

day of general mourning throughout the colony. Full particulars of what is intended to be done will be seen in a special *Gazette*, which will be issued this afternoon.

Question—put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The Council, at 3.10 p.m., adjourned until Tuesday, 19th January, at 3 o'clock.

Legislative Assembly,

Friday, 15th January, 1892.

Death of H.R.H. the Duke of Clarence and Avondale—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 2.30 p.m.

PRAYERS.

DEATH OF H. R. H. THE DUKE OF CLARENCE AND AVONDALE.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Mr. Speaker,—Sir, I regret to inform the House that His Excellency the Administrator has received an official telegram from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, informing him of the death of His Royal Highness the Duke of Clarence and Avondale. The Government has already forwarded, through the Administrator, a cablegram to the Secretary of State, expressing, on behalf of the colony, its deep sympathy with Her Majesty the Queen and the Prince and Princess of Wales and the Royal Family in their great affliction. It is proposed to issue to-day a *Gazette Extraordinary* appointing Sunday, the 17th instant, to be observed as a day of general mourning in West Australia, and the *Gazette* notice further asks the officers of the Government and all other of Her Majesty's subjects to wear mourning in token of their sympathy with Her Majesty and the Royal Family in their affliction. It is proposed that the flags of all public buildings be hoisted

half-mast high from 8 a.m. to sunset on Sunday, and it is requested that the flags on board all the ships in the colony be similarly displayed that day. The Commandant of the local forces will be commanded to cause a salute of 21 guns to be fired on Sunday, the salute terminating at sunset. I have also informed the Mayors and Chairmen of all Municipalities of the colony, together with the Chairmen of the Roads Boards and magistrates and justices, of this sad occurrence. On Monday next I propose to ask the House to agree to a resolution or address to Her Majesty expressing on behalf of the House their sorrow and sympathy with Her Majesty, the Prince and Princess of Wales, and the Royal Family in their sad affliction. As a mark of respect and sympathy with Her Majesty and the Royal Family, I ask leave to move that the House do now adjourn.

Question—put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 2.45 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Monday, 18th January, 1892.

Death of the Duke of Clarence and Avondale—Public Market for Perth—Petition of Joseph Hillman—Northam Southern Cross (Yilgarn) Railway Bill: in committee—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 7.30 p.m.

PRAYERS.

DEATH OF THE DUKE OF CLARENCE AND AVONDALE.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I rise, sir, to ask the House for leave, without notice, to move an humble address to Her Majesty the Queen, the Prince and Princess of Wales, and members of the Royal Family. We are

all aware that during the last few days we have heard the melancholy news of the death of the Duke of Clarence and Avondale; and on the last occasion when we met we adjourned the House as a mark of respect to Her Majesty and her family. Since then we have been informed by telegraph that throughout the whole British Empire—in fact far beyond that: throughout the civilised world—the whole of the nations have joined in condoling and sympathising with the British nation as a whole. I believe that to most of us, even in this far-off part of the British Empire, the news of the sad death of the young prince has come home to us, and we have felt that it was to us a personal trial and a personal calamity. Many of the people on this continent of Australia have had no opportunity of seeing either Her Majesty or the members of her family, except perhaps in a very few cases; but I feel there is among the people of Australia a strong feeling which is brought out on occasions such as this; a strong feeling of loyalty, and more than loyalty, to Her Majesty and her throne, and also a strong feeling of attachment to the old country, the mother land of these colonies. While everything is going smoothly, and while there is nothing to excite us, these feelings lie dormant; but although our loyalty to the old country and to the Royal Family may not be as strong as in the case of those who live near, yet I say that on occasions such as this, when we find our Sovereign and her family in the greatest grief and the deepest affliction—in such times of adversity the best feelings of our nature are brought out, and it is then that the loyalty which is within us comes out and is manifested. I have prepared a short address, which I will read to you, and which I propose shall be submitted to the Upper House for its approval, so that a joint address may be forwarded from both Houses of Parliament to Her Majesty; and if you approve of this address, I propose to take steps to have it cabled home as soon as possible. I can only reiterate that wherever Englishmen are placed, the one feeling must exist; for when we know that we have sympathy for the griefs and misfortunes of those around us, those in humble circumstances

—in fact the more intelligent we are the more strongly we feel for the misfortunes of others—then I say no one will gainsay that when we find our old mother country of England and the people who live there in trouble, and when we find our Sovereign and her family in trouble, I think it is then that we should realise and show that we have sympathy with them in their trouble and their affliction. The address is as follows:—

“MAY IT PLEASE YOUR MAJESTY,—

“We, Your Majesty’s loyal and dutiful subjects, the Members of the [Legislative Council] and the Legislative Assembly of Western Australia, in Parliament assembled, humbly approach Your Majesty with feelings of the deepest devotion to Your Majesty’s Throne and Person.

“We desire to assure you of our great sympathy and sorrow for Your Majesty, for the Prince and Princess of Wales, and the other members of the Royal Family, in the sad affliction and bereavement that has fallen upon Your Majesty and your family, by the lamented death of His Royal Highness the Duke of Clarence and Avondale.

“We pray that the blessing of the Almighty may rest upon Your Majesty and your family, and that you may be thereby sustained in your great and heavy affliction.”

MR. RANDELL: I rise with very much melancholy pleasure to second the adoption of the address moved by the hon. the Premier. I do not think it necessary that I should say many words; for I have already spoken on the subject elsewhere. I can only now reiterate the sympathy I feel for Her Majesty and the Royal family in the bereavement that has come upon them through the hand of Divine Providence. We do not know what the meaning of these things are, but we can only hope that all those who have been intimately connected with the young prince may have Divine assistance to sustain them in their deep sorrow; and we may humbly hope that this present loss to the whole British nation, although apparently a calamity, may be so over-ruled by Divine Will that it may operate for good. Amid the sorrow of her great loss, it must nevertheless be a source of satisfaction to Her Majesty to

receive from the far-distant parts of her empire these expressions of sympathy and condolence. She has not passed through her long reign scathless. She has had to submit to bereavement before, and let us hope that by the same, or even greater, fortitude, she will be able, with the other members of her family, to bear herself up under the Divine Will. I have great pleasure in seconding this address.

Question—put and passed.

Ordered—That the address be transmitted to the Legislative Council, and their concurrence desired therein.

PUBLIC MARKET FOR PERTH.

Mr. CANNING, in accordance with notice, asked the Director of Public Works, Whether the Government proposed, during the present session, taking steps to establish a public market for the City of Perth, in pursuance of an answer given by the Honorable the Director of Public Works to a question on the subject last session.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. H. W. Venn): The Government are unable, at present, to deal with the subject.

PETITION OF JOSEPH HILLMAN.

Mr. CANNING: I beg to move, sir, "That the Petition of Joseph Hillman, received and read on Thursday, 7th January, be printed, and that it be referred to a select committee." When I was asked to present to this House a petition on behalf of Joseph Hillman, I felt I had a constitutional duty to perform, one which my sense of justice would not allow me to shirk or refuse. I felt that every inhabitant of the colony had a right to come to this House as a last resort to seek redress for any wrong he might deem he had suffered. It was for that reason that I undertook to present the petition, and it is for the same reason that I, to-night, move that it be printed and referred to a select committee of this House. I feel that a member of this House has no right to choose his duties exactly—he has no right to undertake those which are pleasant and congenial and to shirk those which are disagreeable. I do not say that this is a disagreeable one, although I

would rather it had fallen upon one of the hon. and learned members of the House to bring this question forward. The petition has been read, and from it we find that Hillman was in the Public Service for a period of some 26 years, and that notwithstanding this he was, a very short time ago, dismissed; or rather placed in such a position that his resignation carried with it all the disadvantages of dismissal. He now finds that after having spent the best years of his life in the service of the colony, he is turned adrift at a time of life, and under circumstances which render it hopeless for him to enter upon a new career. Therefore, I think, it is a case which merits the consideration of this House. In the first place we have the fact that he was so many years in the service, and in the next we have it that he received from successive heads of his department, testimonials as to the satisfactory way he performed his duties. In 1865 he was appointed clerk in the Comptroller General's Office; in July, 1867, he was appointed probation clerk in the Colonial Secretary's Office; in 1868 he was placed on the staff. Later on, in 1871, he was transferred to the Treasury, under Mr. O'Grady Lefroy, and on the 3rd August, 1874, he was transferred to the Public Works Department. Some time afterwards he was promoted to be record keeper under the late Mr. Goldsworthy, and he was subsequently, on 28th July, 1877, at the request of the Director of Public Works, re-transferred to the Railway Department. In February, 1878, his salary was increased from £150 to £250 a year, and in January, 1890, he was appointed chief clerk in the Railway Department at a salary of £300 a year. During that long period of years it will be seen that he went on successfully and step by step. The promotion he got was, presumably, because he merited it. There can be no other conclusion. If he were unworthy and utterly inefficient it is to be supposed he would not have been promoted, nor his salary increased from time to time. It is hardly credible that if he had done nothing to warrant promotion he would have been promoted, or have received the testimonials as to his conduct and efficiency as are set out in the petition. I am not going to trouble the House to listen to all the

letters that he received; I will content myself with reading one of the very latest, which was given as recently as 17th October, 1889, by the late Director of Public Works, the Hon. J. A. Wright. It reads:—

“DEAR MR. HILLMAN,—At your request I have much pleasure in stating “that you have been for the last four “and a half years (during which time I “have had the honor of holding my “present appointment) Chief Clerk in “the Department, and that you have “carried out your duties to my satisfaction. I may state that previous to “that you had been Chief Clerk under “my two predecessors in office, although “for how long I am unable to state “exactly. I have sent forward your “application for leave of absence, and “trust that His Excellency will approve “of it; and that you will benefit by the “change.

“I am, faithfully yours,

“J. ARTHUR WRIGHT, M.I.C.E.,

“Commissioner of Railways and
“Director of Public Works.”

I will just read one other testimonial from Mr. Wright's predecessor. It is dated the 20th February, 1884, and reads:—

“TO THE HON. THE COLONIAL SECRETARY,—

“It has never been my good fortune to “be associated with a brother officer “more faithful—in every sense of the “word—than Mr. J. Hillman. I have “therefore not the slightest hesitation in “supporting this application for promotion in the Civil Service, much as I “should regret his leaving this department. He is in every way fit to fill a “much higher office than he now holds, “and I therefore beg to add my testimony to his worth and abilities.

“J. H. THOMAS,

“Director of Public Works and

“Commissioner of Railways.”

Now it is not possible to believe that up to the date Mr. Wright gave that testimonial, Hillman had done anything to make him unworthy of the confidence of his superiors, or that he had done anything to justify his being treated, as he has been, without any consideration whatever. It has been said that his conduct was not always satisfactory, but the

answer to that is that he was retained in the Public Service. I do not see how we can go behind these testimonials. They are absolutely conclusive. But it is said that the present Government has nothing to do with the acts of former Governments. I do not think that this can be meant seriously. It must be borne in mind that the change of Government which took place was not in the nature of a conquest, by which an entirely new order of things was introduced. It was the mere development of political progress that has been going on for years past here, as well as everywhere else. The present Government in taking over from their predecessors, took the machinery that was already ready for them, with all the obligations and liabilities of the former Government.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Who said that we had nothing to do with what former Governments did?

MR. CANNING: It has been said, but I would rather the hon. gentleman did not ask me who said it. It was not said officially, and I, therefore, hope the informant will not be pressed for. As I have said the Government took over all the obligations of the late Government, and one of them was a consideration for those who had been in the Public Service for a long term of years. In fact that principle is recognised in the letter of the Director of Public Works, in which he says: “I am directed to inform you that the Government have considered your conduct during a long period of years.” Now we come to the question as to why Hillman, after 26 years' service, was turned adrift from the Public Service without any recognition of the past, or provision for the remainder of his days such as he considers himself entitled to. Had he committed any crime? Had he defrauded the Government, or embezzled public moneys, which would at once have put an end to any claim he might have had for consideration? No; nothing of the kind has even been insinuated, much less alleged. What is the reason given? That on one occasion he had been under the influence of drink. I am not going to inflict a temperance lecture on the House, but many

“Compound for sins they are inclined to
By damning those they have no mind to.”

I believe drink blunts a man's moral pro-

penalties, and makes him blind to see the right course he should take, or to distinguish between right and wrong. But we must bear in mind that this vice or disease is so general that it would be a monstrous injustice to take any one individual and make him suffer the serious consequences of what we all know is either a vice or a disease. We cannot take one individual and hold him up as an example to all others, and how this vice or disease is to be treated is a problem that has as yet to be solved. At any rate nothing has been alleged against him than this; and one single instance only has been fastened upon to compel him to resign. Otherwise the facts are that he proved himself to be a good public servant, and did his work to the satisfaction of the heads of his department. He served 26 of the best years of his life, to be, in the end, turned adrift without the slightest provision made for the remainder of his days. I feel a delicacy in referring to anyone but the individual himself. Still I am told he has a wife and family dependent upon him, and to leave him without resources means that an injury must be inflicted upon them. I know that he is in a wretched state of health, such that it would be hopeless for him to seek any employment by which to sustain himself and his family. I think it would be extremely disgraceful to this form of Government that one of the first acts done under it is to allow an old officer of 26 years standing to be dismissed without any provision whatever being made for him. I would, moreover, observe that which most hon. members are aware of, and that is that a man with a grievance is often troublesome. Under all the circumstances of the case, I think the Government and the House might fairly take into consideration and deal with the prayer of the petition.

MR. QUINLAN: I second this motion, sir, because I feel that by so doing I am only carrying out one of the duties which devolves upon a member of this House. I think any British subject should have the right of appeal to this House if he has a grievance, and therefore I shall support a reference of this matter to a select committee. I do not go as far as the mover of the resolution in justifying the petitioner's conduct, and I may say

that if I am upon the select committee I shall speak very plainly as to what I know about him. Still he has served the best years of his life in the Public Service; he has a wife and family, and is entitled to some consideration. I am not prepared to say whether the Government were right or wrong in dismissing him; but this House can have no objection to any person who has a grievance coming before it for redress. Reference has been made to this petitioner being intemperate, at least on one occasion. Although engaged myself as a licensed victualler, no one regrets more than I do to see any man get beyond his senses. I believe if evidence be taken before a select committee it will be shown that the petitioner, when he was dismissed, was not in a fit state to carry out the duties he was employed to do; but still he has been an old public servant, and, whatever may have been his faults, his work was always done. As I have said I second the motion as a matter of duty, and I trust that the Government will not see any objection to allowing it to pass.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The Government have to ask the House not to pass this motion. Hon. members will understand that it was a very unpleasant duty for Ministers, shortly after coming into office, to have to call upon a gentleman who had been so long in the Public Service to resign, for everything was in his favor. He belonged to an old-established family in the colony; his relatives were in high positions, and if there was any feeling on the part of the Government, it was decidedly in his favor. We did not wish to see him leave the service; in fact our inclinations were the other way. I agree with the hon. member for East Perth, who has brought this matter forward, that it is the right of everyone who has a grievance to come before this House for redress; but we must not labor that principle too far, and allow everyone who likes to bring forward a grievance, which it is notorious there is nothing in, and have it referred to a select committee for investigation. Of course it would be a different matter if this were a case of which hon. members knew nothing, or on which there was some doubt. In bringing this matter forward, the hon. member has, I think,

trusted rather too much to the good faith of members of this bench. Certainly if we were as outspoken as we might be, the petitioner would have good cause to say, "Save me from my friends!" But we do not wish to make any charges against him. We called upon him to resign because he was unfit for his duties. It has been notorious for years past that he has been in a condition which has rendered him unfit to do his duty, and he should have been called upon to resign many years ago. Personally, I have no desire to prevent any investigation; but in the interests of the petitioner himself I ask that the matter may not be allowed to go any further. The appeal which has been made to the House by the hon. member for East Perth is a most extraordinary one. What does the hon. member want? Does he want the petitioner reinstated?

MR. CANNING: No.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Then if he has been unjustly treated, it must be that he is fit for his duties and able to take his place again.

MR. CANNING: No.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Then what does he want?

MR. RICHARDSON: He wants a pension.

MR. QUINLAN: He has served the time which entitles him to a pension.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Oh, that is it? No doubt he has served for many years, and our desire was that he should have attained the highest position. However, I do not deem it in the interests of the petitioner himself that I should go any further into the matter, and I will, therefore, conclude by trusting to the good sense of the House to leave this matter as it is. The Government had an unpleasant duty to perform, and they only did what they considered was in the interest of the colony and its Public Service.

MR. MOLLOY: I rise to support the motion of the hon. member for East Perth. I do not follow him altogether in his reasoning, but I do think the petition is deserving of some consideration. The evidence we have before us shows that under successive Administrations the petitioner has given every satisfaction in the performance of his duties, and that for a period of 26 years he has been in the Public Service. I do

not wish to defend the petitioner; I am rather inclined to commend Ministers for the action they took, for it is no argument that, because other Administrations had passed over, or even approved of, this gentleman's conduct, those who took office under Responsible Government should also tolerate his shortcomings. Although I deplore the fault which has led to the petitioner being asked to resign, I think, as an act of grace, and not as a right, the Government might consider his case, especially when we bear in mind the testimony borne of him by the officers under whom he worked as to his efficiency. I think it is rather hard that for one fault, committed at the commencement of the new order of things, he should have been treated so harshly, and it is for this reason that I stand here and plead in his defence. I do not say that Ministers have treated this gentleman unjustly; I simply say he was harshly dealt with, and that the fault did not merit the punishment. If he had thought fit to resign of his own accord, he would have been entitled to compensation, and I do not think that the fault he has committed disentitles him to his right to that compensation after 26 years of service under the Government.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): This is a motion brought forward by the hon. member for East Perth; it has been seconded by the hon. member for West Perth, and supported by the other hon. member for Perth; and I must say that I am grieved that the hon. member has obtained the support of two members of this House on the motion he has made. The hon. member says he has brought the question forward as a matter of duty, it being, he contends, the right of every subject to have his grievance brought before this House. There must, however, be a limit to this principle, and before an hon. member undertakes to bring forward a matter of this sort he should consider whether it is in the interest of the person having the grievance—whether, in fact, by stirring the matter up he is not damning those interests he wishes to protect. For my part, I do not think the motion made to-night is likely to serve the interests of the petitioner in any particular. The hon. member has said a great deal about a certificate which was granted to

the petitioner by the late Commissioner of Railways; but it will be noticed that leave of absence followed this certificate. I do not wish to say a great deal upon this subject, inasmuch as I feel strongly upon it, and have done so for years. The matter of this certificate is notorious. For all I know the head of the department who gave it prayed to God that he might never see the recipient of it again, and I ask whether the House at this time of day is to be hoodwinked by such a document. Cannot hon. members see through it? Because this certificate can be brought out of the records of the office, we are asked now to appoint a select committee to inquire into—what? My hon. friend the Premier has asked what the hon. member for East Perth wants. He suggested two things that he might require, but he got no response. Another hon. member says he wants a pension. God forbid! I thought we granted pensions for good and efficient conduct. The hon. member says the petitioner served the public; but I say he served the publican much better. Then the hon. member for Central Perth says he does not think the Government have dealt unjustly with this gentleman. Of course the hon. member knows that the Government would not; this he admits, but says that he has been dealt harshly with. But what the remedy is I fail to see, unless it be some money compensation. What are the facts of this case? If there was anything to be inquired into—if hon. members found that the Government had suddenly dismissed an officer after long and good service, and such dismissal had come as a surprise—the House might fairly ask the Government why they had taken this arbitrary proceeding, and the Government might justly be hauled over the coals for what they had done. But I ask, have the Government dismissed such an officer? Have they dismissed an officer who was not notoriously known to be a fit subject for dismissal? I say they have, and if we had acted otherwise, should we not have been asked to give an explanation before this period of the session? Still we are asked for one now. We are asked to appoint a select committee to inquire into this matter with a view of doing—what? The hon. member does not know himself.

MR. CANNING: I said I left the matter for the consideration of the House.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): In other words he leaves it to our good nature.

MR. CANNING: I protest against my meaning and my words being distorted by the hon. the Attorney General. I will not sit by and allow a wrong interpretation to be placed on what I say in this House. The Attorney General knows as well as I do that what I meant to say was that the House should take into consideration the prayer of the petition and give the petitioner such compensation for his long years of service as they might think fit. I dislike to interrupt the hon. gentleman, but I cannot allow my meaning to be distorted.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): I do not complain of the interruption, and the hon. gentleman's remarks only show me that I was right. He means that the House should give some compensation, but that is given, as I have said before, for good and efficient service, and that this gentleman did not give. It is known to every hon. member of this House that his service was not good and efficient, and therefore it would be impossible for us to go outside the Pensions Act and award compensation in a case such as this. The hon. member for East Perth said there were no reports against the petitioner. I myself have drawn the attention of Governors of the colony to the conduct of this gentleman times out of number. If I do not hold an independent position now I did then, and I felt it my duty, as one of the public, to represent this question with others to more than one Governor, and what was I told? I am not responsible for these revelations: They are brought on the gentleman by his friends; but after what has been said in support of the petitioner the Government have no alternative but to draw the attention of hon. members to the facts. Two Governors admitted to me that the reports against this gentleman were voluminous, and they can soon be produced if necessary, and they would make a goodly bundle. I myself have had, in my private business, to have communication with this gentleman. The hon. member who sits in the corner (Mr. Quinlan) knows what he is—the hon.

member for the Moore knows—we all know that this gentleman was unfit not on one occasion, but was incapacitated for years and years through drunkenness. If it goes forth to the world that the Attorney General of this colony feels it his duty to say that a gentleman he has known for years is a thorough drunkard, it will not, I think, very much improve either his chances or his position. When hon. members make endeavors to serve the interests of such people as these, they should consider that they cannot expect that the Government are going to sit by and listen to everything and still say nothing, or will not give the reasons which induced them to take the step they did. I say it was full time, whether under the old form of Government or the new, that this gentleman should have been dismissed. He was not dismissed by the new Government for any past conduct. He was warned, not once or twice, but three or four times, and then the matter came before me. He was not only guilty of being utterly incapable of performing his duties, but he did not do his duty, and he did not speak the truth in explanation of why he did not. I do not want to go more in details, for we all know he was not fit for his duties. Even the gentleman's appearance itself was repulsive.

MR. CANNING: That is not fair.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): Not fair! The hon. gentleman takes up the time of the House in the way he has done, and then asks us to say nothing. If the hon. gentleman thinks fit to take the course he has, I think it is the duty of the Government to state the facts on which they acted, and not let it go forth to the world that we have dismissed an officer after 26 years' service for one slight failing.

MR. MOLLOY: We have the certificate.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt): Is not the matter sufficiently notorious, notwithstanding this certificate? However, I do not wish to speak longer on this subject. As soon as I saw this matter was going to be brought forward, personally I should have liked to have told the hon. member that the course he intended to pursue would not do any good, but I thought, perhaps, that my intentions might be misconstrued. But the matter having been

brought forward, I think it my duty to give the reasons which actuated the Government in pursuing the course they did. Hon. members will have noticed the light way in which the Premier passed the matter over, and the Commissioner of Railways has said nothing, and I am sure that nothing but the emergencies of the Public Service would have compelled the Commissioner of Railways to take the course he did, in calling upon this officer to resign. He was not dismissed. He was offered the opportunity to resign, and he had the good sense to accept the offer. In the petition it says that this gentleman for one fault was threatened that if he did not immediately resign he would be instantly dismissed. Is that a fact? We know it is not true. There was not one fault, but numbers, and it would be monstrous if this Assembly did not draw a line between a *bond fide* and an honest attempt to have an inquiry into the grievances of one of Her Majesty's subjects and such a motion as this.

Question—put and negatived.

NORTHAM-SOUTHERN CROSS (YILGARN) RAILWAY BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 2—Adjourned debate on the motion of Mr. Parker "That in clause 2 the word 'Northam' be struck out, with a view to the insertion of the words 'four miles South of York'":

MR. PIESSE: In rising to resume the debate on this clause of the bill, I would like to say that I do not intend to dwell at any length on the subject. The remarks of the hon. member for York have been so full, and he has so ably dealt with all the matters in connection with this matter, that there remains very little further for me to add. There are, however, some few points on which I may be able to throw some light, and which more particularly apply to the district I have the honor to represent. For some time past various arguments have been brought to bear on the public mind as to which is the better point at which to commence this line. The ports of Fremantle and Albany have been referred to in various ways, and the one has been pitted against the other to a very considerable extent. It is on these

considerations that most people have been influenced on this subject; and so that to some extent, at any rate, their minds may be disabused of the prejudice which has been created, I will shortly refer to what the hon. the Premier said on the second reading of this bill. He said: "In all particulars, except one, there is very little to choose between the routes from an engineering point of view; and that one exception is the distance from the port. From Fremantle *via* Northam the distance to Yilgarn is 241 miles, and from Fremantle to Yilgarn *via* York the distance is 256 miles. Then, assuming Albany to be the port for these goldfields, the distance from Albany *via* Northam is 447 miles, and from Albany *via* York it is 442 miles. If anyone looks at this matter he cannot help coming to the conclusion that the port of Fremantle is the natural outlet for the Yilgarn Goldfields, because you have to compare 241 miles as the shortest distance from Fremantle, with 442 miles as the shortest distance from Albany." With this before us it is not likely that the interest of the port of Albany will clash with that of the port of Fremantle, and I ask hon. members to take this into consideration when giving their votes upon this question. It is not likely that goods will be sent 442 miles when they can be sent 256 miles. The facilities afforded by the Eastern Railway to that point are so great and the cost of transit so much less that we may at once disabuse our minds as to Albany competing against Fremantle. There is another portion of the hon. the Premier's speech I should like to refer to. He says: "I do not intend to-night to say very much about this route which the Government recommend, except again to say that the Government can find no sufficient reason for starting the line from York or Beverley, for in the case of York we should have to go 15 miles farther, and in the case of Beverley we should have to go 26 miles farther than there is any occasion to go. I have made inquiries to-day as to what the cost of these 15 miles of extra haulage would be, and I was told that in order to make this railway pay at all there would have to be something like 10,000 tons a year of traffic, and that the loss to those persons who paid for the

"freight would be something over £1,000 a year, by carrying it 15 miles farther than is necessary. It means, besides, nearly an hour's loss of time for anyone travelling the extra 15 miles. I cannot see how it can be argued that it is desirable to go 15 miles farther for the sake of getting to another particular town. The necessity for this railway is acknowledged by everyone." In making these remarks the hon. the Premier has lost sight of the fact that a large quantity of the produce required for the fields will, or at any rate should, come from our own districts—from the districts south of Northam. No doubt that which comes from the Eastern Colonies will go by the nearest route under any circumstances, but we must endeavor to foster our own industries, and assist our own farmers. To do this at least as great facilities should be afforded them as to the growers outside the colony. It is said that by adopting the Northam route those persons who forward goods *via* Fremantle will be saved £1,000 a year in the cost of carriage; but will not the result of this be that while we are taking off a burden from those who reside near to the port of the capital, we shall be in the same ratio increasing the burden of those who reside on the southern side of the starting point? I will just read a few more of the hon. the Premier's remarks.

THE CHAIRMAN: What is the hon. member quoting from?

MR. PIESSE: From *Hansard*.

THE CHAIRMAN: Copies of this session?

MR. PIESSE: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member cannot read from the debates of this session. He can refer to them so as to help his own recollection.

MR. PIESSE: The Premier then said: "The only argument that I can see at all in favor of going 15 miles round would be that the land was very much better on that route, and that it was a much more fertile district; but as far as I am able to judge—and I have been over the country on both routes—I have never heard before that there was such good land, or that people were so pleased with it, as I have heard of late. If you would look at the reports of the Agricultural Commission which visited

"these districts, and if you compare the replies that were then given by some of the witnesses, who are the same gentlemen as have been giving other testimony in the newspapers, you will find that their descriptions at these different times do not quite agree. My experience is that settlers do not praise up the country. Those who have lived in isolated places many years, and have not done very well in consequence, are not inclined to speak of the land as so very fertile. My own opinion is that there is very little to choose between the land along the routes. They are not far distant from each other—twelve or fifteen miles would be the greatest distance between the two routes; and they converge until at 90 miles they join. I think it will be found there is very little to choose between the class of country along either route." There is no doubt that the settlement on either route is about equal. The farmers located within 20 miles of either route are about equal in number; but there is no doubt from the evidence taken before the Select Committee that there is a much larger quantity of good land available on the York than on the Northam route. It must not be forgotten that after going 20 miles out from Northam we get on to the sand plain, and there is then bad land for 50 or 60 miles until the forest country is reached; whereas if we take the York route the line will pass through good land 10 miles broad and 40 or 50 miles in length. Hitherto much of the country was considered useless on account of the cost of clearing; but now it is being brought into practical use. We have it in the evidence that much of the salmon-gum country, which was of little use before, has now been ring-barked, and has become first-class land for various purposes. This kind of land exists along the whole of the York route, and no doubt it will be found in future to be some of the best land in the colony, especially as when the ringing is done in a systematic manner it is not such a very expensive process. It has been said on almost all sides that this railway is to be built purely for the development of the goldfields; but if we can by the same expenditure gain the object we have in view and at the same time open up a rich agricul-

tural country, it will be better than constructing the line through 50 or 60 miles of barren country merely for the sake of saving a few miles in distance. Agricultural settlement must mean traffic for the railway, and that is what we require in order to make the line a success, and if we can use our own produce instead of that which is imported, it must be better for the colony in every way. With regard to the land along this route, I should like to quote from the evidence given by Mr. Griffen before the select committee. He said: "I consider the land on the York route is better than the land on the Northam route for the first 40 miles. I do not think, excepting Grass Valley, there is any country equal to Cubine and Youndegin. This is volcanic basalt country, growing jams and salmon gums; generally admitted to be good land." It may be said that this gentleman, being a surveyor, would not know good land; but his opinion is corroborated by other evidence that the land on the York route is far better than on the Northam route. On the last occasion when this matter was under consideration, the hon. member for Toodyay referred to the productiveness of Newcastle and Northam, and said that they alone could supply the requirements of Yilgarn. For my part I think they would have a better market at Perth and Fremantle than at Yilgarn, and if they have such a wonderful district they should, considering the wonderful bounties which have been bestowed upon them, allow us to have this railway nearer than is proposed. We then should be able to do something for Yilgarn, and should be able to leave the markets of Perth and Fremantle open to them. We have heard a great deal about the productiveness of the Meekering Area, and we have had exhibited to us some of the products from there. I take it that this has only been done as an advertisement for the place, and I believe, from what I can learn, that many of those who are now located on that area would be glad to leave it and settle on the York route. Still I do not think any good can ensue from disparaging the country near either route; because to condemn particular parts of the country must do a considerable amount of harm to the whole colony. There is very much evidence before the Commission in this direction that could

very well have been left out, as it cannot do very much good. In considering this question we must not only think of the York people; there are also those near Beverley and still farther South to be considered. From Beverley we have a line of railway 240 miles in length, and assuming that traffic for only half the distance was taken to the fields, it is worth giving some attention to, especially bearing in mind that the Government are now opening up large agricultural areas along that line. If the people who take up land on them are not afforded a market within a reasonable distance, very little work will be done upon them. We all hope to see great results from these areas, and if the railway to the fields could be brought to within four miles of York, it would act as an immense stimulus to those located on the land for many miles to the South of it, besides not interfering with either Northam or Newcastle. There is one other matter I should like to mention. I do not pose here as an amateur engineer, but I know that lines which pass through marshy country, as this one will from Northam, cannot be maintained or constructed as easily or as cheaply as other lines. On the Great Southern Railway there is a similar lake country, and when the line was being constructed one of the bridges with only two bays on it of 20ft. each was washed away. The length was increased to 65ft., and even then it was found to be insufficient, because it did not make due allowance for the flood-waters. Before taking my seat I should like to say that this Great Southern Railway is looked upon as a railway not belonging to the colony; but, as I pointed out in my remarks on the Address-in-Reply, although it is in the hands of a private company it is fixed here and is substantially one of our railways. It has been said that to build the line to Yilgarn from a point nearer to Beverley than is proposed would result in the Great Southern Railway securing the traffic; but I would ask hon. members whether it would not be an advantage rather than otherwise if this railway could increase its traffic. Already this railway has been the means of opening up the excellent district through which it passes, and we have not even yet seen

the good effect of it to the colony as a whole. The development of goldfields must tend to take the farm laborers and those who would otherwise settle on the soil away; and we should therefore do all we can to keep people on the land so that mining may go hand in hand with agriculture—so that the farmers of the colony may supply the miners with the products of the soil instead of their being compelled to import them. I hope hon. members will give this matter due consideration.—[Mr. THROSSELL: Hear, hear.]—Although the hon. member for Northam says “hear, hear,” he will, I am sure, be sorry when he sees the line go through Northam, for I cannot see any great advantage that will accrue to any town from the fact that a railway goes through it. After the line is constructed, Northam will sink into insignificance. Now it is a place of great moment; it has been well brought before the public, but when the line is built the great work done by my hon. friend Mr. Throssell will be lost. I hope, in conclusion, that hon. members in deciding this matter will seriously and carefully consider the claims of that portion of the Southern district which I represent—a portion of the colony which so deservedly requires attention at their hands.

MR. THROSSELL: In rising to oppose the motion of the hon. member for York, I shall refer only to the fresh developments of the issue, and in the interests of my constituents endeavor to wipe away a few of the cobwebs that have been thrown around it. To my mind the whole question hinges upon the Engineer-in-Chief's report, which fully justifies the action taken by the Government in naming Northam as the starting point. Every hon. member knows that this route means a saving of 15 miles of haulage for all time. Mr. Griffen's evidence also goes to show that by the deviation recommended by the select committee a further two miles may possibly be saved; so that after all the talk that has been indulged in as to other interests, this saving of haulage is the great argument in favor of the Northam route. I agree that this railway is to be constructed primarily in the interests of the goldfields, but at the same time it will largely stimulate agriculture throughout the Eastern Districts.

It is not a question of Northam *versus* York, or of Fremantle *versus* Albany, but simply a question of the interests of a large majority *versus* those of a small minority, the majority being represented by the inhabitants of Fremantle, Perth, and Guildford, together with Bunbury and Busselton on the South, and the Midland Railway lands on the North. Seventenths of the traffic, I believe, to the goldfields will pass over the lines from Fremantle and Perth for many years to come. This traffic must consist chiefly of such goods as galvanised iron, blacksmiths' iron and steel, tea, sugar, tinned meat and fish, dynamite, building material, soap, household necessities, wine and spirits, tobacco, and oats. From the Bunbury line (for which we have already committed ourselves to an expenditure of something like a quarter of a million sterling) we shall get all the potatoes, onions, butter, cheese, and fruits required on the fields. At any rate the country, in committing itself to the construction of this Bunbury line, was led to believe that this would be so, and I can only say that a fraud has been perpetrated on the country if it will not be so. For my part I look to my hon. friend Mr. Cookworthy to see that this promise is kept. Again we may look to the Northern portions of the colony to send their supplies of fat sheep and cattle to Yilgarn by rail; so that, looking at the question all round, hon. members will see that if the construction of this railway is going to result in the large population which the hon. member for York told us was wanted, and which, I believe, will be brought about, nearly every district in the colony is directly interested in this question, and it will be seen that there are far greater interests at stake than those of either Northam, York, or the Great Southern Railway, I do not know whether it was accident or design on the part of the Government—but I prefer to believe it formed a portion of their well thought-out policy—that in selecting Northam as the starting point they had duly considered the interests of the Bunbury and Vasse railways, which are Government lines, as well as the fact that a few months would see millions of acres of rich land along the Northern line thrown open to the public. To my mind, if the Government

had not considered it its duty to give every advantage to the already existing Government lines, and to those about to be constructed, they would not be worthy of their position. I believe these points have been lost sight of, and I hope that hon. members representing the Northern and South-Western districts will duly consider them. I feel sure that if the hon. member for York occupied the same position as the Premier he would have taken the same view of the question as the Government have. With regard to the lands in the Katanning area, I admit they are good, for I have visited them. I believe a large amount of settlement will take place there; but I believe my hon. friend Mr. Piesse has yet a great work before him in this direction. Still, I sincerely hope he will live long enough to see his efforts crowned with success. My hon. friend Mr. Parker has stated that the Eastern Districts would supply the fields with the chaff, flour, barley, &c., they require. This is quite true, but I am in a position to know that these items will form only about three-tenths of the whole traffic, and, as far as I can see, at the present rates for haulage of these products, it means only about 4s. per ton more for the 27 miles. That is to say, the producers of York and Katanning will have to pay that rate per ton in excess of the Northam producer, and I do not believe that either the ruin or the prosperity of the Great Southern Railway lands will hinge upon so small an extra charge as that. If it does, it will not say very much for the land. It has been stated that the Northam line for 10 miles out possesses only four or five farms; but I hold in my hand a list given to me this morning of 54 different holdings for that distance, extending only five miles on each side of the line. Northam, in the main, is made up of small holders, who are bound to cultivate their land. With regard to the Meekering Area, of which so much has been said, there can be no reasonable doubt that the descriptions marked on the maps by the surveyors as to the quality of the soil are reliable. To suppose otherwise, would be to charge the Government Surveyor with a deliberate fraud, for which there could be no motive. I regret that the evidence of the Northam witnesses has been held up to ridicule, while that of

those from York has been lauded. The Northam men came down to tell the simple truth, and not to give exaggerated descriptions of the country. Let me ask hon. members to analyse the evidence of Mr. Burges. He says he used the land formerly as a sheep run, but as soon as the Government declared it an agricultural area he took up 2,000 acres. So bad was the country that he elected to pay 20s. an acre under the non-residence clause, rather than 10s. an acre under the residence clause, which means a gift of £1,000 to the country. He also paid rent to the Government for the much-abused sand plain, which he used as a sheep run, and which he actually thinks so much of that he has gone to the expense of fencing a portion of it. The same gentleman acknowledged that his tenant had this year harvested 15 bushels of wheat to the acre. At the present time the settlement of the Meekering Area by small men means about £15,000 thrown into the land revenue, while at Cubine the land is let in poison leases at £1 per 1,000 acres. As to the question of compensation for the Northam town lands, I believe the amount that will actually be paid will be nearer the sum named by the Engineer-in-Chief than that mentioned by the hon. member for York. We cannot answer for the absentee owners, but the resident owners have signed a paper leaving the matter of compensation entirely in the hands of the Government. On the York route the land is no doubt good, but something like 30,000 acres have already been disposed of at Cubine and Dangin under the Poison Act, which simply means that the total amount of revenue the colony will derive from it will be £620, paid in yearly instalments at £1 per 1,000 acres for twenty-one years, after which the land will become freehold estate. I think this Poison Act is something like charity—it covers a multitude of sins. I mean that a little poison sometimes covers a very large area of good land. I find no fault with anyone for taking up this poison land. All honor to them for their pluck and enterprise, but I merely mention the fact to show that while the Meekering Area on the Northam line would secure £15,000 to the country with a guarantee of a resident population and settlement, these 30,000 acres at

Cubine and Dangin will only bring in £620, with no guarantee of any population whatever. I believe that if the goldfields develop to such an extent as to demand the united productions of the Eastern districts and Katanning lands as depicted by the hon. member for York, the estimated traffic of 10,000 tons per annum set down by the Engineer-in-Chief, will be found to be well within the mark. With regard to the outlying lands which exist on both lines to a greater or lesser extent, they are not worth much consideration; for so soon as the railway is completed it will do away with the inducement to settle and cultivate them. It is while the carriage of chaff is £25 per ton that an inducement exists for men to face these isolated and densely-timbered forests with expensive clearing and diminished rainfall. The railway will reduce the freight on chaff to about 30s. per ton, and with the enormous extent of land known to still exist in the Eastern districts and on the Great Southern line, with a rainfall of from 16 to 18 inches, will, I ask, any men be likely to cut themselves off from civilisation, from their schools, their churches, and their doctors, to take up land where the clearing is so heavy and expensive, the rainfall not exceeding 7 or 8 inches, and with only an indifferent yield, while the price they will get for their produce will only represent about 15s. per ton more than at Northam or York? I assert, sir, that while this Yilgarn railway will stimulate agriculture in the settled districts with their regular rainfall, it will kill increased settlement in these far-out forests—at any rate until the day comes when the millions of acres of good land in the more-favored regions are absorbed. If York, the oldest settled district in the colony, is so superior to my district, why is it that it only figures second as a producing centre? Toodyay, of which Northam forms a part, stands to the front of all other districts in the colony in the matter of agriculture, and second only to the Swan district in vineyards and orchards. It has double the number of cattle and horses that York has, and more sheep, notwithstanding that it was settled many years later. I trust, sir, that in my remarks I have used no extravagant assertions. At any rate I have not intended to, my only object

being to defend my district and my people, without in any way saying hard things of others. I feel convinced that the more this question is thought out the clearer it will become that in selecting Northam as the starting point for the railway to the goldfields the Government were actuated by no other motive than that of conferring "the greatest good on the greatest number."

MR. CLARKSON: I have heard it said of members of the legal profession that when they have no case they abuse the other side, and this seems to me to be the view taken by some hon. members of this House. When it was proposed last session to construct a line of railway from some point on the Eastern line to the goldfields, I said I believed it would do more good to develop the resources of the colony than any other line; and I repeat that statement now. Some question has arisen over the starting point, and a good deal of local feeling has been put into it; but we, in this House, should set this all aside and endeavor to ascertain what is best to be done in the interests of the colony as a whole. We should in no way consider any particular district, otherwise we shall have a state of things which already exists on the Eastern line—a line which will always be a source of expense to the colony and a standing disgrace to all connected with its construction. In fixing the starting point of this railway there are many things to be taken into consideration. If I thought the population of the colony was going to remain at anything like its present number, I should say, "Do not let us build the line at all, because it is not required"; but I do not think we shall remain stationary for any very great length of time from now. On the contrary, I believe that in the near future people will be attracted by our rich goldfields, our vigorous public works policy, and our rich agricultural lands in large numbers. We are all aware that there are two proposed starting points—one from Northam, which is the centre of the largest and best agricultural district we have in the colony, and the other from four miles south of York, which may be said to be the southern extremity of this belt of agricultural country. I may say at once that I am in favor of making Northam the starting

point. In the first place, according to the Engineer-in-Chief's report, the line by this route will be 15 miles shorter, which is a matter of great importance. If York be the starting point it means that every town this side of it will be compelled to have its goods hauled 15 miles farther than is necessary, and this not for a week, or a month, or a year, but for all time. What the cost would be I do not know, but I should think it would mean many thousands of pounds in a year. Notwithstanding all we have heard lately as to the superiority of the land on the York route, I maintain that the land on the Northam route is equal to it, if not superior, and, what is more, the farther north you go from Northam the better the land is, and the greater in extent it becomes. Another point in favor of making Northam the starting point is that it will bring trade to the existing Government railway and to the port of Fremantle. I think it would be exceedingly unwise on the part of this House to do anything which would divert the traffic from our own lines on to the line owned by the Great Southern Railway. It is a peculiar thing that my district has taken no public interest in this question. We have employed no special reporter to give exaggerated and highly-colored reports; we have rested on our merits, knowing that in the end we should reap our reward. If hon. members will refer to the Census returns they will find that the Toodyay district has the largest population, the greatest number of stock, and the largest amount of land under cultivation, of any rural district in the colony, and this, with the whole of the lands of the district shut up for years, in the interests of the Midland Railway Company. York, during the whole of this time, has not had such disadvantages as these, but yet its stock has not increased, nor has its population increased at the same rate as it has in the Toodyay district. Hon. members will remember the large trade that was done in sandalwood in York in years gone by. I believe that the foundations of many of the houses of York are actually laid upon logs of this wood, but that industry has now nearly all gone, and the district will have to fall back upon its other resources. I believe one settler in the Toodyay district has

already sent 15,000 sheep to the fields, and I know of my own knowledge 40 teams (not including those from Northam) that have gone from this district to the fields, and which have carried produce grown in the district. What has York sent? Not 1,000 sheep, I am sure, since the fields were discovered, and as a matter of fact they do not produce in the York district sufficient for their own consumption. I do not, however, consider that either Northam or York has any more to do with this railway than any other part of the colony. It should be our sole aim, in deciding this matter, to do the best we can in the interests of the whole colony, without regard to any particular district. The hon. member for York referred to some millions of acres of land that would shortly be open for selection on the Great Southern Railway. He takes a very hopeful view of the opening up of this country, and tells us that all the produce that can be obtained from it will for many years be required for the fields; but if this be so, where are Perth and Fremantle to be supplied from? I do not intend to detain the House at this late hour, and I will only, in conclusion, express the hope that hon. members will decide this matter in the best interests of the colony.

MR. A. FORREST: I shall support the hon. member for York. As far as I can gather everything that is good is from Northam, and everything from York has been painted as black as possible. In the remarks which I shall address to hon. members, I shall confine myself solely to the land question, which is one on which I am in a position to speak. Most hon. members who have spoken have had an interest in either one route or the other, but I am in the happy position of having no interest one way more than another; in fact my interests as regards each route are identical. Many years ago when but a lad, I came to the Eastern district from the Southern district. The opinions I formed of it were most favorable, and I have not altered them since. As a surveyor, I was engaged in surveying the lands of the colony between Beverley and Toodyay. I formed a very high opinion of them, which I have never altered since. As regards the lands between York

and Southern Cross, and Northam and Southern Cross, I say there is no comparison; and my opinion should be worth something, seeing that I have been engaged in both agricultural and pastoral pursuits for a very long period.

MR. CLARKSON: Nonsense!

MR. A. FORREST: The hon. member for Toodyay has always lived in his own district; but I have moved about, and therefore I do not see that his opinion can be taken before mine.

MR. CLARKSON: I have travelled hundreds of miles.

MR. A. FORREST: Perhaps so, but only in one direction. I am sorry on this occasion to have to vote against the Government; but I do so because I think the interests of the colony alone should be studied, and this will only be accomplished by adopting the York route. A great deal has been said about the poison lands on the York route, but when I speak of the agricultural country along it, I may tell hon. members that I refer to land outside this altogether. Some reference has been made in the Press (and I presume it came from the hon. member for Northam) as to my interests in these districts. Let me tell hon. members that I own 9,500 acres of freehold land close to the town of Northam, and which are improved. As against this I hold a small poison lease 36 miles out of York, which, if I were studying my own interests, would certainly not lead me to vote on this question as I intend to. When I give my vote on this bill, I shall do so as independently as any member of this House. But it is not a question of either York or Northam, but one in which the interests of the whole colony are concerned. If we adopt the Northam route the line, after it passes Grass Valley, will go through no land which will be availed of for settlement for many years to come; but if we take the York route there is good country all along. Fifteen miles out we come to the Green Hills, where there is now a large amount of produce grown, but no means of communication with a market. Going eight or ten miles farther up the valley, we find settlement all the way, but where it is impossible to grow corn at a profit, owing to the heavy cost of carting. On the other route it is said there is the Meek-

ering Area. Well, that Area has been open for three years, and do we find any number of persons settling on it? Mr. Burges is there; but why? His lease was thrown open to selection, and in his own interest he protected his other areas by buying 2,000 acres of it. I should be sorry to say that there was not good land in the Meekering Area, but I am bound to say that it is not as good as the land to the south of York. There is another reason why I shall vote for the York route. We must all bear in mind that a very large proportion of the traffic to the fields will come from the South, and why the people who reside there should be called upon to pay for an extra 20 miles of haulage any more than those who are located in this part of the colony I fail to see. I shall support the York route because I believe it will induce more settlement than can possibly take place on the Northam route; in fact because I believe that in all respects the York route is the preferable one.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): No!

MR. A. FORREST: I say yes. And besides this, it involves the saving of nearly £5,000 in cost; and in addition, I believe, the grades are better.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): No!

MR. A. FORREST: The report of the Engineer-in-Chief, at any rate, shows them to be better. I shall vote, sir, for the York route, and I hope the good sense of the House will show that there is only one starting point for this railway—that from a point south of York.

MR. LOTON: The consensus of opinion seems to be that our primary object in constructing this railway is to serve the development of the Yilgarn goldfields. It is to give to the people the quickest and cheapest means of transit, both for passengers and goods—to where and from where? The port, the natural port, of the colony, to which and from which both passengers and goods must naturally filter. It cannot be argued for one moment, surely, that any great number of passengers or any material quantity of goods are likely to come from the port of Albany and find their way to Yilgarn. There must be passengers by that route, no doubt; we are hoping to see many of them from the Eastern colonies; but,

after all, those passengers who come to the Yilgarn goldfields, will be as likely to land at Fremantle as Albany. What is the material object in travelling the extra distance of about 27 miles, if the starting point of the railway is to be from York, and even the passengers coming from Albany by rail would have to go to York, in the first instance, and have to turn back again four miles? That is not a material difference, a question of 20 and 27 miles, with regard to passengers. Do we expect a great number of passengers to come here from the Eastern Colonies and the outside world, and to land at Albany and take a run to the goldfields and go back again? No; 99 out of every 100 would come to Fremantle and visit the capital of the colony.

AN HON. MEMBER: We want them to come here.

MR. LOTON: Certainly they will come here, and then there will be no extra distance at all; the distance would be saved. With regard to the transit of goods, it is a question of saving 15 miles of haulage or thereabouts. I am not going into the question of the difference in the cost of construction. The cost is set down as being about £4,000 more by starting from Northam than from York. Against this there is a suggestion that a further deviation should be made south from Northam; and it is possible that if this deviation is made we have it in the evidence of Mr. Griffen that, though he is not certain on the point, he has some faith in it, a better route for a certain distance will be found, at a saving in distance of about two miles; and, if so, with an equally good route and a deviation to the south, it will be more in favor of Northam than York as the starting point, and it will bring the question of cost to much about the same. With regard to the cost of compensation for land through Northam, it may or may not be more than the Engineer-in-Chief has estimated. But we should not overlook the fact that ninety-nine hundredths of the traffic that has to go to Yilgarn, both passenger and goods—at all events goods—would go only from the port of Fremantle. Then again, there is the Northern part of the colony, and if the population of Yilgarn is to increase considerably, it will have to

be fed with a considerably greater quantity of butcher's meat than can be produced for a long time to come in the Eastern districts. Where is it to come from, and how is it to be conveyed? It must come by railway, from Fremantle, not from Albany, and there will be a saving there in the cost of 15 miles of haulage. With regard to passengers, also, if we put from our minds the fact that York and Northam exist as towns, and leave out this local agitation altogether, and consider the question of constructing the railway to the Yilgarn goldfields, aiming at the cheapest and quickest transit, we must say the Northam route is preferable so far as the evidence goes. The other point, which to my mind is an important one, is the nature of the land through which the railway will pass. We have a mass of evidence before us, but it was condensed considerably by the hon. member for York in his speech, although I am bound to say that I think he put the evidence in its condensed form very fairly before this House; and I am bound to say also that, although the hon. member represents York, and has been attacked on this occasion by the hon. member who represents Northam, yet he did not put the question of York *versus* Northam at all. He based his argument on the quality of the land, and on the necessity and desirability of the line being constructed in that direction, on account of the superior quality of the land, if the line started from York. I have carefully read the evidence, and it appears to me the preponderance is that the land outside York, say 10 miles wide and 50 miles out, is in favor of York; that is to say, it is better. The evidence goes on to show the number of settlers that are upon this land, and which the line would serve if made from York, as compared with the number on the other route if the line started from Northam. The number from York is 44, and the number from Northam is put at 54. Where is the majority of the settlement at the present time? How many of the settlers on the York route are beyond the Green Hills? I think you can count them on the fingers of one hand outside the 20-mile radius from York. And taking the Northam route, how many settlers are outside the same distance from Nor-

tham? Well, about the same number. As a matter of fact, the settlement is all served by the present Eastern and Great Southern railways. It is all within a radius of about 20 miles. With regard to the very superior quality of the land on the York route, in preference to the Northam route, we have the evidence of Mr. Marwick, who took various parties to the Meekering Area, who made no selections apparently; and even the land on the York route did not suit those people. The reason is not far to seek. Possibly the land is heavily timbered; and there is another possibility which it is no use to shut our eyes to, and that is the meagreness of the rainfall every 10 miles you get farther east. This is what frightens the people. The majority of the settlement and cultivation of the land for some considerable time to come, whichever route this railway takes, will be within a radius of 25 miles from either place Eastward, because the settlers will then be able to go into agriculture at a profit, and in every respect with greater advantage than going farther East. There is one other point: we are all apparently glad to get as near the railway as possible. It is quite evident that the majority of settlement, as I have stated, is within a radius of about 30 miles, and if this line goes from Northam, then North and South of this line to a point 50 miles out—the nearer you go to the 50 miles out, the sooner you will tap the good land of the present settlement. And how far will the settlers and the Crown lessees, and those about Cubine, be from the railway line, supposing it goes out from Northam? There will be no necessity at all for the people who live 20 or 30 miles out to cart their produce into Northam or York, because they will tap the line with their cross-roads as it extends out. If they have tons of hay, are they going to cart it out? Certainly not. They will take their hay and corn to the railway line. There may be certain products—flour, wheat, etc.—which may have to be taken to the mill to grind; but a lot of the produce can be taken to the line, instead of going into York or Northam, and the saving of cost in these cases would be practically done away with. With regard to the people farther down the Great Southern Railway towards Katanning, if

those people are to be served, what is the use of mincing the question, and why not say at once, "Better start the line from Beverley or Moorumbine"? But will the Government be so foolish as to construct a line to Yilgarn, and have to convey ninety-nine hundredths of the goods traffic along that line an extra distance of 15 miles, or, if you want to serve these Southern people, a much greater distance? It seems to me this subject has narrowed itself down to these two points. I am prepared to admit that the route eastward of York is somewhat better than the route eastward of Northam; but if settlement and cultivation, and the products realised therefrom are to be considered, I shall feel it my duty to support the route from Northam.

MR. RICHARDSON: I will refer to a few of the arguments used by the hon. member for York. He has made out the strongest possible case that could be made for York; it cannot be much improved upon; and it behoves those hon. members who are disinterested to hold the scales evenly between the two places. And, as the speech of the hon. member for York was very much in the way of special pleading, by putting everything for York and letting nothing come forward in favor of the other route, it behoves disinterested members to critically examine a few of his points. He made a good point by attacking the estimate of Mr. O'Connor, the Engineer-in-Chief, with reference to the capital saving of £30,000, and he appeared to show that the Engineer-in-Chief had made a great mistake in imagining that these 10,000 tons of traffic were to come from Fremantle or Perth; and he asks us if these are to be all imports from other parts of the world, and whether a great deal of the traffic will not be the produce of the Eastern Districts? In the first place, he rather led us to infer that the bulk of this traffic would be the produce of the Eastern districts; but I think he is a little beside the mark there. We may take the case of York as a test of that argument, and does not the total railway traffic to and from York consist of considerably more than half the produce that comes from it? Therefore we must infer that a very large proportion of the estimated traffic on the new railway will come from Fremantle

and Perth. But is this traffic necessarily to consist of imports? Are we not to have any manufactories in this city? I am in favor of a railway to the goldfields, but I say it is taking a very poor view of our position and prospects if the expected increase in our population is not to bring with it considerable manufactories—to be located in Perth and Fremantle—and to provide a very large proportion of the traffic from the coast districts up to the Eastern goldfields. Another point he argued was that these 10,000 tons of traffic are to be a maximum quantity. I take it that Mr. O'Connor calculated the probable traffic of the next two or three years as the basis of his estimate. But are we going to stop at that? We are legislating for many years to come, and for ever; therefore, surely we are not going to imagine that these 10,000 tons of traffic will not increase? When it does increase, the estimated saving on capital account will be increased also, and will not decrease. He would lead us to believe also that a very large settlement is going to take place along the Great Southern Railway, upon the land thrown open by the Government; but I do not think the Government, in advertising that land, have given any guarantee that even the bulk of it is agricultural land. The hon. member asks, where is the market to be for these four or five hundred thousand acres of land, when they are settled upon and cultivated? He says that market is to be Yilgarn. I take it that if four or five hundred thousand acres of land are going to be settled along the Great Southern Railway, that settlement will correspond to an increase of population equal to one head to two acres, and that will be an increase of the population of the colony to the extent of some 50,000 people; and as we know that the cities and towns always increase in even greater proportion, therefore, taking the hon. member's own figures, we must allow that when all these hundreds of thousands of acres are settled upon, the increase of population will be very large indeed, and, I ask, will the 10,000 tons of traffic per annum be stationary then?

MR. PARKER: I never in any way made a statement, or led anyone to believe I imagined for a moment, that 10,000 tons of traffic per annum would be the maximum.

MR. RICHARDSON: Then the hon. member's argument is worth nothing, because he pins his faith to the £30,000, but I think it will be found nearer £40,000 when capitalised. If he does not mean to say this £30,000 is to remain, his argument means nothing. His two statements about the large increase of population along the Great Southern Railway, and these 10,000 tons of traffic cancel one another. I would like to ask also if, after all this increase of population and production along the Great Southern Railway, Yilgarn is going to be a sufficient market for all these producers? Why, sir, we shall want a population of about 100,000 to consume all this produce. Although I believe the goldfields will increase considerably in population, yet I cannot stretch my imagination so far as to believe that these few people are going to consume all the products of these hundreds of thousands of acres that are to be settled along the Great Southern Railway. The hon. member would lead us to believe the only saving in the distance is from the towns of Fremantle and Perth. The whole of the settlements behind Spencer's Brook are included in the saving of distance in the route to Yilgarn; therefore everything that comes down the line and everything that goes up the line will have the benefit of the shorter distance; and not the traffic of Perth and Fremantle alone, but the produce of the whole district situated anywhere behind Spencer's Brook, and all the Southern District to the Vasse, which ought to send potatoes and mangel-wurtzels to the goldfields, will be benefited by the shorter distance and the cheaper transit. As to another point, I agree with the hon. member for the Swan (Mr. Loton) when he says the hon. member for York has shown that the quality of the land out of York is better. I am led to that conclusion also. I do not know the country, but reading the evidence in a disinterested and impartial manner, that is my conclusion. We have heard a great deal also as to our disparaging the traffic on the Great Southern Railway because the line is owned by a private company; but if two alternatives are placed before us, and we have to choose whether we will carry the

traffic along a Government railway built out of public money or carry it over a railway built by a private company, then I say our choice must be to carry the traffic over the line that has been built with public money, and in making that choice we are not holding any ill-will to the Great Southern Railway Company. When this alternative is placed before us, our choice must be to make our own Government lines pay by increasing the traffic, rather than increasing the traffic of a private company, and in doing that we are acting on a simple business and straightforward principle. I do not think anyone can reasonably ask us to build a line 200 or 300 miles to the goldfields, in order to increase the traffic on a private railway; therefore, I say, it is throwing dust in our eyes when the argument is used that we are disparaging the Great Southern Railway. Taking all the evidence and all the reasons, *pro* and *contra*, from a disinterested point of view, and allowing that the land along the York route is rather better, and allowing that we wish to develop the country along the Great Southern Railway, still we cannot lose sight of the argument that there are other districts in the colony which will suffer equally with those along the Great Southern line, if the York route is chosen. The Midland Railway Company is also entitled to as much consideration as the Great Southern Company. Then there is the Newcastle district, and I notice that the hon. member for York asked why it was that if there is such a large amount of beautiful land in that district, it has not been more cultivated. He has himself shown the reason, in saying that no agriculturist can be expected to prosper if depending on marketable produce grown more than 15 miles from a railway line. I am glad to see the hon. member is a convert to the same argument which I used previously with reference to the Bunbury Railway, though I think the distance I then stated was 15 to 20 miles. For these and many other reasons, having gone through all the documents and evidence, I have tried to make up my mind in a thoroughly impartial manner; and believing that Mr. O'Connor summed up the case very carefully and exactly and justly, I think his recommendation is the one we should abide by.

MR. TRAYLEN: In dealing with the respective advantages to be obtained in starting either from York or Northam, arguments have been adduced of this nature: (1) The number of persons who come from other parts of the world and the other colonies to examine into the riches of our goldfields; and (2) the very much larger number of people who land at Albany, travel to York, and thence direct to the fields. Now that is giving them credit for having the good sense to choose two or three hours of convenience, as against all the other connections with the fields; that is to say, that in order to save themselves a few miles journey, just once in a way, they are to pay more for getting to the fields and for their supplies when there; although whether they are to remain there as workers or as shareholders elsewhere, it must be of the greatest interest to them to have their goods hauled over the shortest possible distance. I cannot think that any person coming from Albany will choose to have the line start from York, merely to save him a few miles of travel. Perhaps next to one other member, I have travelled over this line more than any member of the House, and I am able to say the testimony given by the witnesses agrees with my recollection of the land, and agrees with the deductions drawn by hon. members such as the one who has just sat down, and others. The land is, I believe, somewhat better to the eastward of York than to the eastward of Northam. It appears to narrow down the considerations very much to this: what is the bulk of the traffic to the field—is it Eastern districts produce, such as flour, bran, chaff, pork, bacon, hams, and so on; or is it such as consists of machinery, of building materials, and of such articles as are made in Perth and Fremantle, also vegetables, fruit, fish, imported goods, including oats for feeding horses on the fields? We had no witness before us in the select committee who was able to give us, from his personal knowledge, evidence of the relative proportions of these two classes of freight—the Eastern districts produce, and that class of freight which goes from this part of the colony to the fields. I had, therefore, to turn to a private source, and I am able to verify very nearly what has fallen from the hon. member for Northam. The propor-

tions appear to be two-fifths, as against three-fifths that go from this district. If the line goes from York, the position will be this—that in order to admittedly save something on two-fifths of the freight, the persons interested in Yilgarn are willing to pay more on three-fifths of the freight. And then I ask hon. members to be good enough to note the word “admittedly,” and I do so for this reason—that we have so had it impressed on us that the length of line to be constructed either *via* York or Northam is the same length within a quarter of a mile, that we have forgotten or overlooked the fact that York, as the starting point or the loading-up place, is four miles from where the new line will begin; so that there will be four miles more of haulage to be paid for than if the line starts from Northam. In starting from Northam we shall be utilising to a very much greater extent than at present a branch or spur line; and if this can be made to pay without anything else suffering, so much the better for the cause we have in hand. And lest my York friends should think I am indifferent to their interests, or that I have any wrong bias in arriving at the conclusion that Northam is the proper place to start from, I say the Eastern Colonies are not going to be content for many more years without a transcontinental line; and that line is not likely to run over the same ground as the Eastern district line now does. I expect it will run as direct to York as the engineer can take it, and then it will pass eastward, not to Southern Cross, but a little south of Parker's Range. Indeed Parker's Range seems to be left out of our discussion as to where this line shall start from. It may be a much larger centre than Southern Cross, and other lands will be well served when the transcontinental line is constructed. I am firmly convinced that it is our duty to vote for the line from Northam.

MR. SIMPSON: I have listened to this debate with much pleasure. It occurs to me that in reading the first clause of this bill, it may be cited as the Yilgarn Railway Bill. I have failed to discover that this idea has been apparent to hon. members in discussing the question of the route. I am inclined to look at it by considering that this line is to be built mainly to

assist in the development of our gold-fields. In voting for referring the bill to a select committee, I thought it would be able to furnish the House with exact information as to which particular route would be most likely to open up the most useful arable Government land. I was looking to the interest of the colony, not that the railway should go through any particular private estate, but that it should go through Government land. In reading the evidence that has been submitted, I have to state at once that I rise to support the recommendation of the Select Committee; and in doing so I am not prepared to take the respective assertions either of the Meekering Area men or of the York men. I am not prepared to take either the cabbage-stump view of the land, or the 30-bushels-to-the-acre view of the land. Looking to the capitalised sum which will have to be paid by the consumer on Yilgarn, I am determined to vote for that route which will give the consumers on Yilgarn the lowest freight. I have looked into the matter carefully, and gone into the figures; and I wish to state that if the Government look for 10,000 tons of freight per annum along that line for some years to come, they are very largely leading this country astray. I noticed in the Select Committee's report that at the most 250 tons a month are leaving for the East, and my opinion is that the revenue, which is to pay for interest and maintenance on this line, will largely depend on the coaching traffic, and not on the freight traffic. This question about produce from the Eastern districts is nonsense. Ten tons a month will cover all that is consumed on Yilgarn. As to onions, I suppose one onion per day per man will be an ample allowance. As to flour, I am glad to see that the Eastern districts can supply the field with flour; but if the Government believe that in their first, second, or third year they are going to get 10,000 tons of freight along that line they are making the biggest financial leap in the dark that ever was made. I do believe that, though it will not begin to pay immediately, there will be some considerable settlement along the line. It is a wise suggestion to take that line *via* Meekering, and thus the question of settlement will be reasonably assist-

ed. I wish to get away from the question of these rival towns. I have eaten mutton on Yilgarn many times, and I have never eaten there a bit of sheep that came from York, and never saw a sheep that came from York on the field. They came from Northam, or Newcastle, or the North-West. I have for some years considered that the only avenue of the traffic for the Yilgarn goldfields was by way of Northam, and my idea was that eventually a railway would go by that route, if constructed, to the fields. There is another feature of the Select Committee's report which I hope the members will pay attention to. We do not want a feather-bed railway to Yilgarn, but a cheap line. We do not want expensive station buildings, and we do not want daily trains. I hope the Government will take care that the maintenance of the service and the maintenance of the line do not become a big charge on the Works Department. I am satisfied that the Select Committee have gone into this matter very carefully. I am satisfied with the result of the evidence. I think that if the Government construct a cheap line, without expensive station buildings, and take care to work the traffic economically and cheaply, it will be a railway beneficial to the colony. I shall support the Select Committee's report.

MR. MOLLOY: I have paid great attention to the discussion this evening. The editor of an important daily paper of Perth said he lamented the late hour at which the important speech of the hon. member for York was delivered. I must confess, not for the lateness of the hour, but for a different reason, I failed to follow the forcible arguments which I see printed as having been delivered by the hon. member before referred to; but since that time I have had an opportunity of reading a fuller report of the able address which was delivered on that occasion by the hon. member, and I consider that the arguments were very forcible indeed, and that they dealt with the subject in a masterly manner. I have listened attentively to the debate this evening, and I have failed to observe that the proper point has been touched with respect to this matter. As I understand it, the question is the construction of a line of railway to Yilgarn. A line of

railway has been approved; and the construction of this line is necessary for the development of the goldfields. If we were to pay attention to the hon. member who has last spoken, we do not want any line of railway constructed to these parts. He has told us that we do not want a daily train; that there is not going to be so many tons of stuff sent on it; that there are something like 400 persons on the goldfields now, and it is only the traffic required to supply these people that the railway will carry. But if that can be contended reasonably, then I say the construction of this line is not needed, and it would be imposing a "white elephant" on the country for some time to come. The report of the Engineer-in-Chief has been referred to, and it has been said by hon. members that his opinion should have great weight in enabling them to come to a conclusion. Then what do we find the Engineer's report say? Does it say the line should start from York or from Northam? He tells us that the Northam route is the preferable one, "other things being equal"; but he tells us also that the railway from Northam will cost the same as the railway from York; that he has no knowledge of the quality of the land in either district. I take it, therefore, that the quality of the land is the great consideration; that it is the consideration which should, in my opinion, decide the route which this railway should take. We find the evidence given before the Select Committee is all in favor of the route by way of York. We find that there are a certain number of farmers who have been detailed to us, all settled in the vicinity of the one locality, as against a minority in the other locality. We find that the York route has distinct advantages in the quality of its land, even admitted to be such by the opponents of this route. In developing the goldfields, we wish also, I take it, to settle the land. If there are agricultural areas to be served as well as the development of these goldfields, then if we are to invest money we should do it with the object of securing the greatest amount of gain. The development of the goldfields is the principal point to be considered; settlement of the land along this route is another. We find that the Northam route has not the advantages which are claimed for it

by the persons who came here advocating this route, but if we may judge by the zeal with which the various champions have taken up this route, we may come to the conclusion, inferentially, that there are some interests which are weighing with these advocates in determining them in the narrow bias they have for one route in preference to the other. I say the York route has the advantage of the superior quality of its land, and of being cheaper in the cost of construction. We find now that from later reports, even on the authority of the Engineer-in-Chief himself, there will be a saving in distance of a quarter of a mile—not much you will say, certainly—but we have also the assurance that in the convenience of station accommodation and other matters there will be a distinct saving in respect of the York route of some £4,000. The hon. member for York quoted it at £7,000. When we find this advantage, and also the advantage of the superior quality of land which will be opened up by the York route, in the vicinity of York, and taking into consideration the other areas referred to, I say these advantages are sufficient to justify us in concluding that the York route is preferable. We have also the consideration of the opening up of agricultural areas along the Great Southern line, and we heard the question asked to-night, "Why should we favor the Great Southern line in preference to the Government line?" But is it a question of the traffic along any one line of railway, or is it a question to be looked at from a national point of view, as to which is the best route in the interests of the country? If by means of these railways we can get 700,000 acres of land cultivated and a population settled on it, and also secure the development of the goldfields, surely that is a consideration which ought to weigh with us in coming to a conclusion on this subject. It has been estimated that some 10,000 tons of traffic would pass over the line to the goldfields,—but 10,000 tons of traffic from where—coming from Fremantle? Must it necessarily come from Fremantle? How do they come to this conclusion? Surely the 10,000 tons are not to be all imported from abroad? Are they all necessarily to come from Fremantle? What about

the port of Albany? What about the intermediate towns along the coast? If there are importations, some of them may find their way by these means. The port of Albany is the nearest port of call for the importations which they talk so much about; and if we judge of the inclination, as experience teaches us, in respect to importations, we shall find that the greater amount of traffic will come by this direction. . Therefore it is not a case of sending the goods a farther distance to a port of shipment or transhipment when the goods arrive at Fremantle, but it is a case of arriving at the first port of call and transporting thence to the goldfields. It is said that building materials and the manufactures of the colony are also to be sent, but can no manufactories be in any other place than about Perth or Fremantle? Then the products of the Swan district have been mentioned; surely the argument will apply also as to coming from the port of Albany. I say the York route has been proved, by all the evidence, to have distinct advantages over the Northam route; and I fail to see that the capitalised value of £30,000 applies to the detriment of the York route at all, because I consider that these 10,000 tons of traffic are not going to come all from Fremantle, and there is no producing area around Fremantle. We should not consider the interests of one particular district, to the exclusion of areas which will also send supplies to these goldfields. It has been stated by one hon. member that the supplies would be dearer by being sent in this direction, than if going by way of Northam; and these 15 miles of extra carriage are going to make the supplies to the goldfields dearer. I fail to see where the argument comes in. I suppose the 15 miles extra are going to make the supplies dearer because they must necessarily come from these two districts. If these were the only two districts which have producing power, and were the only districts which could supply the fields, I could then understand how the argument would apply. The supplies to the goldfields will not be increased in cost by the fact of the 15 miles extra haulage; therefore I have come to the conclusion that the proper and essential point of starting this railway for connecting with the goldfields and developing them is four miles out of York.

MR. QUINLAN: I shall not detain the House long at this late hour, but I feel that the issue before us is of such great importance that I should not give a silent vote. It is my intention to support the Government in their endeavor to commence this line of railway from Northam. We have had experience in the past as to the consequences of considering local interests and neglecting those appertaining to the colony as a whole. The mistake that was made in constructing the Eastern Railway by its present route in order to satisfy the York people, instead of taking the line *via* Chittering Brook, has been regretted ever since. We are shortly to have additional harbor accommodation at Fremantle, which will mean a considerable increase in the quantity of freight brought thither, and why the merchants and others should be asked to pay for 15 or 16 miles more haulage to the fields than is necessary I fail to see. I am aware that on the other side it is asked by the people that the South should be called upon to pay for 27 miles of extra haulage, but as against this we must bear in mind that three-fourths at least of the freight to the fields will come *via* Fremantle and from the Swan, Guildford and Toodyay districts. Then, as regards the land, let me ask why, if the York land is so much preferable and better than that on the other route, the Slater's, the Butterly's, the Adams', and others did not go to York to settle when they had the opportunity? The answer is that they went where the land was best. In the Toodyay District people have settled at distances of 111, 120, and 151 miles out, while, in the York District, the farthest settlement out is that belonging to Mr. Leake, 120 miles out. Then, as to the route, I know of an instance where machinery was sent to the fields *via* York, but the teams could not get it up, and it had to be returned and subsequently sent *via* Northam. This proves that the country *via* Northam is as level as it is *via* York. Those interested in the York route call our attention to the agricultural areas which are about to be opened up on the Great Southern Railway; but it will not be all agricultural produce that the fields will require. They will want manufactured articles, and where, let me ask, are the factories?

Certainly not in Albany, but in Perth and Fremantle. Another argument urged in favor of the York route is that some day there will be a transcontinental railway to South Australia, and that York must be its starting point. I entirely disagree with this contention, for the people will come to Fremantle, and they will require to go direct without touching at York at all. A great deal has been said disparagingly of the Meekering Area; but we cannot get over the fact that this land, which has been said to be of no use, has produced 20 and 30 bushels of wheat and barley to the acre. The hon. member for York contended that the Select Committee's report was more in favor of York than Northam; but I entirely disagree with him, for there is a much larger population in the Toodyay district, besides which there is a far larger area of good land. Another argument in favor of the Northam route is that there will be a capitalised saving of £30,000 in the haulage, and I presume this is based on the estimate of 10,000 tons of freight per annum. When the present Eastern line was constructed the York people said they did not want any round-about line *viâ* Chittering Brook; they wanted a direct line. Now we say the same thing. A very large proportion of the capital of the colony is located in Perth and Fremantle, and the people of these parts wish to carry on their trade with the fields by the nearest and most direct route possible. For these reasons, I shall vote for the clause as it stands.

MR. CANNING: The opinion seems to prevail that the land along the York route is better than that from Northam; but apart from this the time cannot be very far distant when an entirely new line will have to be constructed to York to form part of the transcontinental line to South Australia. When that is done the route will be so shortened as to make the distances from York and from Northam to the fields about equal. I do not intend to go over the arguments which have been used by other hon. members; but I must say I have been convinced by the reasons which have been given by the hon. member who represents York that the Northam route is not the one I can give my support to.

MR. PARKER: I do not wish to detain hon. members for more than a few

moments in reply, especially after the weary length this debate has been protracted to. In the first place it has been said that Cubine has all been taken up under the Poison Act, but the hon. member for Kimberley has clearly refuted it. Then it is said that the Toodyay district possesses double the number of sheep, cattle and horses, to the York district. This also is entirely incorrect. As I have already pointed out the Toodyay district possesses 800 sheep more than the York district, but we must remember that the Toodyay district includes the Victoria Plains. And let me point this out: If this Toodyay district is such a prosperous one, how is it that the price of meat tendered for and accepted by the Government is so much higher than in the York district? In Newcastle, I find that the price of mutton was 1d. per lb. dearer, and salt beef and pork double the price as compared with the York tenders. In York mutton is supplied at 4½d. per lb.; at Newcastle, 6d.; in York salt pork is 5d., and at Newcastle 10d. Then again look at the traffic returns of the two places. During the months of July and August the traffic returns from York were £1,219 10s. 9d., and from Northam £634 0s. 4d.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): Is not that accounted for by the large quantities of stuff sent up for the fields?

MR. PARKER: We are told that that goes *viâ* Northam. I take it, however, that as far as the Yilgarn traffic is concerned, about an equal amount goes from both places, and it will not, therefore, affect the returns. One hon. member has said that some machinery could not be taken from York, and it had to be sent to Northam before it could get to the fields; but at all events, notwithstanding that, the amount of traffic at York is double that from Northam, and more than that of Northam and Newcastle put together. Then take another point. In the York district the weekly wages amount to £634, whereas in the Toodyay district they only amount to £182 per week. The manufactures at York amount to £54 per week, and for the whole of Toodyay only to £28. The population of the town of York is 1,199; Northam, 477; and Newcastle, 742. Thus it will be seen that the population of York is

about equal to that of Northam and New-castle put together. As far as the wealth of the two places is concerned, judging from the exports and imports, and the amount of wages paid, York is far and away the superior of the two. I do not, however, pretend to ask hon. members to vote for this line simply in the interests of York; I go solely upon the lines of what is best for the colony at large. I have never said anything by way of disparaging the country at Northam. I simply ask hon. members to bear in mind the facts and figures that have now been placed before them. The hon. member for the district said that he found that 54 men lived to the East of Northam; but he does not say that they were living on the line of the route.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion): He says they live within five miles of either side of it.

MR. PARKER: I do not think so. If he did, I doubt whether it is true; in fact if it were true, it would have been given in evidence before the Select Committee.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): He has a list of the names.

MR. PARKER: He may have, but I place no reliance whatever on the statement, because the evidence we had was that there were only 44 or 45 living within 10 miles to the East. Very likely this last estimate takes in the whole of Irishtown. Then it is said that the compensation payable will be nearer the Engineer-in-Chief's estimate than mine. All I can say is that if land all through Northam is not worth more than £30 an acre, as described by the Engineer-in-Chief, it is a most damning fact. The land must be worth four times that. But it is said that a paper has been signed leaving it to the Government to fix the compensation, which means nothing other than that the people have offered a bribe to the Government to construct this line in the way proposed. Let it, however, come to an action and then see what that piece of paper is worth. Let the Commissioner of Railways ask my hon. friend the Attorney General what the value of it is, and he will find that it is a promise without any consideration, and not in the slightest degree binding upon those who

signed it. Notwithstanding their signatures, if these people insist on having compensation they will have to get it. The hon. member for the DeGrey said that in addition to those resident at and near Northam the Swan people and the Midland Railway people have to be considered; but as against this we must bear in mind that the Midland people are not likely to have their market at Yilgarn. Their market will be here. The natural markets of Northam, Newcastle, and York, and the land this side of it within an easy distance of a railway, are Perth and Fremantle, while the natural market of the land to the South of these places is Yilgarn. The land along the Midland Railway cannot possibly compete with that to the South of York in supplying the goldfields. It is said that stock will come down; but everyone knows that it will never pay to send stock by rail. Sheep, too, will probably be driven overland, but they will take a route straight from the North to Yilgarn without touching any of the settlements along the line.

MR. RICHARDSON: They will never be driven.

MR. PARKER: I find that numbers of sheep are driven.

MR. A. FORREST: Not fat stock.

MR. PARKER: I do not know whether they were fat stock. At any rate, I do not think it would pay to send fat stock by rail.

MR. A. FORREST: We carry them from here to Albany.

MR. PARKER: At a great price.

MR. A. FORREST: Twelve shillings a head.

MR. PARKER: I imagine the time will shortly come when a route from the North will be found direct to the fields. The hon. member for West Perth said that we made a great mistake in not taking the Eastern Railway by way of the Chittering Brook; but let me tell the hon. member that the line was taken by its present route for the very object of serving Northam and Newcastle, and, as regards the Chittering Brook route, I believe there was only one survey which was found to be impracticable. There were to be one or two zig-zags down the river.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): One.

MR. PARKER: All I ask hon. members is not to consider either York or Northam, but to consider the whole country and these goldfields. But if when building a line to serve a mineral district we find we can pass through a large area of good land, capable of supporting a large amount of settlement—land on which, as one witness says, hundreds of farms may be selected—we had better take it than adopt another line on which, from the evidence taken by the Committee, little or no settlement can take place, and which must depend on the freight it gets at its starting point on the Eastern Railway without being fed in addition with the produce of settlers who may be established along the line. I also ask hon. members to remember that the Government have opened up large agricultural areas to the South, the market for which must be the goldfields, and I ask them to consider whether, in the interests of settlement and of colonisation, it is better to saddle those articles which are imported with 15 miles of extra carriage, or saddle our own settlers with 27 miles of additional carriage on their own produce.

Question—That the words proposed to be struck out stand part of the clause—put.

The Committee divided, with the following result:—

Ayes	19
Noes	9
Majority for ...			10

AYES.

Mr. Baker
Mr. Burt
Mr. Clarkson
Mr. Cookworthy
Mr. Harper
Mr. Loton
Mr. Marnion
Mr. Pearse
Mr. Phillips
Mr. Quinlan
Mr. Richardson
Mr. H. W. Sholl
Mr. Simpson
Sir J. G. Lee Steere
Mr. Symon
Mr. Throssell
Mr. Traylen
Mr. Venn
Sir John Forrest

(Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Canning
Mr. Darlot
Mr. De Hamel
Mr. A. Forrest
Mr. Hassell
Mr. Molloy
Mr. Plesse
Mr. R. F. Sholl
Mr. Parker (Teller).

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I move in line 4 to strike out the words "five miles on either side," and to insert the words "fifteen miles south or five miles north," in lieu thereof. This is in accordance with the recommendations of the Select Committee.

MR. PARKER: I shall oppose this amendment. We might just as well say start the line at Northam, and then run down where you like. In Railway Bills the object is always to run the line as straight as possible and a distance of five miles is quite sufficient for deviation purposes. Besides it will be a very bad precedent to set. In the future we shall have Governments coming down to the House, and saying we have not made our surveys, but it will be all right if you give us a margin of 30 miles to work on.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The Government thought that this would be in the interest of the York people; otherwise they are quite content with the bill as it stands. The Select Committee recommends it, and it will give us a little more latitude when the permanent survey is made. However, the Government are not wedded to it.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: This may be necessary in order to tap the good land. I think it would be as well to give the Government this latitude in the present instance; but I do not think this should be taken as a precedent.

MR. TRAYLEN: At about 45 miles out from Northam the surveyors found it easier going north than straight. When we came to look at the detour, and asked what objection there was to going along straight lines, it was said that it was found to be so easy where they were; but that if time had permitted them to have made a straighter survey they would have done it. Therefore if we now hold to the five-mile limit it will be impossible to obtain a further survey.

Question—put and passed, and the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Schedule agreed to.

Title and preamble agreed to.

Bill reported.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at midnight.

Question—put and passed.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 3—"Deviation may be made five miles on either side":