disease. Why should we have the colony put in danger of being overrun with it, because of the carelessness of a few owners in the Victoria district?

**MR. PHILLIPS:** I cannot agree with the hon. member for Toodyay with regard to the way he says this dipping business has been carried on at the Irwin dip. The hon. member told us he obtained his information from the drovers, but I think that what these drovers say should be taken with a grain of salt. It is simply an excuse for themselves, when they happen to bring scabby sheep down, so that they may say it is not their fault, but the fault of the dipping. I shall be very glad to see this committee formed, and I hope they may be able to do some good. I consider that dipping on the road ought to be done away with, and that there should be inspectors stationed here in the vicinity of Perth, and also at the Irwin, to examine the flocks that come down. Dipping is a great hardship to many settlers, and a considerable expense, and it is doing no good in eradicating scab.

**THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest):** This question of the eradication of scab is a matter we all know we have had to deal with for years and years. I have no objection at all to the appointment of this joint committee, but I must say that I think a committee of this House would have been competent to deal with the question without having a joint committee of both Houses. I do not see what we are likely to gain from that. I think there are a sufficient number of practical and experienced men in this House to deal with this matter; and I really cannot see why we should bring to bear upon it such heavy artillery as this, when we have sufficient very good cannon of our own. I am inclined to think that no great result will come from this select committee. What we want is a proper administration of the Act. The Act is good enough, I believe—it ought to be at any rate, because some of the most ex-

perienced men in the colony had to do with the framing of it. I believe it is sufficiently good myself; if it isn't, it ought to be by this time, because we have had a good many attempts at improving it. I am inclined to think that the screw loose is with the administration of the Act, as I have said before, and not with the Act itself. So far as the Executive Government are concerned, we have tried our best, so far as our means will permit, in every way to assist in the eradication of this disease. We have not begrudged any expenditure; the money has been available to any extent that was required by the officers who have had the management of this department. We have had a Chief Inspector, and I don't know how many assistant inspectors—at any rate as many as he wanted. Still we have not got rid of the disease. I met the Chief Inspector only the other day, and I told him frankly that in my opinion his management had been a failure. He has had some ten years now to try and extirpate this disease from the Victoria district, and he does not seem to have succeeded in doing so up to the present time. I am aware that the general opinion of members who know this gentleman is that he is an excellent officer, that he is active and capable, and looks after his business. At the same time, I cannot myself think it reflects any great credit upon him that he has not been able, with a free hand and ample funds at his command, to extirpate this disease from this one spot—the Victoria district. I think the labours of this committee will have to be directed to that matter, because it is there, I think, the whole thing lies. We want, perhaps, more experienced and more active inspectors than we have got; and, so far as I am concerned, the Government will not be found to be behind-hand in finding, or at any rate in asking this House to find, ample funds for endeavouring to extirpate this terrible scourge. As I said before, I have no objection at all to a committee being appointed, but I do not see the necessity for a joint committee of both Houses. A joint committee is a somewhat troublesome process, I believe; and I do not think it is necessary to have resort to it in this instance, when we have sufficient men of experience and knowledge of the subject in this House to deal with it thoroughly.

MR. LEFROY: I must thank the Premier for the support he offers to the proposal, or at any rate to half of it. The Commissioner of Crown Lands tells us that select committees of this House have been at work for the last twenty years on this question, and have done nothing, or done very little good, and that he does not think another committee will be likely to succeed in doing good. That does not deter me at all. I shall keep on and on with this question until I do succeed. That has been my guiding principle through life. I think the hon. member's argument is somewhat in favour of this joint committee of both Houses, when he tells us that select committees of one House have not been able to do much good. As to a joint committee being a cumbrous process, we had a joint committee on the Midland Railway proposals; and I think a domestic question like this, affecting an important industry and affecting every person in the colony, more or less, is of very much importance—sufficiently so to justify our bringing to bear upon it the joint efforts of both Houses.

THE PREMIER (HON. SIR J. FORREST): There are only two or three members there who know anything about scab.

MR. LEFROY: I think there are some good practical men amongst them, whose assistance we should like to have in this inquiry, and, personally, I should prefer a joint committee. I quite agree with the Premier that there must be something wrong in the administration of the Act, and by appointing this committee we hope to be able to find out what is wrong. We shall simply try to do what I think the Government itself ought to have done. I am not blaming the present Ministry for not eradicating this disease; I am sure they are most anxious to have it eradicated. But somebody must be at fault, and I trust this committee may find out whose fault it has been.

Motion put and passed.

A ballot having been taken, the following members, in addition to the mover, were elected to serve upon the Committee:—Mr. Harper, Mr. Burt, Mr. Richardson, and Mr. Loton.

Ordered—That the Committee report on Wednesday, 19th September, and that the Resolution of the Assembly be transmitted to the Legislative Council, and their concurrence desired therein.

#### WATER RIGHTS ON GOLDFIELDS.

MR. MORAN: Mr. Speaker—Sir, I rise to move the following resolution: "That with a view to encouraging the procuring of water on our goldfields by private enterprise, the following Regulations be adopted: (1.) *Deep Boring*:—Water right shall mean a ten years' lease of the area mentioned. A water right of 1,000 acres shall be given for the obtaining of a constant daily supply of not less than 100,000 gallons of water within a three mile radius of any declared goldfield townsite. This area shall not be closer than one mile from the centre of such townsite. It shall not be on the main line of reefing country on which the mining is centred. Water rights may be granted on the line of reef on land which is unoccupied, but shall in no case exceed 100 acres, nor shall it prohibit any person from prospecting such land. The prices charged for bore water shall be as follows, on the surface at the bore, viz., according to the output:—100,000 gallons daily at 10s. per thousand; 200,000 gallons daily at 7s. 6d.; 300,000 gallons daily at 6s. 8d.; 400,000 gallons daily at 5s.; 500,000 gallons daily at 4s.; over this at 2s. 6d. (2.) *Shafts or other Shallow Sinking*:—Water rights of one acre may be given to any person or company within townsite who shall put down shaft or bore to supply 5,000 gallons daily. It shall be supplied at a maximum price of 25s. per thousand at the shaft. In cases where such shaft or supply shall be without the townsite, a water right of 10 acres shall be granted, and if it be half a mile from the town boundary a water right of 50 acres shall be given. Before the lease issues it shall be proven to the satisfaction of the Government that the shaft or well is capable of producing 5,000 gallons a day, and at no time shall the supply be less than this amount. Provided, however, that exception from supply shall be given upon certificate of Government engineer to deepen or otherwise improve shaft, sufficient time being allowed to carry out work. In the case of settlements, or fields not yet declared townsites, the right shall be given to sink and dispose of water, and provisional 10-acre lease shall be granted. If afterwards a townsite be surveyed round it, this lease shall be cancelled, and the 1-acre lease substituted. In all

these cases it shall be compulsory upon the holders to supply the water to the general public first for ordinary purposes. When this demand does not reach the supply, the leaseholders may sell the water to companies or others for any purpose whatever. Provided that, in all cases, the maximum prices above fixed shall not be exceeded. In all cases it shall be competent for the Government, through their engineer, to demand that a fair rate of progress be made with sinking or boring or other work connected with these rights. Water rights may be renewed at end of ten years upon valuation basis, and it shall be optional with the Government to re-issue the lease at an annual rental to the original holders, or to put the right up to auction, and sell it to the highest bidder, fair compensation in every case being allowed for plant. A bonus of £1 per foot will be granted, on certificate of Government engineer, to the first person or company who shall procure a permanent supply of water of not less than 250,000 gallons per day on the Eastern goldfields under the above regulations, and a bonus of £1 per foot for a similar supply on the Murchison goldfields. Its permanency shall be determined six months after first supply to satisfaction of Government. A reward of £20 shall be given to any person who shall discover a permanent rock soak, or other fresh water supply of water, within five miles of any main road on the fields, or anywhere within ten miles of any alluvial or reefing field. In the case of new finds a reward of £20 will be given for the discovery of permanent soak or fresh water supply not already known, and the finder shall have the right to apply for valuation of work done, and be paid accordingly in cases where holes or shafts are sunk. Valuation to be fixed by Government officer. That these regulations be printed in the principal papers of the Eastern colonies, and also in the Press of Western Australia." Sir, the motion I have brought forward this evening follows in sequence upon a motion having a similar trend which I introduced a few days ago, when the Government requested me to offer some practical suggestions, and this House desired me to bring forward a more definite resolution than the resolution I submitted on that occasion. It

appeared to me at that time that the Government were favourably disposed towards the principle which I then advocated in favour of encouraging private enterprise on our goldfields; and I thought, perhaps, that, having heard from members an expression of their views, the Government themselves would be prepared to draft some regulations to carry out the object in view. I have, therefore, endeavoured to set before the House an outline of such regulations as to my mind will meet the case. Although the time has been short since I brought forward my other motion, I should like to say that it is not since then that my mind has been made up as to what should be the nature of these regulations. This is a question that occupied my attention a long time before I became a member of this House; and I may say that, so far as I am personally concerned, the attainment of this end is the one great object for which I am here as the representative of the district which sent me here. I only trust I may be able on my return to show the people of my constituency that I have done some practical good, and that in returning me to this House they returned one who has some knowledge of their wants. If I should be the means of having passed any legislation which will bring this about, though I should fail in everything else while in this House, I shall consider I have done my duty towards that great constituency which I represent. To show the necessity of adopting some such regulations as these, I have only to point out to members the position of affairs at the present moment on our Eastern goldfields, although, of course, they refer also to the Murchison; but I am not able to speak of the position of affairs up in that district with the authority of the hon. member for Nannine. Moreover, it is known that water is not the great difficulty there which it is in the district I represent. I wish to point out this astounding fact, that on these Eastern goldfields, which, I venture to say, are at the present moment more heard of and read of throughout the civilised world than any other goldfields, and which are believed by many to be the richest in the world, and which are providing day after day some new surprise in the way of marvellous finds, each eclipsing

the other, and with regard to the permanency of which eminent geologists and experts who have visited the fields have pronounced a favourable verdict—on these fields at the present moment, principally owing to this water difficulty, there are not ten head of stampers at work. Heretofore the minds of people have not rested upon that astounding fact, because, as I have said, day after day fresh discoveries have come to light which have occupied their attention. These fields contain, as is known to the Government, over one thousand leases, taken up, no doubt, by practical and sensible men, men whose experience extends all over the Australian colonies. Money has to be paid to take up these leases, and money has to be spent in keeping them going; and the ultimate intention of every man who has taken up a lease is to prospect it and develop it, and put machinery on it. Here we have this field, which has existed long enough, and which is rich enough to have many batteries at work, had the necessary water been discovered,—here we have these fields, as I have said, with only ten head of stampers at work on it. I submit it is the duty of every member, and more especially members like myself, representing a gold-mining district, to give their most earnest and thoughtful consideration to this water question. I will assume for a moment that out of these 1,000 leases only one-fourth the number will ultimately turn out to be payable properties, and I will assume for the moment that it takes a 20-head battery to work out each of these leases—it will take more to work some of them, but I will take this for the sake of illustration; and I will assume that the machinery for each battery will at the lowest weigh 30 tons, and every part of that machinery will have to be landed at Fremantle, and pay a Customs duty of 5 per cent. *ad valorem*—here we have at once an enormous increase to the revenue. In the next place this machinery will have to be carried by rail from Fremantle to Southern Cross, and ultimately to Coolgardie. I will take Southern Cross as its destination by rail. Here we have 250 claims, each having 30 tons of machinery to be conveyed over our Government railways, or an aggregate of 7,500 tons for machinery alone. This at £6 per ton, which is below the present

rate, when you take the wharfage and all other charges—I mean the Government share of it—would bring in a revenue of £45,000. Then we will say there are 20 men employed on each of these claims, which is a very low estimate; each of these 5,000 men, to start with, will have to pay for a miner's right—another large source of revenue. Looking again at the large consumption of dutiable goods which these men will require—and bear in mind they will all be new men, not those already working on the field—I think we may fairly put each man down as contributing £4 annually to the Customs revenue. This will give us another £20,000, which I consider altogether too low an estimate. Then there will be the increase of revenue from postage; for all these men, we may take it, will have their letters to forward and papers to post. Taken altogether, I estimate that from these claims—and I am assuming for the sake of my present argument that only one-fourth of the present leases will pay to work—that from this mining industry on this one field, the Government would gain fully £80,000 a year in direct revenue. I am not trying to work up a sensational or fictitious case, but placing things in a sensible and reasonable light before the House, and I think I have shown the necessity of some further steps being taken to obtain an adequate supply of water for these goldfields. Up to the present, as members are aware, we have not had any universally adopted process or system of dry-blowing, and, so far as we can see, it is absolutely necessary, if these fields are to be developed, that we should have a good and reliable supply of water to work the field to advantage. It may be asked, why have I brought these figures forward in favour of the Government adopting these regulations, or others equally liberal, and why should not the companies themselves undertake this work of obtaining water? My answer to that is this: if I can prove that the Government by doing what I am asking them to do will increase their revenue to the extent of £80,000, I think I may fairly put it that, no matter how many companies may be on the field, no private individual would reap the same benefit as the people of this country would through the public exchequer. I hope that as progressive

Australians we shall show ourselves alive to the advantages which are here offered to us. I am afraid there is a slight feeling of suspicion amongst some people that the Government are rather slow in this matter of providing water. But they are gaining experience. They have spent considerable sums of money in this direction. It cannot be said that they have been niggardly in their expenditure; it is their judgment that has been at fault in many cases. Their intentions, no doubt, are strictly good, but the way they have gone to work has not always commanded our admiration. I do not wish to speak too harshly of their efforts in this direction, but I believe—I have said so before, and I say it again—that what has been done up to the present, by the Government, in the way of providing water, will be altogether inadequate, and, unless it rains a great deal, that work will be a failure. The Government are not to blame if the rain does not come, any more than I am. The fact remains as I have stated it. Personally, I may say, I approve of what they have done in the way of sinking tanks; but, no matter how clever we may be as legislators, we cannot rule the heavens. The heavens, so far, have been unpropitious to the Government in this respect, and these tanks, which cost so much money, may be found useless during the coming summer simply because there may be no rain to fill them. What else has been done may be summed up in two or three words: a bore put down at Coolgardie to an insignificant depth. I might almost call it a farmer's shaft for supplying a few poultry. It has, however, proved that, at a shallow depth, thousands of gallons of water may be procured. That being the case, surely it should not require much incentive for a progressive West Australian Ministry to show a little more confidence in the resources of their own colony. I do not belong to this colony, in the sense of having been born here; but, at the same time, I defy any West Australian to prove that he has greater confidence in his own colony than I have at the present moment. It only requires wise and opportune legislation, a liberal Legislature, and smart execution on the part of an active Ministry to provide these goldfields with their one great want—an adequate supply of

water—to send this colony bounding on the path of prosperity. The tide is at the flood, let us take advantage of it, and be led to fortune. The eyes of the civilised world are upon us. Capitalists are turning their attention to the colony; their pockets are opened for us to dip into them, and the moment has arisen when the gold mining industry of the country should receive the most earnest attention of its Government and of its Legislature. We do not want a recurrence of the water panic of last summer at Coolgardie, because British capitalists will get tired of putting their money in a country where, although gold is in the stone, it cannot be got out of the stone.

At 6:30 p.m. the House adjourned for an hour.

At 7:30 p.m. the House resumed.

MR. MORAN: When interrupted by the adjournment I was endeavouring to prove what a large revenue the Government may receive from the full working of these goldfields, taking as a basis one-fourth of the number of the leases there, and taking the probable amount of labour required and the consequent Customs duties on the supplies imported for the use of those on the fields, and the increased railway revenue. I have simply one more great argument to advance, and it is the most important of all. We are about to continue the debate on the Loan Bill, and I would say that the necessity for that Bill is owing entirely to the existence of these two great goldfields; for the main items of that Bill are the railways which are going to these two centres. Those railways are to give facilities for carrying machinery to the fields, and the ordinary necessities of life. This House and the Government will fall far short of our requirements if, while building these railways, they do not use every possible endeavour to see that the object for which the railways are being built is kept in mind also; for if it be found impossible to procure a good and permanent supply of water on these fields, that being a *sine qua non* with regard to their development, then I say these railways will be a fallacy. I will come now to the measure which I propose, and which I place with all due deference in the hands of the

Ministry first, and secondly in the hands of the members of this House. The measure provides that a water right shall mean a ten years' lease of the area mentioned. I have come to this conclusion, that, as the development of these fields is pretty rapid, and as the population increases at a rapid rate, if permanent water be found on any area, the right of selling water to the public for ten years exclusively on that area will, no doubt, be a sufficient reward for the enterprise of the discoverer in providing the supply for those who will use it. I wish it to be known that I have as much abhorrence of monopoly as the Government say they have, or as they really have. I know the Government have developed a strong dislike to all sorts of monopoly in private enterprise; but I think ten years is a period quite short enough; and at the end of that time you will see the great advantage of the clause I put in here, stating that the Government may then resume the area, and may put up the water right to auction, or they may renew the lease to the original holder for a further term, at a rental based on a fair valuation. It is only fair that the Government should fix the value of the right at that period, and that the holder, if he wishes to go on, should pay a fair rental. Then it is provided that a water right of 1,000 acres shall be given for the obtaining of a constant daily supply of not less than 100,000 gallons of water, within a three mile radius of any declared goldfield townsite; and this area shall not be closer than one mile from the centre of such townsite. Now the proposed area of 1,000 acres is not an arbitrary limit; for when we bear in mind that we have millions of acres which, but for the existence of these goldfields, would be absolutely useless, and must remain so, I think you will agree with me that 1,000 acres is, comparatively, a mere speck on the vast area which is at present lying there useless. Some persons may say we cannot afford to give away the patrimony of those who have to come after us; but to such objectors I would say, What is the value or use of that land now lying waste, if we cannot procure water for developing those goldfields? The fields would have to be abandoned for want of water, and all that land would drop back

into a state of unoccupied wilderness. I have taken a radius of three miles from the centre of the townsite, because that is not a great distance to convey water, and I do not wish the water bore to go closer than a mile of the townsite, because it is possible that these towns may extend to enormous size. I state, in these regulations, that the thousand acres shall not be on the main line of reefing country on which the mining is centred. There is a large amount of waste land round each townsite altogether unoccupied at present. I may state that some companies and some enterprising individuals deem it more likely that a good supply of water may be got where the large leads of quartz go through the area. I have, therefore, limited the area of unoccupied land which may be granted upon a belt of country of that nature, to 100 acres; though very often the area may be much less, and may even go down to a quantity of 10 acres. Then I have fixed a scale of charges for the supply of water; and you will bear in mind that at present the very lowest price at which water can be obtained is 30s. per thousand gallons at the Government bore in Coolgardie, whereas the highest price to be charged in the scale I propose is 10s. per thousand gallons; and you will see that, by reducing the maximum price, a great boon will be conferred on the consumer. The scale of charges I propose is:—For 100,000 gallons daily, 10s. per 1,000; for 200,000, 7s. 6d. per 1,000; for 300,000, 6s. 8d. per 1,000; for 400,000, 5s. per 1,000; for 500,000, 4s. per 1,000; and over this quantity, 2s. 6d. per 1,000 gallons. It must be borne in mind that a man may sink 2,000ft. and strike a supply of only 1,000 gallons a day, whereas another man may sink 2,000 feet and strike a supply of half-a-million gallons daily; therefore, there is a great deal of luck in artesian boring, and it would scarcely be fair that the one man should reap the reward of nature's generosity by charging a lower price to consumers, while the other man, who had done an equal amount of boring, should not be able to compete with him in price because of his smaller supply. The man who strikes the larger flow of water will be the gainer by obtaining a larger revenue at the same scale of charge. The second division in my proposal is for

the sinking of shafts, namely:—"Water rights of one acre may be given to any person or company within townsites who shall put down shaft or bore to supply 5,000 gallons daily. It shall be supplied at a maximum price of 25s. per thousand at the shaft." Of course this acre may be given to any person or company who sinks a shaft for water where it may be most convenient—say, right in the centre of what may become a town. The area here proposed is not a large amount to give, but if the place grows into a town, there will, at the end of ten years, be an enormous value in that one acre, and it will be secured to the Government in the future. For cases where a small supply may be found outside of a town I have made this provision:—"In cases where such shaft or supply shall be without the townsites, a water right of ten acres shall be granted, and if it be half a mile from the town boundary a water right of fifty acres shall be given." Then follows this provision:—"Before the lease issues it shall be proven to the satisfaction of the Government that the shaft or well is capable of producing 5,000 gallons a day, and at no time shall the supply be less than this amount. Provided, however, that exemption from supply be given upon certificate of Government engineer to deepen or otherwise improve shaft, sufficient time being allowed to carry out work." Hon. members will see that, while safeguarding the people against a useless monopoly, no hardship will be put on the person who sinks the shaft, because, if something has gone wrong, it will only be fair to allow a reasonable amount of time to execute the necessary work. The next provision is:—"In the case of settlements, or fields not yet declared townsites, the right shall be given to sink and dispose of water, and provisional ten acre lease shall be granted. If afterwards a townsites be surveyed round it, this lease shall be cancelled, and the one acre lease substituted." This is intended to give confidence to persons to sink at once in likely places where a rush takes place; and if the new field proves permanent, the enterprising persons will have their shaft down, and an acre will be quite sufficient to conserve their interest, as they will have the benefit of the start. I provide also that "In all these cases it shall be compulsory

upon the holders to supply the water to the general public first for ordinary purposes. When this demand does not reach the supply, the leaseholders may sell the water to companies or others for any purpose whatever. Provided that, in all cases, the maximum price above fixed shall not be exceeded." I put this in to meet the case of persons who have got a water right, with a very good flow, and may be disposed to stand on their right, and say to some mining company that requires water:—"We know you cannot get water anywhere else, and we will not supply this water to you at the same price as to the general public." I think the regulations laid down here are full and ample for every case that is likely to arise. The next paragraph says:—"In all cases it shall be competent for the Government, through their engineer, to demand that a fair rate of progress be made with sinking or boring or other work connected with these rights." I think the officers of the Government should be quite competent to see that this is carried out; for it is only fair that if we give a substantial concession to a man, he should not dilly-dally with the work, and that he should not hawk his concession about. Further, I say:—"Water rights may be renewed at end of ten years, upon valuation basis, and it shall be optional with the Government to re-issue the lease at an annual rental to the original holders, or to put the right up to auction, and sell it to the highest bidder, fair compensation in every case being allowed for plant." This assumes that at the end of ten years the holder of the right will have reaped a full and sufficient reward for his enterprise, and after that period the Government should come in and put up the water right to public auction, or allow the same holder to go on at an annual rental. Now I come to one of the most important clauses in the measure, but I would say that I am taking the previous action of the Government as my example, and accepting it as a precedent for this provision:—"A bonus of £1 per foot will be granted, on certificate of Government engineer, to the first person or company who shall procure a permanent supply of water of not less than 250,000 gallons per day on the Eastern goldfields under

the above regulations, and a bonus of £1 per foot for a similar supply on the Murchison goldfields. Its permanency shall be determined six months after first supply, to satisfaction of Government." This proposal asks the House to vote £5,000 for paying bonuses to persons who will prove, once and for all, that we have a large underground supply of water on our two main goldfields. Seeing that we have, on the Loan Bill Schedule, £70,000 for the development of mineral resources, what I ask in this provision is a paltry sum to prove the great question whether artesian supplies of water are to be obtained by deep boring on our goldfields. I think that a company which will provide plant, and bore at its own risk for water in four or five different places, deserves a liberal bonus in the event of discovering a permanent supply of water; and if such experiments by private companies are unsuccessful, the risk will have been theirs, and the Government will not be bound to pay anything. If the companies do succeed in finding water, surely we would be failing in our duty, and in our common sense and judgment, if we did not consent to give them this small bonus. Now I come to a different phase of the question, and this part of my measure ought to have been carried out long ago. The fresh-water soaks are found at very long distances apart, and the search for them in dense scrub requires time, trouble, and expense. Heretofore the Government have not recognised the right of any man who found a fresh-water soak to receive any compensation. I know individual cases where men have found water, and the Government officers have afterwards abruptly ordered them off the place. I think that any man who will prospect and discover a rock soak should receive some compensation; and seeing the vast hardships some men have undergone before discovering water, I think the paltry sum of £20, here proposed, is little enough reward to the man who will show where a supply of fresh water can be got. Indeed, I think this altogether inadequate, because the discoverer must always sink to a certain depth, in order to prove whether there is a permanent soak or not. The next regulation in the list will enable the Government engineer to place his own valuation

on the work done in discovering a soak or fresh-water supply; and I think that, besides giving a bonus to the discoverer, he should be allowed the value of the work done in sinking the shafts or wells, as the case may be. This regulation says:—"In the case of new finds, a reward of £20 will be given for the discovery of permanent soak or fresh water supply, not already known, and the finder shall have the right to apply for valuation of work done, and be paid accordingly in cases where holes or shafts are sunk. Valuation to be fixed by Government officer." This concludes the list of regulations, and I have made them as brief as possible in the circumstances. Finally, seeing that we are likely to have another dry summer, and in order to give full publicity to these matters, I have added this paragraph:—"That these regulations be printed in principal papers of Eastern colonies, and also in the Press of Western Australia." This will give the people the knowledge that we are waking up to the full necessity of providing water on our goldfields, and they may know that, on coming to this colony, they will have a chance of doing some good for themselves on our goldfields. I look upon this as the most important question that has ever come before Parliament, and as one of the most important questions that will come before this colony during many future years. The Government or Parliament who can provide a permanent supply of water for the dry interior of this country will have done a greater work than any Government which brings in a purely political measure. If we once prove that this colony contains stores of water underground, many companies and individuals will be induced to take up large areas of land and stock them; and should our goldfields work out sooner than we expect, we shall have something to fall back on, and have permanent sources of revenue with which to pay for the large works we are constructing with loan money. I appeal to the Ministry, who have the responsibility of carrying out this work; I say also to the country members that a lot of the produce of the land will be consumed on these goldfields; and I appeal to the representatives of Perth and Fremantle, of Geraldton and Albany—all the mem-



bers of this House, to give this measure their consideration. Lastly, to the members of the North, from which cattle and sheep come, I would say it is important that they should have a great market for their fat stock. I hope all hon. members will give me a helping hand to pass this measure into law. I think it is every member's right to be a specialist for his own constituency's wants. I shall be glad to see the Government hold their present positions. The credit of the colony is as high as that of any other colony ever was; and if they accept this measure, I shall be pleased to help the Government for any number of years.

**THE SPEAKER:** I did not like to interrupt the hon. member's speech, but I wish now to give a ruling on the motion. These regulations, brought forward by the hon. member for Yilgarn, deal with the expenditure of public money; and as there has been no Message from the Governor asking the House to make an appropriation for this purpose, it is not in order for this debate to be continued any longer. Therefore, I must rule that it is out of order.

**MR. MORAN:** Well, sir, it is well known that I, as a young member, am not altogether conversant with the forms of the House; and I did not think the Government would take advantage of such a mean subterfuge as to allow me to fall into a trap of this kind. I hope that is not the case. I may mention that it was at the suggestion of the Government I brought it forward.

**THE SPEAKER:** It is not the fault of the Government. They probably did not contemplate that the hon. member was going to propose an expenditure of public money.

**THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest):** That aspect of the question did not occur to me until I heard the hon. member speaking on it. I would have pointed it out to the hon. member if I had thought of it before. But I think the hon. member's speech will have served a good purpose. He has brought the matter before the House, and we have an opportunity of considering what he has said.

#### THE LOAN BILL (£1,500,000).

#### SECOND READING—RESUMED DEBATE.

**MR. RICHARDSON:** In rising to continue the debate on this important

Bill, I need hardly add my congratulations to the Government, both on the boldness and the comprehensiveness of the measure, and on their earnest desire to develop the best and widest diversity of interests in this great colony. It must be evident to all hon. members, on reading the schedule of loan works proposed, that the Government have endeavoured, to the best of their ability, to include all the public works which, in their judgment, will lead to a right development of this great country, and to the conservation of its best interests. Whatever may be our criticisms on the measure, or on its various items, I think most hon. members will agree in giving credit to the Government, at any rate for their honesty of intention, in trying to do what they can to push this country ahead at this important stage in its history. I have listened attentively to the remarks and criticisms of other hon. members with a desire to learn from them, to learn from the Premier, who introduced the measure, and from those members who have commented upon it, and especially those who, to a certain extent, adversely criticised it; feeling, as most of us do, some hesitation in making up our minds on the great questions involved in the borrowing of this large amount of money. I have been anxious to get some help from them, but I do not see much help in any of the criticisms yet delivered. In looking for some clue to the reasons of hon. members in opposing the Bill, and for voting "No" against it, I have been disappointed, with the exception, perhaps, of the speech of the hon. member for Albany, who is the only one amongst us that disagrees with the larger portion of the items. And, after all, what he has said has not afforded us much comfort, because when he came to the most questionable item, that which we have most hesitation in swallowing, he gave his whole support to it, so that one cannot help surmising that if the item had been one of half a million for connecting the Donnybrook section of railway with Albany, he would have swallowed the whole of it. So we cannot justify his criticism on the score of the reasonableness of the work as compared with its cost, because the hon. member has not the slightest hesitation in approving of a railway towards Bridgetown, and there-

fore towards Albany, which is to cost £100,000. The hon. member (Mr. Randell) who is looked upon as the leader of the Opposition side of the House, prefaced his remarks by saying he did not speak as the leader of a party, but only as an individual member. I think that was, to a certain extent, a desertion of his colours, because on this question he ought to have voiced the opinion of his party, if it is a concrete party at all. However, he only voiced his own opinion; and though he gave approval to the major portion of the Bill, yet he expressed some doubt as to the condition of the colony, and its progress and prosperity. He questioned whether we are individually more prosperous than we were some years ago, and endeavoured to prove his point by asking whether we are individually more prosperous or in a better position than in a previous period. I do not think that touches the core of the question at all. It is possible that individuals, that certain men engaged in business, may not, perhaps, be more prosperous; but that is no evidence that the colony as a whole may not be in a sounder and more advanced and more progressive state; because, having attracted a great deal of notice, and attracted many persons who are on the look-out for occupations in which they can make money, the consequence may be that the volume of business in the colony is split up into many more portions among a larger number of competitors, and it is reasonable to suppose that each man in business is not getting so large a share now as some were getting formerly. So, although the volume of business in the colony may have increased very largely, yet individual traders may not be getting so large a share of it now. I come now to the one caution given us by the hon. member for Albany, that we should beware of following the lead of other colonies in over-borrowing, and he pointed to the disastrous results now following upon it. Well, we have heard a great deal about that, and there is much in it which deserves attention. It is a very grave question indeed whether the present position of the Eastern colonies may not be attributed, in a great degree, to some other cause than that of excessive borrowing. The idea has occurred to me very often, in reflecting over this matter, that this

aspect of the question may properly be challenged. For instance, Victoria is pointed out as pre-eminently a case in which this warning should apply. Victoria is usually singled out as the colony *par excellence* where depression is severe at the present time, as the result of over-borrowing, Queensland also is pointed at with the finger of scorn; while New Zealand is rather held up as an example of prosperity. But I would like to ask how it is that the colony of Victoria, which has borrowed to the extent of about £42 per head of population, is now in a more depressed condition, although it is naturally a richer and more fertile colony than Queensland, which has borrowed to the extent of £74 per head, and is more depressed than New Zealand, which has borrowed to the extent of nearly £70 per head? This only shows that the argument as to the depression being caused by over-borrowing is not conclusive. Some other cause must be sought for the extremely acute depression in Victoria, or else it must be apparent that a colony which has borrowed so little as £42 per head ought to be in a much more prosperous condition than one that has borrowed £74 per head. This leads me to challenge the conclusion that the amount borrowed per head is a sufficient explanation. I am inclined to attribute the depression to the tremendous shrinkage in the value of products, not only in Australia, but throughout the world. If we seek deeper, we are more likely to find the true cause. I think it is not so much the amount of borrowing per head as the manner in which the money borrowed has been expended. There is another great feature in the solution of this problem. We all know that the way in which the colonies have expended their loans has been lavish. One fact alone reveals a great deal towards the solution of this question, and that is that while we in Western Australia are making railways at a cost of under £3,000 per mile, the railways in Victoria have cost £18,000 to £20,000 a mile, and all the public works in that colony have been conducted on the same scale. The Parliament Houses cost two or three millions. [AN HON. MEMBER: No, no.] Looking at all her expenditure, I make certain that the Houses of Parliament in Victoria cost over a million, and I have seen that stated

in print very often. I look upon all these factors as offering more of a solution of the difficulties in other colonies than the amount of their borrowing. I am not saying all this with the idea of showing that we in this colony can go on borrowing to an unlimited extent, but in order to get some sound ground of hope and confidence, and to show that we need not be scared away by what may be bugbears. Another serious matter, having a close connection with this Loan Bill, is the amount of our exports and imports, but more particularly our exports. I cannot say I have learnt with pleasure that our exports have not increased as we might expect them to do, with the exception of gold, which has increased very largely indeed; but I must repeat that a country's exports and imports may not be an exact index of her prosperity, because the more a country produces of those things which her inhabitants usually require, the less imports and exports will be shown on paper, while, in fact, the country may be much more prosperous, with a small proportion of imports and exports, than another country which shows larger returns. I also maintain that the extreme shrinkage in the amount of the exports is accountable for in many ways. One is the immense shrinkage in the value of our wool, and we must bear in mind that the quantity of wool exported is larger than ever it was. I would like to press that fact on the attention of hon. members, that although we had a terrific and unprecedented drought recently, which decimated our flocks by hundreds of thousands, yet we have a larger export of wool now than ever. We cannot be accountable for the depression in the price of wool in the world's market, but that is no indication that we are going backward in the matter of wool exports; and I confidently anticipate that, with the help of ordinary seasons, this valuable staple product of the colony will figure more largely in the statistical returns than it has done in the last few years. Then there is timber. There is an old saying that you cannot have your cake and eat it; therefore, if we are using large quantities of jarrah in the construction of our railways and other public works, we cannot expect to show a large export of timber. There is also a large and hope-

ful trade in jarrah timber opening up in the demand for paving streets, both on the Continent and in England, and we may look forward to the demand for that export trade being almost unlimited, and, perhaps, greater than we can supply. It is a question whether we ought not to take some steps to conserve our forests, and particularly the young timber. Nothing is inexhaustible if you attack it too heavily, and it would be wise, even at this stage, for the Government to give serious attention to the protection of our young and immature timber. Referring now to the proposed railway from Mullewa to the Murchison goldfields, a good many hon. members do not seem to think there is much doubt about the advisability of that item. I do not feel altogether satisfied about the amount proposed for expenditure on that work. Half a million for that purpose is a large amount, however promising those goldfields may be, and I have very great hopes of them indeed; but still the amount proposed for this railway is very large for connecting goldfields which, from the nature of things, are more or less speculative, as regards the permanency and extent of the population. We have no right to conclude, from the results of alluvial rushes, that this population is going to be with us for the next ten years, say; and unless the probable duration of these goldfields will exceed ten years, we should not be justified in expending this large amount. Still, we should be justified in doing a great deal to develop these goldfields; and it is a question whether the Government could not adopt some idea of making a cheaper kind of pioneer railway. Australia has followed too much the English method of constructing railways, and it is time we got out of the idea that a railway must be made in a most substantial and permanent manner. Light lines of pioneer railway, made with steel rails and sleepers, and without ballast except at the sides, have been made to some extent successfully in Queensland. I have read that Sir Samuel Griffith, when Premier, carried a vote of money sufficient to construct a short experimental light railway, and that being found a success, the Parliament sanctioned the construction of a light railway to connect the Croydon goldfield. Although that is not a perfect railway, it is answering all

the practical purposes of traffic. I am told that a line of railway like that could be made here to be run at a speed of 15 to 20 miles an hour.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn): No; 12 miles an hour.

MR. RICHARDSON: But we are dealing here with a level country, not exposed to long continuance of wet weather, nor long winters, and a country where iron sleepers will stand very well in comparison with wood, on account of the short season of damp they would be exposed to here, and avoiding the ravages of white ants, the iron sleepers being thus a great advantage. I am told that in a level country such as the route of this line would be, a light railway of 3ft. 6in. gauge could be laid down for £1,200 or £1,300 per mile. That would be a saving of some £600 per mile, which would reduce the cost of this railway to Cue goldfield to a practicable figure which we need not be afraid to face. Another great feature is that if the traffic on this railway increased in a few years to such extent as would warrant the laying down of a more permanent railway, the materials of this pioneer line could be taken up for opening some other new district in the interior, and a more permanent line could be laid along this track. So, that is another great advantage of beginning in this manner. We should be going a little more slowly and surely, and feeling our way, and not plunging into such a great outlay as if we build a permanent railway now at a much greater cost. I say this with a desire that the alternative method should be discussed. As to the proposed railway from Southern Cross to Coolgardie, there seems to be no necessity to discuss it, because it seems to be urgently required, and is only 115 miles in length, and it must be built substantially, because I believe it will, before long, form a link in the great transcontinental railway that is projected to connect us with South Australia and the other colonies. I will pass over some of the other items. The harbour works at Fremantle seem to be almost a necessity, and, having embarked in that scheme, I do not see how we can hold our hand from continuing it when everything is turning out as well as we could possibly expect. There must be

a good harbour formed at this central port for the most settled portion of the colony. The items of "Rolling stock" and "Roads and Bridges" are absolute necessities. "Schools" should not be included in a Loan Bill, as the money for these ought to come out of current revenue. I will now deal with the two items which hon. members regard as the most doubtful, namely, the "Railway from Donnybrook towards Bridgetown," and the "Railway to Collie coalfields." As to the Collie, I do not think the deposits of coal have been sufficiently proved, or the quality sufficiently assured, to justify this House in voting £70,000 or £80,000, which may not be sufficient. After the railway has been made, who is going to work the coal mines? Where is the coal going to be shipped? If at Bunbury, is that a port sufficiently good for the purpose? I am inclined to think it is not, and that the next thing may be harbour works at Bunbury facing us. If we attempt the land carriage to Perth and Fremantle, it blocks the whole question of exporting the coal; and if it is not to be exported, will the local consumption justify us in spending, perhaps, £100,000 on this railway to the coalfields? I believe the coal from Newcastle (New South Wales) can be landed here at about 18s. a ton, and its value for steam producing purposes is greater than the Collie coal. As to the calculation placed before the House of the relative cost of the coal, there seems to be some error, and I do not think the report before us is conclusive, because one of the most important of the tests failed—that is, when the Collie coal was used on an engine going up the steep grades at Greenmount, the test was a failure. We are told the failure is easily to be accounted for by the fineness of the coal, it having crumbled by long exposure to the weather. If so, why was not some coarser coal used as a test? Whichever way we look at it, we must infer that the tests of the Collie coal were not conclusive, and I do not think they will justify this House in voting this money. I might almost say the same thing about the railway to the Blackwood district; for, anxious as I am to encourage the people who are settled in that district, and while fully sympathising with them, and hoping the day will come shortly when they will have a

railway, yet I cannot say that the present stage of development in that district is sufficient to justify us in building that railway at present. Before this question is finally settled, I hope some kind of a compromise will be proposed by which we can give to these people in the district some assurance that they will have a railway in a couple of years, but that the House will not at present commit itself to the expenditure of that money. And, according to the report of our Engineer-in-Chief on the Bridgetown Railway, instead of being able to build that line for £100,000, we shall require £150,000 or £160,000, because there will be no use in stopping the line half way or at a stump, and if we really think that railway is justified, let us do the work properly and open up the Blackwood district. I am anxious to see the people who are settled in that country get a sufficient guarantee from this House to satisfy them in going on with their improvements and showing what they can do with the land. Still, I cannot see that we should commit ourselves to an expenditure of £160,000 or £170,000 for that railway, together with the other expenditure for the Collic coalfield, in view of the present developments. I hope these proposals will not be shelved, but that they may be put into such a shape that the House may have an opportunity of voting on them at a later date. I wish to allude next to an old friend with a new face—the item “Development of goldfields and mineral resources. £70,000.” I think that item must have been copied from the previous Loan Bill without alteration. When it was brought in before, I complained of its being put in a lump, and expressed a desire that the Government would allocate the amount in some way, and show the members of Northern districts how much their districts were to get, or whether they were to get anything, because those goldfields which happen to be situated a long way from the capital come off second-best in the apportionment of loan money, and I do not think it is a fair thing to give these Northern goldfields no assurance as to what they are to get. The Northern people look down the items of this Loan Bill, and write to the newspapers asking, “Where do we come in?” They say, “Here is the colony borrowing a million

and a half of money, and we in the North are supposed to pay our fair share of the taxation, but we don't see our districts figuring in the Bill for any item of the money.” I have endeavoured to show to such persons that there is a sum to be spent on the Northern Stock Route, and that some share of the £70,000 for the development of goldfields will be spent in the North; but they have replied that this sort of thing was said about the last Loan Bill, but they did not get any share of the money. Some say that £20,000 to £25,000 should be allotted for expenditure northward of the Murchison, or some proportionate sum, so that the people in the North might be assured that the Government did not forget their wants, and those people would have a guarantee that some portion of the money would be spent in the North. This might, perhaps, be remedied in the annual Estimates. Item No. 9 is “Development of agriculture, including land purchase, clearing land, draining of land, market in Perth, and cold storage.” That item is a bit mixed. [Mr. R. F. SHOLL: Mixed on purpose.] One may make anything he likes out of it, though I hope we may know more about it some day. There is one thing in it I do not like to see, and that is an expenditure by the State for clearing land. If the Government do intend to help agriculture, I hope they will not enter into the executive field by clearing land or building houses, and employing workmen on the “Government stroke,” because I do not think it will come out right. I am glad to see in the item a provision for land purchase, and I wish that course had been taken four or five years ago, when the Government might have purchased some thousands of acres, when some of the best agricultural land adjoining railways was open for purchase; and if the State had acquired that land at the time there would now be under cultivation, perhaps, 50,000 acres more than at present. The answer we got then was that there were no funds available. I am glad to see an item for this purpose now, but I am afraid the land may not be obtainable now at the same figure as then. I agree that the Government should have a fund so that, when any good opportunity occurs, they should be able to purchase agricultural blocks from

absentee owners. I hope that will be done, and that the Government will use business capacity and ordinary caution in spending the money.

MR. LEFROY: Where is the land you allude to?

MR. RICHARDSON: In the Eastern districts, and it might have been growing corn now. As to item No. 12, "Lighthouses," I do not know whether the Government intend to carry out the old idea of building a lighthouse at the Leenwin.

THE PREMIER (HON. Sir J. Forrest): Yes, but that is not included in this Bill.

MR. RICHARDSON: I am not in favour of building a lighthouse there for the benefit of traders going past our shores to other places. In conclusion, I would say, if the Government could adopt some method of making pioneer railways in a cheap way, then the possibility of making a railway from Port Hedland to Marble Bar might be entertained. Some of the richest gold reefs in the colony are about Marble Bar and Bamboo Creek. There are two or three rivers to cross, which could be crossed with low bridges; and, if a cheap kind of railway could be built there, such a scheme would not be impracticable in the present position of the colony. As a shipping place for fat stock Port Hedland will be one of the great centres. I draw attention particularly with a view of seeing what there is in that place, and what it would cost to open up Port Hedland as one of the best water-ways in the colony. There would be no objection, in that case, to a narrow-gauge railway, as there would not be a break of gauge in connecting with any main line. Again complimenting the Government on the evident desire they have shown to deal fairly with most parts of the colony, though they have rather forgotten the North, and hoping they may yet be able to remedy that, I conclude my remarks by saying I have no intention of opposing the second reading of this Loan Bill.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Sir, — The Premier, in that very excellent address with which he introduced this Loan Bill, I think it must be admitted, stated in the ablest way all that possibly could be said on the side which he advocates — the Government case for the raising of this further loan of a million and a-half.

Hon. members will recollect that he dared, and defied, and challenged the House in a manner which left no doubt as to the earnest conviction which he, at any rate, held as to the advisability of this loan. In fact, it would appear, from his standpoint, that there was no other side to the question. But, I venture to suggest, there are two sides to most questions, and that there is another side even to this one; and it is the duty of hon. members on this (the Opposition) side of the House to present that other side of the question. One thing I was very much pleased to see was that the Premier grasped, in a most earnest way, the fact that he was presenting to this House a very serious question, and that very grave responsibility rested on the Ministry in making this proposal. This undoubtedly is correct, that it is an exceedingly serious question for the Government to propose, at this stage of the colony's history, to increase our indebtedness by over one-third. Our present debt, including the Midland Railway guarantee—and I venture to say this House recognises the fact, as the Attorney General did the other evening, that the guarantee is an absolute liability which we shall have to meet, and unfortunately it is a liability which has not been covered or provided for by any sinking fund, but which will have to be paid or provided for inside of twenty years—adding that guarantee of half-a-million to our existing loans of £3,200,000, we have the large total of £3,700,000 as our present indebtedness. I am aware that the Premier, in his calculation, has deducted the amount there is to our credit as sinking fund, out of the existing loans. It is perfectly true that we are so much the better off, but as we are under obligation to continue paying the interest on the whole amount of the loans, and as we must continue to provide this sinking fund, then the question of taxation—the question of what we have to provide from revenue—exists precisely the same as if we had nothing to the credit of that fund; and consequently our indebtedness, as far as interest is concerned, amounts to £3,200,000 *plus* the £500,000 guaranteed for the Midland Railway. This makes the ratio of our present indebtedness £48 per head of population. If we also add this loan now proposed to be raised, and if we admit that by the time

the whole of this loan is actually raised the population will have increased to 100,000, which is as large an increase as we can reasonably expect, then we bring our indebtedness up to £52 per head. The ratio of interest to-day is £2 9s. per head, and our interest will then be £2 12s. per head. Now if we turn to our neighbours for a comparison, we find Victoria and New South Wales have an indebtedness of about £42 and £45 per head respectively. The present total indebtedness of Victoria is £47,297,780; but in looking at these figures we should bear in mind that the neighbouring colonies have raised a large portion of their loans at  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. They are at a disadvantage with this colony—and I am pleased to say we are a long way ahead of them in this particular—that the repayment of their loans is not provided for by means of a sinking fund; and difficulties have accrued, and will accrue, in consequence. Still, on the present occasion I am dealing with the amount of interest which has to be raised yearly for meeting our indebtedness, and although Victoria now stands with an interest bill of £1,844,000 per annum, yet the average per head of population for making up that interest is £1 13s. 6d. per head. That is all that colony has to provide, including the money that has been spent wastefully on those unprofitable railways which have been spoken of. The whole amount which the Government of Victoria have to provide yearly for interest, by means of taxation, is £1 13s. 6d. per head. If we consent to the further loan now proposed for this colony, we shall have to face the necessity of raising, by taxation, interest to the amount of £2 12s. per head; and the question presents itself as to whether we are justified in putting upon this colony, in its present effort to progress, taxation for interest alone amounting to £2 12s. per head. Nothing but the very gravest reasons—reasons of a sound and earnest character—can justify such a step. I can imagine the consternation which would be raised in the minds of hon. members, even in the mind of the Hon. the Premier himself, if we were to receive, through the Press, a telegram from Sydney or Melbourne to-morrow, saying the Government had decided to raise a loan equal to one-third the amount of their total existing

loans—a matter of £16,000,000! What would be the feeling? What effect would that announcement have upon the people of this colony? Yet, as far as the proportion is concerned, the loan now proposed here is an absolute increase of our indebtedness to the extent of one-third; and we, only a small people, will have to bear the weight of that large indebtedness, which is just as great to us, proportionately, as would be a proposal to raise £16,000,000 more for expenditure in Victoria. Our conditions and our prospects are decidedly different—I am pleased to see that we have a very much brighter prospect—but I contend we are not justified in discounting this prosperity too heavily; we are not justified in drawing too heavily upon the future, and imagining that, because we have been prosperous for a while, this prosperity is going to continue. I hope it will. I hope the most sanguine expectations of the Ministry will be realised. I hope brighter days than any expected by hon. members will be realised. But I contend it is the duty, at any rate of hon. members on this side of the House, to speak on the other side of the question. Looking back upon the past, to the time when the present Government proposed their first Loan Bill, will hon. members say there was any forecast of the present prosperity at that time? Was it not a somewhat venturesome thing for the present Government to propose a railway to Yilgarn, with the prospect then before this colony? And to-day, looking with our present experience to guide us, if we were now to shut out of view the Coolgardie goldfield, unknown then, would not the Ministry to-day have to stand up and excuse and justify their previous proposal for building that railway to Southern Cross, if there had been no subsequent discoveries of gold at Coolgardie? Is there not also very grave reason to charge the Ministry with lack of forethought in building the railway to Mullewa? That railway was supposed to cost £100,000, but not long afterwards the Government found that £40,000 more would be necessary, then another £40,000 was asked for, and to-day that railway is not completed. And, I say, if there were now no Murchison goldfield behind that railway, would the Government be in a position to-night to defend the building

of that railway? Then, further, a railway to the South is held up as one of the most prosperous, in reference to the past loan. I am glad to see it is a prosperous railway. I am pleased to accept the figures of the hon. the Director of Public Works, whom they would speak of in Victoria as the Minister of Railways.

MR. SIMPSON: I wish you had him in Victoria.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: They would give him a larger salary over there. Looking at this railway to Bunbury, hon. members should not lose sight of the fact that a large amount of the traffic on that railway has come to it through the discovery of the goldfields, and but for the existence of those goldfields, that railway would not be the success it is to-day. So that all this prosperity and this success which the Government congratulate themselves upon lies in the accidental discovery of those goldfields, which we all rejoice to have in the colony. But the question is this: Was it forethought? Did the Government know anything about them? Is it a manifestation of wisdom and forethought on their part? I contend that, but for the discovery of those goldfields, the attitude of the Government to-night, before this House, would be a very different one from what it is. They did not create the goldfields, and they did not discover them. The next point which the Premier has urged, as a reason for the second reading of this Bill, is that the people demand these works. Well, do they? When, and where? The people, when this House was elected, knew nothing about these works.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I do not agree with you. They were set forth on the 23rd of May, at Bunbury.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Yes, and the election to 17 seats in this House was decided within a fortnight after. There was no possible chance for the opinion of candidates for this House or the opinion of constituencies to be formed upon these works. I do not think the people of this country have grasped, even now, what is involved in this Bill. I do not believe there is evidence before the constituencies which would warrant them in coming to a conclusion upon this question now. However, if the Premier thinks the country requires this Bill, the best course is to take a vote in this

House. Still, I contend that the country has not been consulted. Now we come to the test position which the Premier takes up in connection with this Bill. He asks, firstly, are these works necessary? And I answer, yes. I answer, they are absolutely necessary, some of them. These two railways to the goldfields are absolutely necessary, and they are absolutely urgent. I am prepared to go further than the Premier.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I think that is far enough.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I am prepared to say these railways to goldfields are so necessary, and so urgent to the future of this colony, that if it were requisite to stop every other public work in the colony in order to construct these railways, those works should be stopped and these railways should be constructed.

MR. SIMPSON: Except the Geraldton jetty.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Yes, except the Geraldton jetty. I say these goldfields railways are necessary. I say they are urgent. I say it is imperative and vital that they should be constructed. But when you ask the questions, is it necessary, and is it desirable, and is it urgent that these railways should be constructed out of loan money?—then I answer you, emphatically, No. I contend there is no reason why this country should take upon itself an obligation which will bring up the indebtedness to £2 12s. per head annually for interest alone. If there are legitimate firms, syndicates, or companies, that are willing and able to build these railways, their proposals should be fairly considered. All that we have upon this question is that some hon. members say they “don’t believe,” and they “don’t think,” and “don’t know.” Because we have had some experience of syndicate land-grant railways, one of which practically had nothing behind it, and the other one unfortunately lost its principal in the death of its best financial man—and hon. members know quite well that but for the death of Anthony Hordern there would have been no difficulty in the financing of the Great Southern Railway—because we have had experience of these syndicates, that is no reason why we should not consider fresh proposals from syndicates to build railways, on a different principle, without any land grants. There are some of the people



behind these syndicates who could buy all the railways in the country. And yet the hon. the Premier has declared these persons are impecunious adventurers. There are men behind these syndicates who can raise enough cash to buy all the railways in the country.

MR. A. FORREST: And they will keep behind, too.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Here we get proposals asking that the Government will treat with people who are prepared to prove their *bona fides*, and to satisfy the Government; yet how do the Government treat them? They send a telegram saying, curtly, that the Government decline to treat. [MR. RICHARDSON:

And quite right.] I contend it was not right; that at the very least the Government ought to have made inquiry; that at the very least, before they took the responsibility of refusing to treat with firms which were, possibly, able to build these railways, they ought to have satisfied themselves more certainly than they have done, in reference to this matter. I contend that, while it is absolutely necessary to build these railways, it is not absolutely necessary to build them with loan money. Then the next question that is asked is, will it pay to build them? I want to call the attention of the hon. member for the De Grey (Mr. Richardson) to what he may, perhaps, have omitted in reference to this Murchison railway. If the hon. member would go up to the Murchison district we should be able to show him at grass—and I think the Premier will be able to agree with me on this point, at least—a very large quantity of stone for crushing; that there is in sight—

[MR. A. FORREST: Is it any good?] well, stone that has been tested at six and seven ounces to the ton; that there is at grass stone ready to crush which would pay for the whole cost of this railway, and the equipment as well. And yet, in the face of that fact, I am prepared to say the Government are not justified in borrowing money to build that railway, if they can get it built by private enterprise. It may appear absurd to some hon. members, but I wish to assure them, absurd as it may appear, that I make the statement because I believe it, and that may be more absurd still, perhaps. I have here a letter received only to-day, from one of the leading men in my con-

stituency, and he informs me that a petition is in course of signature, which he believes will be influentially signed, asking this House to entertain the question of constructing this railway upon Mr. Lush's scheme.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Who is he?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: He is a gentleman whom the Premier has seen, and for whom he has a great amount of respect. Here is an opinion, at any rate, and that opinion may be backed by a good many influential people in that district; and one of the reasons why that opinion will be backed is this, that those people believe the Government intend to build this railway by the squatters' stations, and not by a route for connecting the goldfields; and they believe that if this railway is to be made to pay, as I believe also, it must go by way of the goldfields—it must go by Yalgoo, the Island, the Day Dawn, and into Cue. I have very grave suspicions that this line, if constructed by the Government, is going by the stations. I want to urge on the Government that, if they wish to make this railway pay, it should go *via* the goldfields. I do not know what their plan is, but I strongly urge this route. The Premier has asked, Will it pay? I say that if you take this railway by way of the goldfields you may make it pay. The line to Coolgardie, I take it for granted, will pay, though I am not an authority upon that. But supposing we build these railways to the goldfields, do hon. members expect they will pay interest on the borrowed money for some years to come? If they do, they expect what is unreasonable; they expect what they will not be able to achieve, except by the very improper expedient of making differential rates. No other railway has paid, as yet, in the early period of its working. Do the Government expect these railways will pay not only the working expenses but the yearly interest? If the Government can show us these railways will certainly pay, that will get rid of one great difficulty which is in my mind. Where is the interest on these loans to come from? With the revenue of the colony such as it is, I see no grounds for supposing we are warranted in incurring a yearly charge which practically amounts to £260,000 for interest alone. I do not see where

the money is to come from. If these two railways, which are to cost about £700,000, will pay the interest in addition to the working expenses, then these railways will pay. If it be proved to the satisfaction of the Government—and I suppose we shall have to be satisfied with their judgment—that these private companies cannot construct these railways, and cannot give satisfaction as to their ability to construct them—and I think the Government are pretty well satisfied upon that already—then I say this country should take the responsibility of borrowing the money for the construction of these railways; and, although it will be a heavy amount for the country to pay, yet I think the country is so absolutely dependent upon the development of the goldfields, that at any risk and any hazard these railways ought to be constructed. But the question that lies behind is: May we not have the railways without the responsibility? The Government have settled that question by saying we cannot; therefore, if we must have the railways, and must not have syndicates, it is a case of "Hobson's choice." We must take the Government, and we must take the loan money. We may hope the Government will construct them quickly, and open them in sections, and get on with the work as fast as possible; and we may hope to have good railways constructed in the cheapest possible manner. There is a point I want to emphasise to the advantage of the Government; for, when I can, I like to say something with the Government. The Premier evidently felt, and felt deeply, as we all feel, the seriousness of the story that is told in the list of imports and exports, as reported by the Collector of Customs. And the Premier brings us down to this point, that while we have imported a very large amount, our exports have gone back in value £497,412.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Not gone back.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Well, we have got a revised edition of the Premier's speech, and let us see what it says:—"For 1890 our exports were valued at £671,813, and out of that amount £86,664 was for gold, leaving our exports for that year, exclusive of gold, at £585,149. Three years afterwards, in 1893, the total value of our exports had certainly in-

creased to £918,147; but, of that amount, no less than £421,385 represented the value of our gold export; so that the value of the exports which the colony has been accustomed to rely upon only amounted for 1893 to £496,762, as compared with £585,149 in 1890." What I want to say is that this export of gold is a proper export, and should be set against the imports. It is not only a proper export, but it is the best possible export. In the past history of Australia, there was a time when we could send away a bale of wool and get £25 for it. Can you get that to-day? We can take a sovereign and buy eight ounces of silver with it. What is true of these two things is the very key-note of what the hon. member for the De Grey has touched to-night, the very key-note of Victoria's or Australia's depression, the very key-note of the world's depression; and behind the whole of the difficulty is the question of currency, on one hand, and the depression in the value of produce, on the other. So eminent an authority as Dr. Giffen said, so far back as 1893, that the depreciation in the value of produce may go on from age to age. I say we have no reason to expect that wool will ever reach £25 a bale again. We have no reason to expect that silver will again reach 5s. an ounce, or that wheat will realise 3s. a bushel in the world's market. But while every other commodity has depreciated, gold has appreciated; and gold will buy more to-day than ever in its history. Consequently, if we can pay our debts with gold, it is better for us than exporting wool or wheat.

MR. RICHARDSON: That depends on what it costs us to get the gold.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It depends upon what the gold will buy in the world's market. It will buy more in the world's market to-day than any other commodity you can raise, because gold is the accepted standard of currency. It is important to know that we are exporting the most valuable commodity the world possesses.

MR. RICHARDSON: Is £400,000 worth of gold worth more than £400,000 worth of wool? That is what we want to know.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It is not that. If your gold costs £10 an ounce to raise and you get only £4 for it, that is one thing, but if it does not cost you 10s. an

ounce to win, then you will be able to pay your debts. I want to call the attention of this House to the warning voice. Notwithstanding that we give credit for all this gold, there is still a very serious warning voice in this question of exports, and which the Government have recognised. There is still a deficiency of £500,000 beyond, and I want to emphasise this, because it touches the point before us. It is always so: your exports diminish when you are borrowing and spending money. Whenever you commence a borrowing policy, you create unnatural, abnormal conditions. You take away from the ordinary, cheaper, harder conditions of life, men out of those ranks, to work in other, if not easier, yet more exciting conditions; and, as a consequence, your natural exports decrease, because you are bringing into the country money which you are not earning, but which you are borrowing. It has always been the case in the history of the world, and this colony will be no exception. Whenever you commence a borrowing policy, the margin between your exports and imports will be widened in proportion to the amount you borrow. The principle is this, that if you go on increasing your borrowing, you decrease your exports. If you import £1,500,000 worth of goods from London, and if you borrow £1,500,000 in the London market at the same time, certainly you will not require to export goods in order to pay your debts. Having accepted the position that we must borrow money in order to construct these railways, I want the Government to face, fairly and squarely, the question that still lies behind, which is that they are proposing to borrow, according to this schedule, over £500,000 for works that are not of a reproductive character. We are going to ask the people in London to lend us a million and a half of money, and those people will find, when they examine this schedule, that £20,000 of the loan is to be spent on schools. That is, we are going to ask them to lend us a million and a half of money, £20,000 of which is to be spent in educating our children. What will the London people say? What will the London financiers say? What, indeed, have the London financiers already said, as published in the Perth newspapers yesterday.

MR. RICHARDSON: Financiers quote our stocks at £110.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: But we shall see what they will quote them at, by and by. Then the next item in the schedule is £50,000 for a stock route. That can scarcely be said to be a reproductive work.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): £50,000 for what? That item is "Roads and Bridges, including stock route to Northern district."

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Will the Government dispute their own figures? What are roads and bridges in that district for, but for bringing the stock along?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The money for roads and bridges is not all for the Northern district.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: For roads and bridges and the stock route there are £50,000 to be expended out of this loan; and are you going to tell the people in London that you have not got money enough to make a stock route, and you are going to borrow for that purpose?

[Several hon. members interjected: "No, no, that is not it."]

MR. LEAKE: I rise to protest. Is this a parrot cage, or a deliberative Assembly? It seems to me the hon. member is not allowed to speak.

THE SPEAKER: It is disorderly for hon. members to interject so much.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): If the hon. member makes a statement that is not correct, are we not at liberty to call attention to it?

THE SPEAKER: You are not at liberty to interject, when a member is speaking.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I do not mind interjections. I interject myself. Item No. 14 in the schedule is £50,000 for roads and bridges and a stock route. Are you prepared to tell the people in London that you intend to spend your loan money in this way? That expenditure is absolutely unproductive. I am not disputing the necessity for the expenditure, but I say this is an unproductive work, and such expenditure ought not to come out of loan money. I say we ought to be prepared to put our hands in our pockets to construct such works as these. We debit posterity with the cost of educating our children, with the cost of making our roads and

bridges and a stock route, instead of providing the money out of our own pockets. To nearly the whole of this remaining £500,000 the same argument will apply, that while the works themselves are necessary, and are justified and desirable, I say we cannot afford to borrow £500,000 to construct unproductive works of this character, and pay the annual interest on that money, in our present circumstances. Then, some hon. members will say, if the works are necessary we must borrow the money to construct them. The Treasurer tells us he has got £88,000 in hand, and this will enable the Government to go on with the Fremantle harbour works for some time. If we could do as I suggest, that is to strike out this loan altogether, and build these great railways to the goldfields by private enterprise, then we should have £75,000 a year saved in interest alone; and during the four years which the Government propose for the construction of these loan works, the saving of that interest would amount to a total of £300,000; adding the £88,000 which the Government say they have in hand as a surplus from last year, these sums together would make £388,000; therefore this total, and the increase we may expect during the prosperous years, would enable the Government to do all these unproductive works in the schedule during the four years. I contend we ought to save this £75,000 a year, and instead of using it for paying interest on the proposed loan, we ought to use it in building these unproductive works. I do not think this or any other colony is justified in going to the London money market and asking for loan money to build unproductive works. The Premier and the Government admit this is not to be the last loan, though they wish it was. And yet I do not wish it to be the last, because I presume there may be conditions in this colony which may justify us in going up to forty millions. But in our present position and with our present prospects, we have to face the probability that before the Government have raised this million-and-a-half, they will come to this House and ask for more money; so that the question of interest will be raised over and over again, and unless our population increases much more rapidly than

even the Premier seems to anticipate, we shall have a further load in the shape of interest to pay. But this very admission sweeps away the argument of increased population, because while the Premier is looking for the increase of population up to 125,000, to help in paying the interest on this loan, he has already admitted that before we reach that stage we shall probably want another loan. And who is going to pay the interest on that? You cannot make the newcomers pay the interest on that further loan, and also pay interest on our own loan. It strikes me that we, to-day, ought not to build on the prospects of those who come after us, and that those who come after will bring their own responsibilities, and make their own charges on the Government when the time comes. I will conclude by saying that I have very little hope of convincing hon. members on the opposite (the Ministerial) side of the House. I am not speaking with that idea. But, at the same time, it is possible that days of difficulty may come to this colony, that days may come when we may possibly find a difficulty in paying all this interest and providing for all these loans; and when that day comes, it will be on record that hon. members on this side of the House gave a warning that was not heeded.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): It is very easy to warn.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I will just conclude by saying that, as a principle, this House is not justified in borrowing money for unproductive works. I hold that principle. I do not think the Government themselves can dispute it. I think also that more consideration ought to have been given to those who offered to undertake the construction of these necessary works. If these works cannot be built in that way, yet, difficult as the circumstances are, and dangerous as I hold borrowing to be, still, as these works are necessary, we are perfectly justified in risking this responsibility. Hon. members have said enough in reference to these Southern railways. The Government have not convinced me that these railways are justified. I think the hon. member for the De Grey has raised a question which is worthy of the careful thought of the Government, and that is the question of constructing, in certain

districts, narrow-gauge railways. I have a good deal of information in my possession as to their successful working in different parts of the world, and I have data in my desk now which show that 2-feet gauge railways, as used on the Continent, can be built and equipped here at a cost of £700 a mile. I think the Government could put into Marble Bar a light railway that would pay all its working expenses, and yield a profit. I think also they could put one of these light railways into the Collie coalfield, and justify their action; but until the coal there is more fully developed, until it is shown that the coal is such as can be put on board ship and transmitted and used by steamers—which is a doubtful question, in my mind, because I understand there are qualities in that coal which absolutely unfit it for steamship use—unless the coal can be shown to be fit for steamship use, we shall soon reach the limit of our own consumption. We cannot export to other countries at a profit, and the only outlet would be to provide coal which steamers passing our ports would be able to take in; but I understand there is something in this coal which renders it absolutely dangerous for steamships to use, and if it be a coal of that quality, all we can look for is to supplying our own markets. Therefore a 2-feet gauge railway, costing about £700 a mile, will be ample to supply all the wants and necessities of that coalfield for the next 50 years, and such a railway would pay its way and be justified. I hope that when we go into committee on the Bill, hon. members will have courage enough to strike out these two Southern railways, and to say we will not build our schools and other unproductive works with loan money, but that, if these things are necessary, we will show the English lenders that when we come to ask them for borrowed money, it is for some remunerative public work which we are warranted in constructing.

MR. LOTON: I do not suppose it is probable that any hon. member intends to move an amendment upon the question now before the House. I conclude that the whole of us deem it absolutely necessary, at the present stage, that the Government should be authorised to go into the market and borrow money for certain public works; and as all the items

of the proposed expenditure will be before us in committee for discussion in detail, I do not intend, on the present occasion, to trespass on the patience of hon. members to any great extent. The hon. member for Albany (Mr. Leake) has raised a question, and has been followed by the hon. member for Nannine (Mr. Illingworth) on the same subject, in connection with the works proposed in this Bill; that is as to the desirability of constructing railways by means of private enterprise, instead of continuing the system of construction by the Government out of loan moneys. I refer to this question in the first instance, because it is not alluded to in any way in the Bill itself. But the principle has been considered by the Government, and they have come to a conclusion upon it. I should be glad if I could see that it was practicable to enter into and conclude negotiations with any private company or individual to enter upon transactions of this kind; but recognising, as I do, that the railways, not only in their construction, but in their upkeep and working and maintenance, have to be looked after and supervised in the interests of the colonists generally, I feel that if any person or company undertook these lines with a view to working the railways, under present circumstances and with our limited population, the result would be bound to be a failure as a commercial undertaking. In other words, I arrive at the conclusion that if the Government were to complete negotiations for performing these works by means of private enterprise it would result in failure, and the country would, after all, have to step in and carry the works on. I might refer to what has been our experience of railways constructed by companies in the past. We have had experience of two companies; and as to one, the Midland Company, I was rather pleased and surprised to hear the Attorney General, the other evening, admit that this was, practically, almost a Government railway, being carried on now by funds supplied by the Government. As to the Great Southern Railway, what has been our experience of it during eight to ten years? We expected there would be considerable settlement and development of the lands suitable for agricultural purposes through that extensive district,

but I regret to say that this expectation has not been at all satisfied. The settlement has been meagre indeed. On this question, it will be understood, I am not in accord with the views expressed by the hon. member for Albany and the hon. member for Nannine. The recognised leader of this side of the House (Mr. Randell) said, when commencing his speech on this Bill, that he was expressing only his individual views. I think I may say that, on this question of the Loan Bill, members generally in this House will express their individual views. I do not know whether the Government, who have had a very large following up to the present time, will have the same compact following on the present occasion in connection with this Loan Bill. I trust not, in the best interests of this colony. The Premier, in introducing this measure, referred to the loan raised in 1891, and to the further loan raised in 1893, these loans together amounting to close on two millions, namely £1,876,000; and the conclusion he arrived at, if I followed him correctly, was that the borrowing and expending of this money had given a great impetus to the colony, that it had been the cause of wonderful advancement, and that if persons who had left the colony a few years ago were to come back now they would scarcely know the place again. This result he attributed mainly to the borrowing of these two loans, and the expending of the money during the last three and a half years. I cannot agree with those views in their entirety—far from it. My opinion is that the advancement we have experienced during the past three and a half years is not due to the borrowing and spending of this money, but is due to the raising of the gold on our goldfields.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I do not think I said so.

MR. LOTON: I say the great cause of the advancement has been the impetus given by the working of the goldfields. These goldfields were known to a limited extent before the present Government came into power; and the export of gold, though small, had commenced before they came into power. I do not desire to detract from the influence that the expenditure of this money has had in the advancement of the colony, to a certain

extent, but the main cause has been the working of the goldfields. It has been the gold from the various mines—gold from the Londonderry and the Wealth of Nations.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): We have not had much of that.

MR. LOTON: It has been raised in the colony and exported.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): And never came back.

MR. MORAN: Every ounce raised has cost about £20, so far.

MR. LOTON: On the question of the export of gold, and the export of other products, hon. members may argue, and may have their individual opinions, as to the advantage of raising this or the other commodity and exporting it; but I take the whole of the commodities and the whole of the exports, and I do not much care what they are so long as we are enabled to export them. The Premier went on to point out that the revenue during this period had increased very materially. Sir, it surely would have been an extraordinary position, a very strange matter indeed, if, during the expenditure of this loan money of nearly two millions, and with the increase in the population—

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): That money is not all spent yet.

MR. LOTON: Well, it has been earmarked, and is nearly all spent; it will be all spent by the end of the present year. I am not here to split straws, on the present occasion, but am dealing with principles. I say it would have been a strange thing indeed if the revenue had not increased concurrently with the extraordinary increase of population and of commodities consumed, while at the same time there has been no reduction in the high duties on imports. If there has been an increase of 50,000 to 75,000 people, surely we should have an increase of revenue? I am quite willing that the Government should take credit for everything they can; but there is one small item, at all events, they have to be debited with; that is to say, the indebtedness of the people during the three and a half years has been increased by the sum of £13 per head—taking the Premier's own figures. But in his estimate the hon. gentleman did not take into consideration an extra £500,000 which has been under-

written, and the interest for which we are already paying.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) : No; not paid a penny of it.

MR. LOTON: Although we agreed that the deposit paid by the constructing company should be used, it ought not to have been used at all until the railway was completed. The Premier must admit, as the Attorney General has admitted, that this extra half million is a liability of the colony, and that amount represents another £6 or £6 10s. per head, so that our total indebtedness at present is about £46 per head.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) : I do not admit that.

MR. LOTON: Well, it is a very close contingency, and that half million is a liability that will have to be wiped off in the next twenty years—principal and interest. As to the amount of indebtedness, I think I can enlighten the hon. member for the De Grey as to how it is that Queensland is in a position to go along so smoothly as it appears to be, while staggering under a load of £74 per head of population, whilst Victoria is in difficulties under a liability of £41 per head. Possibly the hon. member will not agree with me, and I do not say this is the only reason, but it is a very material reason; and the reason is that, while Queensland is indebted to the extent of £74 per head of population, her imports amounted to £4,382,000 for 1892, while her exports for that period were £9,170,000. It will be seen, therefore, that while Queensland was importing to the extent of about four millions, she was able to export two pounds for one that she imported. Queensland is able to export gold and other produce in addition to what is consumed in the colony, and there is a large margin of value, as compared with the exports, out of which to pay interest on her borrowed money. In New South Wales, the imports and exports are pretty nearly equal. South Australia, fortunately, exports a little in excess of her imports. As to Victoria, while her imports during 1892 were over seventeen millions in value, her exports were only fourteen millions. Coming now to Western Australia, our imports in 1892 amounted in declared value to £1,391,109, while the exports were only £882,148 in value; and I am sorry to say

the comparative position of the imports and exports has not improved since 1892. Now, with respect to this colony, we have been borrowing money for reproductive public works, as I will call them, though I have not seen much reproduction from them at present. We have been borrowing money, and we have to pay the interest on the public debt. But what is the position also with regard to private indebtedness? Private borrowers are also going largely into the money market, and they have to send away money for paying interest on these private loans. Therefore, how can we, in this colony, pay the interest on the money borrowed outside the colony for public and private purposes, unless we, as a colony, produce something in excess of what we consume? That is the only way of paying the interest, so far as I can see. I may not know much about political economy, but it seems to me that unless our people have some surplus capital which they can lend to persons outside, and receive interest in return for its use, as people in England do when they lend money abroad and live on the interest—that as we are not in such a fortunate position, but instead of having capital to lend outside we have to borrow from outside and pay interest on the loans, both public and private, we must be going further and further to the bad every year. Our public indebtedness being, up to the present, £41 per head, as the Premier says, though I say the correct calculation is £47, it is proposed in this Bill to increase the indebtedness by another £20 per head of our present population, and I am not intending to estimate what the population is going to be at the end of the next three or four years. It may then be 100,000, or it may just as likely be 150,000, or possibly even higher than that. But when this Parliament authorises the Government to borrow a certain sum of money, it authorises a further indebtedness of the present population; and when the Government go into the market to borrow the money, the members of the London Stock Exchange, and the financiers, will look at what the population of the borrowing colony is now—not at what the population may be two or three years hence. I say, in reply to the Premier's question as to whether these works are necessary and urgent, that we

may admit the whole of them are necessary and urgent, if you like; but I do say we are not justified in passing a Loan Bill of this magnitude, for these particular works, at the present time. I should like to see the amount in the Bill cut down to a million, and I think this can be done easily, if members of this House will not be afraid to face it, and that the same result, or possibly a better result, may be arrived at in the same length of time, and on safer ground than by raising a million and a half at present.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): You can't do the same amount of work, at any rate.

**MR. LOTON:** The hon. gentleman may say, in reply, that we are not going to borrow the money all at once. Then if the expenditure is to be extended over four years, why do the Government now ask Parliament to give them authority to borrow the whole of this money? Why may we not be wiser as to the necessity for these works twelve months hence, than we are now? I say it is very probable that a number of members may know something more about these particular works in twelve months than we know at present. I will start with the items in this loan schedule, and show how I think the total amount may be brought down to a million. Firstly, as to the Mullewa railway to Cue, £409,000, it is admitted by almost every member that it is desirable to construct a railway to these goldfields; but are we in a position to undertake the expenditure of half a million for this particular work straight away? The hon. member for the De Grey has referred to the possibility of constructing a railway on the narrow gauge at a cheaper rate. I have a great aversion to narrow gauges, and particularly on what I regard as a trunk line of railway; and I would rather that we faced the construction of a railway to the Murchison goldfields by undertaking a moiety of it in the first instance; going a certain distance at the cost of a quarter of a million, if you like, and in that way it may be constructed equally as quickly, because to construct the whole length must require longer than to construct one-half the length. I say, construct it to a point half-way for the present, and by the time that is done we shall have experience of a further development

of those goldfields. Can you tell now which is to be the main centre of the Murchison goldfields?

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Cue.

**MR. LOTON:** But there may be fresh discoveries on those fields — perhaps a Londonderry or a Wealth of Nations may be found in some fresh locality within the present year; and if a new great centre be created by such discovery, it may not be so desirable for this railway to go to the same point, twelve months hence, as you propose now.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): We know the way to go exactly.

**MR. LOTON:** Yes; the hon. gentleman knew everything that was wanted three and a half years ago. However, that is my view with regard to this question, and I should like hon. members to think about it. I think my suggestion is perfectly practicable, that those goldfields will be equally well served, and that there will be very little delay in carrying the work through. With regard to the Coolgardie railway, I have only to say the amount set down, if sufficient, should be raised, and the work should go on, as it is warranted. The next item is the railway from Donnybrook to Bridgetown, the amount put down being £80,000. I recognise that in the Blackwood district there is a considerable amount of good land, very heavily timbered, and that it is a country which will, in the future, carry a large population, and it has a splendid climate. But before that country can be very materially utilised, a large expenditure of capital will be necessary; and it is suitable for persons who, having made money in other parts, will be able to settle there on good land, and spend a lot of money in clearing it. The House should want to know, definitely, the best route, thoroughly and properly surveyed; there should be no doubt about it, and the railway should go to some certain point.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): We know that already.

**MR. LOTON:** I am in favour of striking out that item altogether for the present, unless full and sufficient information on surveys and cost, and all that sort of thing, be laid before us; and I think that, by the end of another year, if the colony is then in a position to undertake



the work, the Government could come down with another Loan Bill for half a million. I would treat the Collie Coal-field railway in the same manner. The hon. member for the De Grey has referred to this line, and I feel sufficiently in accord with what he said to avoid repeating it. But as to the tests of the coal, according to the report placed before us by the Commissioner of Railways, I see that a ton of coal can be carried from Fremantle to a point 55 miles up the Eastern railway for 5s. 3d. a ton, this being in reference to coal imported from Newcastle (New South Wales); while the Collie coal can be carried over the coalfield line to Brunswick, 25½ miles, thence to Perth and eastward to the same 55 mile point, for 9s. 11d. a ton. So, I suppose, if you go on another 200 miles, it might be carried for nothing. I am not saying these works are not necessary, but I do say we are not justified in borrowing a million and a half at the present time; that we can well afford to await the further developments of the next twelve months before we pledge ourselves to the whole of this expenditure. Then, as to the item of rolling stock, a certain amount can be reduced in proportion to the reduced length of railways to be constructed. Item No. 6, "Additional improvements to opened railways, £44,000:" I suppose we must expend that amount if required; but there is a question in this connection, for it is easy to say the opened railways are paying more than their working expenses, when the Government make all these additions and improvements out of borrowed money every year. And how are these railways paying? About £20,000 of the receipts are made up by carrying contractors' plant; and nearly all of that is earned by wharfage at Fremantle. That is the way in which the railway revenue is made up. I shall be glad to see the true and honest figures of any railway that is paying in excess of its working expenses; for I want to be honestly convinced, and I am not loth to be convinced.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Very difficult, sometimes.

MR. LOTON: No doubt; and it will be difficult to see how these railways are worked, until their management is removed from political influence.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): No political influence now.

MR. LOTON: I cannot avoid thinking so; but I am not casting any reflection on the present Commissioner of Railways. The next item is the harbour works at Fremantle. These, of course, we are committed to, and I am still in favour of them; but why should we raise a loan of £200,000 now for continuing these works, when the whole of the amount previously authorised is not spent? Surely £100,000 will be sufficient for carrying on another year?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): We need not raise it all at once.

MR. LOTON: And you need not take warranty to raise it all at once. Why should the Government take that power now, when they can come down with another Loan Bill next year? I am showing how this Loan Bill can be cut down to a million, without any injury to the works. The next item, "Development of goldfields and mineral resources, £70,000," I do not object to; but I do object to the following item, "Development of agriculture, including land purchase, clearing land, draining of land, market in Perth, and cold storage, £40,000," and I should strike this item out of the Bill. If a portion of it is wanted for desirable and necessary purposes, and if it can be proved that a market is wanted and cold storage also, then I would leave £10,000 on the schedule for these purposes; but as to the policy of spending money in developing agriculture, I am entirely opposed to it in principle and detail. The two next items "Harbour works at Geraldton" and "Improvements to harbours and rivers," etc., amounting together to £50,000, might be reduced by £10,000. "Light-houses, £25,000," might be reduced by £5,000. "Telegraphs" to numerous places, £20,000, might stand as in the schedule. "Roads and Bridges, including stock route," might stand. But item No. 15, "Schools, £20,000," I would strike out altogether. The last item is for incidentals, £30,000. Treating the items in the way I have indicated, my deductions bring down the total to £967,000, being under a million; that is by reducing the expenditure on the Cue railway to about £350,000, leaving the Coolgardie railway as it is in the schedule,

and allowing £100,000 for continuing the Fremantle harbour works, the necessary works may be brought down to a million, and the Government will still be able to go into the money market with a bold policy.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Then our credit is not good enough for a million and a half; it is good enough only for a million, is it?

MR. LOTON: You don't require the whole amount this year. We have no distrust about the Government, but we do believe we have a certain amount of common sense on this (the Opposition) side of the House, as well as the sense you claim on your side. I am speaking in the interest of this country. We have been told by several hon. members that there has been no distinct opposition to this Bill. The hon. member for the De Grey said so. That hon. member himself I commend, sitting as he does on the Government cross benches, for taking exception, to a certain extent, to this unwarranted loan policy of the Government at the present time. I think that hon. member, if he were to speak after me now, would not be able to say he had not heard a voice in opposition to the whole policy of this Bill.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): It is very easy to oppose.

MR. LOTON: I think there is some sound reason in the opposition I am putting forward. I am not putting it forward simply for the sake of opposition. I think I have said sufficient on the principle of the Bill to indicate the position I intend to take up in committee, and I will not say any more at this stage.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): You will make me ill if you go on much longer.

MR. LOTON: If the opinions I have enunciated to-night were acted on, I do not think the hon. gentleman would have any occasion to feel ill. He would be likely to be in a more refreshed state, this time twelve months hence, than if this Bill were swallowed *holus bolus*, as he would like it to be swallowed. I have as much faith in the ultimate advancement of this colony as the hon. gentleman himself has—equally as much; and I believe that during my residence in the colony, and even up to the present time, I am doing as much, and always have done as

much and have taken as much risk individually, and am still taking as much risk, in the interest and for the development of this colony, as the hon. gentleman himself or any other hon. member of this House; and I should not advance these views unless I had some faith in them.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): You generally have the same sort of views.

MR. LOTON: I submit that I have a right to express my views; and the hon. gentleman, and other hon. members in this House, and the people in the colony may place what construction and what value they like upon them. I am not here to say my views are right in every particular, but I submit they are, at all events, worthy of consideration; and I trust that if the leader of the Government does not think so, yet that some hon. members of this House do think they are at all events worthy of some consideration.

MR. A. FORREST: I think the time has arrived when some member should rise and say something good of this Bill. From half-past seven o'clock till half-past ten this evening, we have had one long wail of croaking. I did not think there was any member of this House, or anyone outside, that would not be in a position to congratulate the colony on its progress, and the way in which it has been pushed ahead by the policy of the present Government. I can scarcely understand the hon. member for Nannine, and the hon. member for the Swan, speaking in the way they have done this evening. [MR.

RICHARDSON: They are not in the "Wealth of Nations."] The hon. members for Nannine and Albany have treated us to a lot of information about building railways by private syndicates; but I would like to tell the House what my opinion is about that. The syndicate promoters usually come here, and, without having any financial means whatever, make proposals to the Government; and because the Government have not entertained such proposals as those contained in the correspondence now on the table, the hon. member for Nannine and the hon. member for Albany think the Government have treated those persons with discourtesy. I am sure the hon. member for Albany ought to be aware of the way in which private syndi-

cates have been carried on in connection with the two land-grant railways now in existence; and he should be the last man to ask that the Government should entertain further proposals for the construction of railways by syndicates. If I live to the age of 100 years I shall never support private railway proposals in this colony. The hon. member for Nannine said certain persons were prepared to put down a guarantee of £20,000; but he ought to know it is very easy for persons to subscribe £20,000 among a lot of them, but, after doing that as a preliminary, it is a very different thing to produce half-a-million of capital for constructing the railway. Take the Midland railway, for instance, and the difficulties which have surrounded it. Hon. members know that the Midland Company or syndicate could not have completed that railway without the aid of the Government. It would be the same with reference to these private syndicates; and if the Government had accepted their proposals, I believe the members on this side of the House would have withdrawn support from the Government altogether. In dealing with the first item in this loan schedule, the railway from Mullewa to Cue, 215 miles —

THE PREMIER (HON. SIR J. FORREST): That is the long route, 215 miles.

MR. A. FORREST: This railway will open up a large extent of auriferous country, and a large extent of pastoral country. But we have to consider whether the Government will be justified in spending, perhaps, a million of money in completing that work, because, in addition to the large outlay for harbour works at Fremantle, there will be demands of further sums for harbour works at Geraldton in connection with this new railway to those goldfields—a sum of £10,000 in this schedule for harbour works at Geraldton, and, perhaps, hundreds of thousands to follow in the near future. It is a question whether the Government are justified in building two lines of railway to connect the same back country with two ports on the seaboard—a railway from Coolgardie to the harbour of Fremantle, and a railway from Cue to the coast at Geraldton. This is an important matter which hon. members should look at in the light of broad facts. The railway from Southern Cross to

Coolgardie, as proposed in this schedule, will be 115 miles long, and we know now, from the latest discoveries, that the best reefing country lies to the northward of Coolgardie, in the direction of Mount Margaret and Lake Carey. Now, to construct a railway along that line of reefing country, you would leave Coolgardie northward, and in 10 miles you come near Mount Burges, where many reefs are being worked with machinery; then on to the 25-Mile, where a large battery is being worked; at the 35-Mile the Wealth of Nations Mine will support a large population; at the 45-Mile there is another large population; then 10 miles further on is Siberia, where some of the richest claims have been found; then you go on to the 90-Mile, which I believe is good reefing country, and a large quantity of machinery will be there shortly; from there you go on to these latest good finds at Lake Carey and Mount Margaret; and by the time a railway reached there it would have tapped a large portion of the Murchison goldfields. The railway must eventually be continued in that direction, and these two great railways now proposed for connecting with different points on the seaboard would meet eventually in the back mining country. So you will find that Geraldton will probably in the near future want a breakwater erected there at great cost; and there will be two railways tapping the same back country and running to two different ports. Would it not be wiser for this colony to build one great railway running inland to the goldfields, instead of building two expensive railways for the same traffic? I think this proposed line from Mullewa to Cue, being a very long one, might stand over for another year so as to enable us to see in what position the colony will be before expending this half million, and enable us to see whether it will not then be advisable, in the interest of the colony, to connect the Murchison goldfields by way of the Coolgardie line.

AN HON. MEMBER: For the Wealth of Nations mine.

MR. A. FORREST: My argument does not apply to the "Wealth of Nations," because that mine is close to Coolgardie.

MR. SIMPSON: A brilliant idea of your own.

MR. A. FORREST: It is not my own idea exactly, but I have thought a good

deal about it. No private person would build two parallel lines of railway to tap the same country.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Mr. Lush is willing.

MR. A. FORREST: The Government have to satisfy hon. members, I suppose, and satisfy the member for Nannine, who wants to tell his constituents that he has got the railway for them.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: No, I will not.

MR. A. FORREST: I believe you will. I think we should not have two costly railways tapping the same back country and competing in the same traffic. The hon. member for Geraldton says if anything is done to delay the Murchison line he will block the other. I do not think that threat is fair, because the line from Southern Cross to Coolgardie is of such importance that there should be no question about it. We may have to spend a million in making a good harbour at Fremantle, and we may have to spend another million in making another harbour at Geraldton, whereas one railway from the coast to the back reefing country would serve the requirements of both these great goldfields. These two railways are the most important items in this Loan Bill, and no doubt they will be both carried by this House. I have thrown out this suggestion for consideration, because if these railways were laid out by private persons, only one connection with the coast would be made for the economical working of the goldfields traffic. The other works proposed in the schedule are of minor importance, and I shall not take up time by speaking on them now. In the item of "Roads and bridges" I want to see the Northern parts of the colony get a fair share; and unless we get an assurance that the roads and bridges and harbour improvements are to be extended to the Northern districts in fair proportion, I shall oppose that appropriation. I think that we Northern members should pull together, and see if we cannot get something for the improvement of the Northern coast. One portion of the district I represent (West Kimberley) pays to the general revenue £10,000 per annum; and yet it has never had a sixpence of public money spent in it. That is the port of Broome, which should have a jetty. I am sure the good sense of the

House will agree that if this Bill is a fair and reasonable one, and if, as the Government have promised, the whole amount is not to be raised at once, it would be better to pass one Bill for a million and a half than to reduce this amount and leave the Government to come down next year with another Loan Bill for part of the amount. Lenders do not look particularly to see what items are included in a Loan Bill, because they have the security of the whole colony for their loan. If the Government could not raise the money, I have no doubt the proprietors of the Wealth of Nations Mine would lend them a million.

MR. LEFROY moved the adjournment of the debate until the next sitting of the House.

Question put and passed, and the debate adjourned accordingly.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10:40 o'clock, p.m.

### Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 30th August, 1894.

Railway Platform, &c., at East Northam—Leave of Absence to Mr. Darlot—Defence Forces Bill: third reading—Excess Bill, 1893: third reading—Postponement of Orders of the Day—Municipal Institutions Bill: further considered in committee—Point of Order as to Members voting in a Division—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 4:30 p.m.

#### PRAYERS.

#### RAILWAY PLATFORM, &c., AT EAST NORTHAM.

MR. MONGER, in accordance with notice, asked the Commissioner of Railways,—

1. Whether the Government had sanctioned a railway siding at East Northam, and on what conditions?