

consent to defeat the Bill in the manner proposed by the hon. member.

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

Ayes	12
Noes	9

Majority for ... 3

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Atkins	Mr. Butcher
Mr. Daglish	Mr. Harper
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. Hastie
Mr. Gregory	Mr. Morgans
Mr. Hayward	Mr. Nanson
Mr. Illingworth	Mr. O'Connor
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Quinlan
Mr. Kingmill	Mr. Yelverton
Mr. Moran	Mr. Jacoby (Teller).
Mr. Rason	
Mr. Reid	
Mr. Wallace (Teller).	

Amendment thus passed, and the second reading negatived.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10:41 o'clock, until the next day.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 3rd September, 1902.

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

PRAYERS.

PAPER PRESENTED.

BY THE TREASURER: Agricultural Lands Purchase Act, Return showing purchases made; moved for by Mr. Stone.

Ordered: To lie on the table.

QUESTION—GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF GOLDFIELDS.

MR. HOLMAN asked the Minister for Mines: 1, When he intends to have a complete geographical survey made of the Murchison and Peak Hill Goldfields. 2, Whether the Government Geologist's report of the portion of the Murchison Goldfield already surveyed is satisfactory. 3, What area, or areas, have been reserved for boring purposes. 4, Whether the Government intends starting diamond drill boring operations. 5, If so, when. 6, If not, why. 7, Whether the Minister will take immediate steps to establish a School of Mines on the Murchison.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, As soon as work already in hand is completed. 2, Yes. 3, About 168 acres. 4, Negotiations are in progress with the municipality and leaseholders affected in Cue as to whether they will contribute to the cost of such boring; if not, an offer received from a mining company, in which the company agrees to do such boring provided that the Government subsidise to the extent of one-half the cost of same, such subsidy to be repaid by the company from the first gold won should the boring warrant development, will be favourably considered. 5 and 6, Answered by number four. 7, No provision is being made for the establishment of a school on this year's Estimates.

QUESTION—EXEMPTIONS ON LEASES, MAINLAND CONSOLS.

MR. HOLMAN asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Whether it is a fact that the Mainland Consols group of leases have been exempt from fulfilling the labour conditions for the past 18 months. 2, If so, for what reasons. 3, Whether the Minister will at once compel the owners to man the leases or forfeit them, to allow others who are willing to work them an opportunity to do so.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, Yes. 2, This is one of the properties of the Standard Exploration Company (in liquidation). The leases were protected by Regulation No. 152 up to December 1st, 1901, when this Regulation was repealed, and I protected the leases to January, 1902, to enable the liquidator to sell his assets in accordance with Regulation 146, and then refused further

protection. On the 23rd January, 1902, the local liquidator applied for and obtained a Supreme Court injunction protecting these leases during the process of liquidation. In April I served notice on the liquidator to the effect that if immediate action was not taken to realise on the assets I would hold the leases forfeitable. The leases were sold early in July, but owing to the transfers not having been effected in many cases to the Standard Exploration Company, considerable delay was caused thereby. Every effort, however, is being made to have transfers effected to the new company. As these transfers will probably be effected early next week, action will then be taken to remove the injunction. It is anticipated that the whole of the leases held by this company will be working or forfeitable by end of second week in October. 3. Replied to by No. 2.

QUESTION—GAOL AT DERBY, CLOSURE.

MR. MORAN (without notice) asked the Colonial Secretary: Whether it has been finally decided to remove all the prisoners from Derby Gaol, close the gaol there, and take the prisoners farther southward.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: Owing to the condition of the Derby Gaol and the heavy expenditure entailed in repairing it, and the necessity for economy, it has been decided to close that gaol.

PAPERS—COAL LEASES AGREEMENT, COLLIE-CARDIFF.

MR. J. L. NANSON (Murchison) moved:—

That there be laid on the table of the House all the papers in the possession of the Mines Department relative to the Collie-Cardiff coal leases, including copy of agreement dated 19th April, 1901, between John Ewing and one Parker, attorney for the Collie Coal Trust of West Australia.

When he had referred yesterday to this matter, the member for the South-West Mining District (Mr. Ewing) interjected with regard to the agreement mentioned in the notice of motion that it was a private matter, and he evidently meant to suggest that it should not, therefore, be laid before the House. That being so, it would be well that he (Mr. Nanson) should explain why it

should be laid before the House. The object was not to satisfy idle curiosity, but to obtain information which was of the highest importance to the House and to the country. Last week the Minister for Works and Railways (Hon. C. H. Rason) introduced a Bill called "a Bill to construct a railway from Collie to Collie-Boulder." On looking at the plans, he (Mr. Nanson) found that the original intention had been departed from, and that the railway, instead of being constructed merely from Collie to the Collie-Boulder, was from Collie to the Collie-Cardiff coal leases, which lay beyond the Collie-Boulder leases; and he was advised that, according to the agreement which he wished to have laid on the table of the House, and a copy of which was in the possession of the Mines Department, the Collie-Cardiff leases were owned by the member for the South-West Mining District.

MR. EWING: That was untrue.

MR. NANSON: The hon. member said that was untrue. One was glad to hear it was untrue; but this agreement, which he had had an opportunity of perusing, was between John Ewing of the one part and one Parker—Bernard Parker (he thought)—of the other part, as attorney for the Collie Coal Trust of Western Australia. One of the covenants in the agreement was that the Collie Coal Trust agreed to purchase from John Ewing the property held by him, that was the Collie-Cardiff leases, for the sum of £25,000, £5,000 of which was to be paid in capital, and the remaining £20,000 in fully paid-up shares of the company. Conditional on that purchase being made was the fact that the Collie-Boulder line had to be extended beyond the Collie-Boulder leases into the Collie-Cardiff leases, the leases which, according to this agreement, it would appear either belonged to the member for the South-West Mining District, or he was personally very much interested in them. Members would understand it was in the public interest that this agreement and other papers connected with these Collie-Cardiff leases should be laid on the table of the House. Of course he was aware that, although the circumstances might on the face of them appear to be somewhat singular, the hon. member had, probably, a perfectly convincing explanation with

regard to them. He felt sure, however, having made this explanation, that the hon. member could have no objection to the agreement being placed upon the table.

MR. BUTCHER seconded the motion.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. Gregory) : All the papers in connection with this matter, except the agreement, could be laid on the table. He would like to explain how the agreement came into his possession. He found that, owing to delay in construction of this railway, no development work was being done on these leases, and he issued instructions that the work should be proceeded with at once. Those instructions were given, and the agent for the company waited upon him and explained the circumstances, which seemed to have placed this person in a very bad fix. The company could neither find the money for development nor complete the purchase. He (the Minister) insisted that if he was going to protect the leases any farther, a writ would have to be issued against the person who held the agreement, compelling him to pay up the working capital and go on with the development of the property, or, otherwise, the agent himself would have to take control. To make himself fully conversant with the whole matter, he insisted upon a copy of this agreement being given to him. There were certain portions of the agreement which dealt with the construction of the railway. He had not the slightest objection to place any of those portions on the table of the House. Extracts could be taken from the agreement, and he thought the mover would agree that this was all he required. One hardly thought that the private matters, which dealt with the question of price and other points, should become public property. Once these particulars were on the table they became public property, and that would be hardly fair. The mover could inspect the agreement, and he (the Minister) would be only too pleased to have any extracts dealing in any way with the construction of this railway placed on the records and brought into the House. This copy of the agreement was placed in his hands only so that he could be satisfied that the reasons which were being adduced were sufficient for him to grant exemption upon

the leases. Development work had to be carried on, and the agent could not get the money for that development. One understood there were other persons who would place money in hand for development purposes if they could get control of the leases ; but these persons were being humbugged through the agreement. On condition that a writ was issued against the men, he was prepared to give protection. He would not protect until he heard that a writ had been issued. He was going to withdraw protection unless development work was continued. As long as he was satisfied that every expedition was being used, he would take care that the owners were protected. The hon. member could see the agreement, and note what extracts he required. If that were satisfactory, he (the Minister) would agree to the motion. It was not necessary that the details contained in the agreement, such as the price, should be made public property. The agreement should be kept in his office, and not placed on the table. If the hon. member was satisfied with that portion of the agreement which affected the railway itself, that portion would be placed on the table ; but it was not fair to place on the table of the House information that he (the Minister) had required before he would grant protection.

MR. MORAN : Once the agreement was filed, it was public property.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES : Every information would be given which was absolutely necessary for argument in regard to the construction of the Collie to Collie-Boulder line. If the hon. member was satisfied with that assurance, then there would not be any opposition to the motion.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. C. H. Rason) : As the mover had referred to an extension of the proposed Collie-Boulder line, it would be well to state that the subject could be fully debated when the hon. member dealt with the motion to-morrow. But this question was not a new matter ; it had been dealt with now by four Governments, the present being the fourth ; and any extension of the line had not been proposed or suggested by the present or any other Government. The line as proposed in the Bill was the line suggested by the Collie-Boulder Company.

Mr. J. EWING (South-West Mining): It was to be regretted that the papers had been called for. He had denied, when the mover was speaking, that he was the owner of the property; and he now reiterated that denial. He was not the absolute owner; he was the attorney for the persons interested in it. As to anything he had done in the matter, he did not fear the light of day; but it was a peculiar thing for a member to ask for a private agreement which had been come to between a member of the House and some persons in London. If the mover had thought fit to consult him (Mr. Ewing) in the matter, there would have been no objection to supplying a copy of the agreement, and he would be happy indeed to give a copy of the agreement to every member of the House, as there was nothing to fear. In connection with the extension, to which so much objection seemed to have been taken, it was a question mutually agreed to by himself as attorney and Mr. Walkeden as attorney for the Collie-Boulder Company. Because he (Mr. Ewing) was a member of Parliament, it should not be expected he would not protect his own interests, and he was bound to protect the interests of those whom he served under the terms of his agreement. Mr. Walkeden, himself, and Mr. Muir mutually arranged for the extension of the line. The line ran into the Collie-Cardiff leases, and the property he represented was fully prospected and ready for opening out. Unfortunately for him and those connected with him, the property was under offer to certain persons in London, who refused to have any communication with him, or to do anything at all; and the natural outcome was that a writ had to be issued for the recovery of the property, and for the protection of himself and those interested with him. It was not his intention, nor was it ever his intention, to ask the Government or Parliament to sanction the expenditure of money unless there was full justification for it; and he maintained there was full justification for carrying the line to the Collie-Boulder leases. The railway was to be carried to the boundary of those leases, but it was arranged by the late Premier, with Mr. Walkeden and Mr. Burt, that all the properties in Collie should have their rights fully conserved.

The member for Pilbarra, who was then Minister for Railways, fell in with the idea, and asked him as member for that district about the matter—not as one interested in a property, although the Minister knew he was interested in a property; and he (Mr. Ewing) told the Minister there were no other properties on the other side of the Cardiff property prospected, or on which it was known that coal existed. The Minister pointed out that provision would have to be made for any property on the Collie-Cardiff side, and the hon. member made provision by which the line should not stop on the Collie-Boulder lease, but should be extended in the future. When the matter came up for debate, he would move an amendment that no money should be spent on the Collie-Cardiff leases until the Government were protected. The moment he could get the property back, he would work it on behalf of the persons interested with himself. He failed to see any justification for the mover imputing improper motives in this matter. He knew the source from which the mover had received his information. No doubt the hon. member was actuated by the highest motives, and no doubt he thought he was acting in the public interest; but the circumstances of the case would be related to the House to-morrow, if necessary. If the hon. member made remarks in any way reflecting on his (Mr. Ewing's) honour or character, then it would be his bounden duty to show the strength of the hon. member's position, and the reliability of the information which the hon. member acted upon. He was justified in asking the hon. member to accept his word, and he would place in every member's hands, if necessary, a copy of the agreement; but he did not wish that agreement published in the newspapers of the State. It was his own private business, and surely if the information were put in the hands of members it should not be necessary to place the agreement on the table of the House. The hon. member had not done right in mentioning the purchase price of the property, which was a private matter between the parties to the sale. Perhaps the hon. member would reconsider his position. Speaking for himself, he reiterated that he had nothing to fear.

MR. NANSON (in reply): The suggestion of the Minister for Mines that he (Mr. Nanson) might inspect the agreement met the case. The agreement had already come under his notice, purely by accident. He knew that there was in the Mines Department a file of papers relating to an application for exemption of the Collie-Cardiff mine. A copy of the agreement in question was on the file, and he had read the agreement through. It appeared to him that the circumstances disclosed in the document were such as ought to be brought to the attention of the House in the interests of the member for the South-West Mining District, in order that the hon. member might be afforded an opportunity of explaining those circumstances. As for the extracts from the agreement required by him (Mr. Nanson), the first was a full description of the parties who had entered into the agreement. The member for the South-West Mining District had just told them that he was not the absolute owner of the property, but merely the attorney for the owners. In the light of that statement, it was singular that the agreement should not have described the hon. member as attorney, but should simply be made out as between John Ewing, seller, and Bernard Parker, purchaser. Mr. Parker was referred to as attorney, but Mr. Ewing was not so described. The agreement, therefore, on the face of it indicated Mr. Ewing as the owner of the property, because Mr. Ewing agreed to sell to Mr. Parker as attorney for a company. If Mr. Ewing were not the owner of the property, he could not have the power to sell. The point, however, was a legal one. The wish of the hon. member, that the agreement should not in its entirety be laid on the table of the House, was one which he was quite willing to respect, though it had to be pointed out that if the hon. member took proceedings against either Mr. Parker or the Collie Coal Trust, for which Mr. Parker was attorney, the agreement would have to be produced in the law courts and would then be given to the public despite the objections of the hon. member. Exception had been taken to the publication of information relating to the purchase price. He (Mr. Nanson) knew of his own knowledge that before the purchase could be consummated, and before John Ewing could receive £5,000

in cash and £20,000 in fully paid-up shares, the Government railway line had to be extended to the Collie-Cardiff leases. The extract relating to that condition was one which ought to be laid before the House. The circumstances might be perfectly capable of explanation, since they certainly ought to be explained, since they appeared to furnish the hon. member concerned with an exceedingly valid reason for wishing to see the proposed railway extension carried out. For, failing such extension, the purchase could not be completed, and the hon. member would not receive the £5,000 cash, the £20,000 in fully paid-up shares, and certain out-of-pocket expenses amounting to about £1,000.

MR. EWING: The hon. member would read the agreement carefully he hoped.

MR. NANSON: It was certainly desirable that the agreement should be carefully read, and for that reason he had asked that the document should be laid on the table of the House. However, he was willing to fall in with the suggestion of the Minister for Mines that only extracts should be laid on the table.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member wanted only extracts affecting the construction of the railway?

MR. NANSON: Also extracts relating to purchase price, and an extract showing who were the parties to the agreement. In the circumstances, the motion might be agreed to on the understanding that the full text of the agreement would not be produced.

Question put and passed.

MOTION—PUBLIC SERVANT DIS- MISSED, TO INQUIRE.

MR. G. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret)
moved:

That a Select Committee of this House be appointed to inquire into and report upon the transfer from Coolgardie of Mr. J. E. Pombart, late Assistant Clerk of Courts there, his qualifications, his appointment at Perth at a lower salary, the confidential and other reports concerning him, and the action taken thereon, and also his removal from the service in consequence of certain charges made against him by the Chief Clerk of the Perth Local Court. Such Committee to have authority to send for papers and persons; call, hear, receive, and examine evidence, and, after fully hearing the whole case, report to this House.

It was necessary to offer a few remarks

in support of the motion, because he believed the motion was to be opposed by the Premier.

THE SPEAKER: The Premier not being present, would it not be better to postpone the motion until to-morrow, when the Premier would be here?

MR. TAYLOR: The motion had been on the Notice Paper about six weeks.

THE SPEAKER: The Premier could not well reply to observations made in his absence.

MR. TAYLOR: A similar motion to this had appeared on the Notice Paper during last session, but lapsed at the prorogation; therefore he now wished to test the feeling of the House. Owing to the matter having remained so long in abeyance, Mr. Pombart had for several months been walking the streets of Perth out of employment and with a certain stigma attaching to him; for it was not known whether or not he had been dismissed from the public service for any crime. A letter had been addressed by Mr. Pombart to the editor of the *West Australian* on the 5th June last, and that letter aroused one's suspicions that injustice had been done. Certainly the circumstances disclosed were such as *prima facie* should induce the House to grant an inquiry. The position of the Government, if it was sound, could not be injured by inquiry; whilst Mr. Pombart, if guilty of what was alleged against him, would find himself in a worse position after the proposed committee had reported. Mr. Pombart's letter, after referring to a speech delivered in Perth in the course of which his case had been touched on, said:—

I received a letter from the Secretary of the Crown Law Department, informing me that the Board of Inquiry would sit on the 22nd of last month, and that I had, if I desired to do so, to call witnesses, and also for any papers that I might require on the inquiry. On the 21st, I accordingly gave the chairman (Mr. Roe) a list of my witnesses, eleven in all, to disprove the charges made against me (which were almost identical with those that had then given rise to a motion made in Parliament for a Select Committee, but could not be gone into in consequence of Parliament having prorogued). I also filed a notice to produce certain documents, such as confidential reports, made against me when ill in bed and under medical treatment, by Mr. Rushton and another official, and other documents (seventeen in all) in order to show animus and collusion to prevent my promotion and mar my

advancement in the public service. On handing these documents to Mr. Roe, he told me that he did not think the Board could hear the witnesses, as the whole of the inquiry must be finished on the next day, Mr. Burt having to go to Wyndham. I said that it would be impossible to finish the inquiry in one day. I left the office, and sent the following letter to Mr. Roe on the 21st May:—"Sir,—Referring to my interview with you this morning, when you asked me what my witnesses in the list I gave you were to prove, and suggested that there was no time to call them, because the case had to be finished to-morrow on account of Mr. Burt going to Wyndham, I now point out that it is impossible to finish the case to-morrow, inasmuch as my own case, in answer to the charges, not to mention my cross-examination, will last at least a day, and, so far as I can judge, the inquiry cannot be finished in less than two days. I would therefore suggest, *ex debito iusticie*, that the commencement of the inquiry should be postponed to Mr. Burt's return." The next day (May 22), just a few minutes before the inquiry commenced, Messrs. Roe and Burt sent for me, and Mr. Roe said, "We do not propose to permit your calling witnesses." I said: "They are all here," but he said, "We won't hear them." I was asked if I intended to have counsel. I said, "Yes." He said: "We won't allow you to be represented by counsel," and they proceeded to inquire into the charges made against me. All the witnesses that had been duly subpoenaed then made their appearance, but were not heard. One gentleman wished to be heard, but was not allowed. The inquiry was heard *in camera*; they refused to hear the eleven witnesses to disprove the charges made against me; they refused to allow me to be represented by counsel; they refused to produce documents which were material to disprove the charges and prove animus and collusion; they would not allow me to cross-examine Mr. Rushton. At last, I asked to call two witnesses to disprove some of the principal particulars of the charges. Mr. Burt replied saying, "It is no use; we have made up our minds you are to be blamed."

If this contained a particle of truth, it amply justified the appointment of a select committee, despite any argument against the multiplication of such inquiries, for it was unfair that any man should be dismissed on confidential reports. Anyone accused of offences should have particulars of the charges, so that he might have a chance of disproving them, which Mr. Pombart alleged he had never been given; and 11 witnesses had signed a document setting forth that they had been prepared to give evidence in disproof of the charges. Had they been heard, there would have been no necessity for a committee, which should now be appointed in justice to Mr.

Pombart, to the officers of the department, and to the board of inquiry who were alleged to have tried the case *in camera* and rejected this evidence. Sections 33 and 34 of the Public Service Act provided that any civil servant similarly accused might be suspended, but must be furnished with a copy of the charge; and, if demanded, there must be a board of inquiry to hear evidence, etc., and after fully hearing the case, to report to the Governor; but it did not appear the board had made that full inquiry to which Mr. Pombart was entitled.

Mr. F. REID (Mt. Burges) seconded the motion. Last session he had tabled a similar motion, which, through pressure of business, was crowded out. A statement had been made, he understood, in the precincts of the House, which was to the effect that Mr. Pombart had been thrown over by him, or that the Government had "got at" him, and that Mr. Pombart had been thrown over in consequence. To this statement an answer was due to the House and the electors of Mt. Burges. If the Government had induced him to throw over Mr. Pombart, he (Mr. Reid) must have received some consideration for delaying the notice of motion or omitting to table it this session. He contradicted that statement, and would say the hon. member who made it had acted wrongly. The rules of the House would not allow of a stronger contradiction. He (Mr. Reid) was pleased to second the motion, particularly as he was the only member of the House who had known Mr. Pombart before the latter came to Perth. Prior to that, Mr. Pombart had been assistant clerk of courts in Coolgardie; and he (Mr. Reid) had always found him an efficient, obliging, and trustworthy officer, with whom he had often done business. Mr. Pombart had been charged with want of fidelity and capacity, and with negligence in transacting his business. When he was assistant clerk of courts, the clerk of courts absconded, and the Government had been obliged to fall back on Mr. Pombart, who had thereupon acted as clerk of courts, electoral registrar, coroner's clerk, and registrar of births, deaths, and marriages, the office being in such confusion that he had had to work day and night for months to put it in decent order. This he had done success-

fully. Most private employers would have promoted such a man to the vacant position of clerk of courts. But no. He was put back into his position as assistant clerk, and a new clerk of courts appointed. Mr. Pombart's record at Coolgardie went far to disprove the charges of want of fidelity and capacity. He had then been transferred to Perth at a salary of £25 per annum less than he had received in Coolgardie, being thus degraded in the service; and in Perth his life had been anything but happy. His fellow-clerks had a habit of writing confidential letters to the head of the department; and it was on the strength of those letters that he had been discharged. Well might he say:

Who steals my purse steals trash: 'tis something, nothing;

'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands.

But he that filches from me my good name,
Robs me of that which naught enriches him,
And makes me poor indeed.

This man, who had given faithful service to the country, had certainly been robbed of his purse and deprived of his employment as well, practically in his old age; and if ever there were a case demanding a committee of inquiry, this was that case. It was regrettable that the two gentlemen appointed to conduct the inquiry had treated Mr. Pombart in the manner alleged. They were appointed to inquire thoroughly; yet, notwithstanding he had had 11 witnesses there, they told him they could not hear evidence. That was a great wrong, and justified farther inquiry. The man had a family dependent on his efforts; he was out of work; and as he had been dismissed from the service for alleged incapacity and want of fidelity, it would be hard indeed for him to obtain employment at the occupation he had followed all his life, seeing that he had been disgraced by the Government of this country. It was hoped the House would take the man's case into consideration, and appoint a committee, so that justice might be done to him and those dependent on him.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. W. Kingsmill): In the absence of the Premier, who would naturally deal with this matter in his capacity as Attorney General, he moved the adjournment of the debate until the next day.

Debate adjourned.

MONEY APPROPRIATION, IRREGULAR.

MR. A. E. THOMAS (Dundas) having given notice to move, "That members' official correspondence should be franked":

THE SPEAKER said the hon. member was not present; but if he had been present, it would have been necessary to rule that such a motion could not be put without a Message from the Administrator recommending appropriation for the purpose.

MOTION—FOOD DUTIES, TO ABOLISH.

MR. R. HASTIE (Kanowna) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, all interstate duties on butter, cheese, eggs, bacon, ham, potatoes, onions, and flour should be immediately abolished.

He said: It is a time-honoured axiom in all Parliaments that no private member of the House ought to move a motion for the increase of taxation. However opinions may be divided on that point, and personally I have grave doubts about its wisdom, we certainly are all agreed that it is particularly useful we should have the opportunity of trying to abolish taxation. Every country whose economic history I know of has started at various periods by imposing taxation which time showed it was wise to do away with, and I cannot recall one single instance in which the initiative of these matters was not taken by private members. In fact, I cannot conceive how any Government, or any Treasurer, could, "on his own," and without a very considerable amount of assistance, start to give himself less revenue for the Treasury. All this session, for nearly a couple of months, we have been discussing questions dealing with legislative enactments and with administrative acts, and now I would ask the House to join with me for some time and go through the somewhat novel experience of getting back to the question of taxation, to consider the best means of providing ways and means for carrying things on. Practically, all countries go through a certain cycle of years, usually like what took place in ancient Egypt: we have a series of fat years, followed by a series of lean years. That has been the case in nearly every country I know of, more especially in Australia. But here in Western Australia we have not had such experience.

Ever since responsible Government took place, we have not had anything that can be called a depression. We have not yet had a year when the State income was to any considerable extent lower than in the year previous. There has always been an improvement, not, like in other countries, on an average of every 10 years, but an improvement on every one year. That was the case from the initiation of responsible Government up to Federation, and Federation has not yet made any particular difference in that direction. As to the question of Federation, no doubt to some extent, it will come into this debate—if I could exclude it, I would do so—and in anticipation of some things being said upon that subject, the House will allow me to mention it. It has been the case with all federations that, after a large number of people have cried out for them very strongly—"they won't be happy till they get them"—very soon after obtaining them they have started crying out:

The longed-for toy, so vainly sought,
Has lost its charm by being caught.

Or rather, like Goldsmith's newly-married sailor:

Before a twelvemonth passed away,
Jack found his goddess made of clay.

Everywhere in Australia, except in this country, these complaints have been made. There has been a cry of financial embarrassment, which they say federation has caused. Everywhere we find there is not a surplus on account of federation, but a deficit.

MR. MORAN: Oh, no. New South Wales.

MR. HASTIE: I was about to say New South Wales has obtained considerably more revenue; but she has spent it all by this time, and her statesmen have difficulties in finding out where there is sufficient revenue to carry on next year, and she has joined with others in Australia in envying us in Western Australia our strong position. In fact, I believe it is understood that shortly an attempt will be made by the Eastern States to break away from Western Australia —[MEMBERS: Hear, hear]—largely because their Treasuries have less money in them, and our Treasury has a great deal too much. In considering this aspect of the question, one rather peculiar thing strikes me, and that is that

prophets are no good, more especially when dealing with such a large matter as federation. One of the most remarkable things that occurs to me at the present time is that prior to federation everybody predicted that, when once federated, we should be very "short"; that we should lose a very considerable amount of money by the act of federation. So far as I can remember, the most enthusiastic anti-federalist at that time, and the most liberal-minded man, would only go up to a possible increase of £50,000 or £100,000 the first year. Most of them declared that, as the result of federation, we should lose right away from the jump. But that financial ruin did not arrive. Instead of that, the Treasury has been kept overflowing, and the chief trouble of our Treasurer has been to know how to spend the money that he gets. I wish to emphasise one fact which I have not seen often commented upon, and it is that, independently of the inter-State duties, we have financially progressed to a substantial extent. We have not yet had one year of Federation. The uniform duties only started on the 9th October last, and I have figures here showing the amount of duties collected for the 11 months ending the 31st August. That also takes in eight days before we came under double duties, and I wish those gentleman who take interest in figures in the House would especially note these figures. I take figures for 11 months ending the 31st August last year in order to have a fair comparison with a period before Federation started. The total amount of revenue of the State on that date was £2,871,277, and the total amount of revenue for the 11 months ending the 31st August this year—that is for fully ten and a half months of Federation—was £3,495,046, there being a difference in favour of the Federation period of £623,769. It is difficult for us to find out exactly what we have obtained from inter-State duties. I do not know whether I am right; some members will say I am rather moderate if I take the ten and a half months of Federation, and put down the inter-State duties during that time at £223,000. If I am correct in saying that, then we have a balance in favour of the Federation period of £400,000.

MR. MORAN: That is ordinary increase, without Federation?

MR. HASTIE: That is the ordinary increase, and those gentlemen who made the calculation in pre-Federation times were anticipating the ordinary increase at that period, and I presume their calculations were arranged accordingly. Remember that during that period the State has imposed no duties whatever, and the only thing to take into calculation is an increased railway rate for a few months, as the figures I have quoted refer to the general revenue, of which the railway revenue is a part; so that, as a State, apart from the inter-State duties Western Australia has made a considerable amount of money by Federation. I again wish to remind the House that the clause under which the inter-State duties are levied is a permissive one. That clause enables us, and us only in Australia, to retain, diminish, or abolish all or any of the inter-State duties. Everywhere else in Australia there is absolute free-trade between one State and another.

MR. MORAN: Not yet.

MR. HASTIE: I believe I am correct.

MR. MORAN: Look at this morning's paper, in relation to the Minister for Customs in the Federal Parliament.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: All the other States.

MR. HASTIE: I did not notice that item, and it is new to me.

MR. MORAN: There are a lot of formalities to go through over there, I believe.

MR. HASTIE: I was about to say that at the time when this clause was arranged in the Convention, there was one particular reason given for its insertion, that being that it was required to make good the loss of revenue to Western Australia. Surely, after I have given those figures, no member in this House really believes that such a thing was required, for, instead of suffering a great amount of loss on account of those duties being abolished, we have gained a very considerable amount by other things. One other reason was given for the insertion of this clause—not, it is true, by those on the other side, but by those who supported the cause of Federation in this country—and that was that it was necessary in order to protect and to increase local production.

MR. MORAN: That was the principal reason as far as Western Australia was concerned.

MR. HASTIE: That was the principal reason as far as we are concerned, but, so far as I can recollect from reading the debates in the Federal Convention, that was not seriously discussed, and certainly it was not a factor in the calculation of those belonging to other States. Now we are met with this other consideration. We wish to know if production has increased in this country in proportion to the population. So far as ordinary crops are concerned, there has been an increase, although nothing like the increase we were all asked to expect; but so far as dairy products are concerned and the other articles mentioned in the motion, such as onions, potatoes, and flour, there has been no increase. I know it is difficult to get reliable figures on these matters, for the returns in regard to dairy products for the year 1900-1 have not yet been published. I tried my best yesterday to get them but I could not do so. Amongst the articles mentioned in the motion, on which there has been no increase to any appreciable extent over the average of the last three years, are bacon and hams. There was an increase in that respect in 1900, and I recollect, as I was getting information for this motion seven or eight months ago from the late Mr. Lindley Cowan, that gentleman asserting that after all the inquiries he had made on the subject he found that the local production of bacon and hams was very far behind during the year 1900-1; and he explained that by saying that during the period mentioned, the price of fresh pork was so very high that it did not pay people to cure hams or bacon. I have several figures that I could present to the House, but I have noticed on former occasions, when others far more eloquent than I have presented figures to the House, members become sceptical and take the figures, not from the point of view which the hon. member wished to give them, but to prove the matter according to hon. members' own ideas. I was speaking a few moments ago about this taxation as it affected us, and during last year, in speaking on this motion, I remember mentioning the high percentage of the duties upon these articles.

The percentage this year is not exactly the same because prices have risen. These I will give as about correct. We charge on inter-State imported butter 20 per cent.; cheese, 30 per cent.; eggs, 18 per cent.; bacon and hams, 22 per cent.; potatoes and onions, 35 per cent.; and flour, 22 per cent.

MR. MORAN: That is on the buying price in the other States.

MR. HASTIE: On the buying price in the other States, calculated on the same basis as you collect duties of customs.

THE TREASURER: Do not they fluctuate?

MR. HASTIE: They certainly do fluctuate; I was careful to see about that. Some of the articles during most of the time might rise in price 2d. or 3d. or 4d., and that will make a difference on the percentage, as all these are fixed duties. The difference about fixed duties is this, that on a cheap article we can easily say that 1d., 2d., or 3d. is nothing; but if we could levy these duties on percentages, then we would declare the increase was too much. I wish to say here, in anticipation of some of the unfair criticisms that we had last year, and which probably will be repeated again this year, that people do not go in for the production of the articles mentioned in the motion, not because the country is not good enough to produce them, but because it is easier for the farmer and more profitable to produce other things. No new country takes up dairying until all other avenues of profitable industry are closed; or if the contrary be stated, I hope the hon. member who so argues will give a case in point. Dairying requires long-drawn-out and continuous attention and labour. It has hitherto needed cheap labour, which I am very glad to say this country has not yet had. Another condition we have to remember: moderate and comfortable success has often been attained by the production of dairy articles, but rarely has the industry produced a fortune. There are many better opportunities for people in this country to devote their energies and their labour than to push on with the dairying industry. The Federal Constitution enables us to retain or limit, or if we like to abolish, the inter-State duties during the first five years, and whether we wish it or not, these

duties must be diminished annually by 20 per cent. We all believed up to quite lately that the uniform duty period would start from the time when the uniform duties were promulgated by the Federal Government. That idea continued until not very long ago when some genius on the other side, I think, discovered that it was not so, but that the uniform duties would begin at the time when the Federal Parliament definitely agreed to all the duties to be levied. I notice in this morning's newspaper people have still some doubt on the subject and are inquiring about it.

MR. HIGHAM: They have got their answer, too.

MR. HASTIE: I am glad to know that the former idea that uniform duties will be declared to have started from the 9th October, 1901, is correct, but in case a lot of people are seriously troubled about this matter, I wish, during this debate, the Treasurer will take an opportunity of stating definitely how the matter stands, or, as the vulgar would ask, when does the sliding scale begin to slide?

MR. HIGHAM: We have got the answer already from the Commonwealth Treasurer.

MR. HASTIE: I believe he should be the supreme authority in this matter because it is under the Federal Treasurer that even the inter-State duties are collected. Meantime we may reason on the basis that the uniform duties will commence from the 9th October next. Were it otherwise I candidly believe that public opinion in Western Australia, and even the farmers themselves, would scarcely allow us to retain these duties for one year longer. We need not, in this discussion, go into that very foolish question which was brought up some time ago, whether the removal of the duties would be a breach of faith with some people who were invited to vote for federation and did not do so; nor to the validity of the compact entered into by a few unauthorised political enthusiasts; but only those who wish to retain the duties take it seriously now. Those who believe there is something in it consider a fair compromise is suggested in the motion, seeing that the House on this occasion is not asked to remit all the

duties, but simply to remit the duties on the actual necessities of life.

MR. HIGHAM: Those that are doing some good.

MR. HASTIE: The hon. member will have an opportunity to tell us what good they are doing by-and-by. I shall be surprised if the hon. member gives us that information, for I have tried my best to hear something in that direction during the last 12 months, and have only been able to hear people speak in general terms. We are told that if there are high prices for a while in the State, by-and-by we shall be able to get plenty of local production. It is difficult to say the amount exactly the Treasurer is asked to give up, but the first six months' collection of inter-State duties is a fair basis on which to go. During that period there was collected on the articles mentioned in the motion £47,439, or for the year £94,878.

MR. MORAN: On those products?

MR. HASTIE: On those products. I only have the figures for the six months, and I doubled them to give the amount for the 12 months.

MR. MORAN: A lot comes from New Zealand.

MR. HASTIE: That is not taking New Zealand into consideration. After the 9th October, 20 per cent. less will be collected, leaving then £76,000 that we may expect. Of course, there may be some slight increase, but on the other hand we may have some doubt on the matter considering the position the other States of Australia are in. Every other State is crying out on account of the drought. Nearly every State is declaring that it requires all that the country can produce for its own use, and therefore I do not anticipate that there will be an increase in these particular articles of food after that time. Our Treasurer, no doubt like every other Treasurer, will say he cannot do with a penny less; indeed if our income were doubled he could spend it all. A country's expenditure is always governed by its expected income. The only way to spend little is to have little to spend. If that money is really required, surely there is a better way to get it than levying heaviest on the people who are least able to bear it. Who will doubt the effect of the duties as to unduly raising the expenses of living? We have long

heard a lot in Australia about dear food-stuffs, and now I believe that in consequence of immigration the consumption has exceeded what our industries can produce, prices here having increased all round. Many of our people are able to buy but little, if any, food and the struggle for existence is harder to-day than it ever has been in this country. I need not look into the question of protection and the high prices which benefit the farmers generally. That idea, I fancy, is pretty well exploded. No member of this House has been able to point to any particular farmer who makes his living by the production of the articles mentioned in this motion. Not a single West Australian farmer produces one half of the commodities enumerated. [SEVERAL MEMBERS: Yes.] The farmers produce these articles in nearly every instance only as by-products; and what the individual farmer gains in one or two instances, he loses in others. So far as my knowledge of the farmers of the State goes, it enables me to say that I know very few outside this House who are anxious for a continuance of the duties.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: You do not get about among the farmers.

MR. HASTIE: Will the hon. member tell me where the farmers who are anxious to retain these duties are to be found? I should be glad if the hon. member would furnish some specific information on the point.

MR. MORAN: They are to be found at Goomalling.

MR. HASTIE: I was at Goomalling not long ago, and I did not hear from a single Goomalling farmer an indication as to whether he cared a fig for either the retention or the abolition of the sliding scale. [Several interjections.] Some hon. members will tell us that if more produce is imported, our farmers will receive lower prices for theirs; and after those hon. members have finished telling us that, they will proclaim that if we decrease the duties the importer will get the whole of the benefit and the consumer will get none whatever. We heard that argument last year, and no doubt it will be repeated to-night. The members I have in view will remind us that when this House remitted, three or four years ago, heavy duties on beef, the price of beef

to the consumer, instead of decreasing, remained at pretty well the same level. I would remind those hon. members, however, of the difference between meat and the articles which form the subject of my motion. In the first place, we are not in a position to import any large quantity of meat, because we have not the necessary storage facilities; and, in the second place, we cannot enter into a general competition in the supply of meat. The articles mentioned in my motion, however, are all unperishable.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: What about eggs?

MR. STONE: And cheese and bacon?

MR. HASTIE: Bacon and cheese are not perishable articles. Cheese can be kept in this country for several months, without requiring much expenditure to keep it alive. (Laughter.) Bacon also, and even butter itself, can be kept for a considerable time before the necessity arises for selling them or putting them into consumption.

MR. STONE: After holding cheese and butter for a couple of months you would have to shut the door to keep them in.

MR. HASTIE: I do not know the nature of the experience which the member for Greenough (Mr. Stone) has had of butter and cheese in his district; but the products he describes are not such as we are accustomed to on the Eastern Goldfields. I was saying that if the duties are taken off, it is absolutely certain, to my mind, that the increased competition resulting will necessarily bring down the price of the articles in the market; that is, if the farmers of the Eastern States can supply all our requirements. If they cannot, then the market price will be regulated, not by the import price *plus* the duty, but by the quantity of locally-produced commodities put on the market. In the course of this debate we shall no doubt hear that the principal objection to reducing the duties on these articles is that the poor farmer will suffer: it will be urged that we must consider the unfortunate position of the West Australian farmer.

MR. MORAN: Who has borne the heat and burden of the day.

MR. HASTIE: I have travelled a good deal among the West Australian farmers, and I am bound to pronounce our farmer the most comfortably situated man I

know of in the whole of Australia. If there is one class of our community nowise to be pitied, but rather to be envied, it is the farming class. [Several interjections.] So far as I know the West Australian farmer, he is invariably well clad, well fed, and well housed; and I feel certain that he does not work anything like fourteen hours a day. It may be possible to find here and there a farmer who does it; but unless the agriculturalist devotes himself to dairy farming he cannot have many opportunities of working such long hours, even if he wish to do so. I do not grudge the farmer his prosperity; I am only sorry that every other class of the community cannot be pronounced equally prosperous with the farming class. I feel assured that the opinion of the majority of members is that the farmer has attained as good a position as any other man in the country; and therefore hon. members cannot maintain that we should cast a burden on the community generally for the benefit of the farmer. Those who are convinced, as I am, of the prosperity of the West Australian farmer, and those who with me wish to see the West Australian farmer continue to enjoy his present prosperity, must always bear in mind that the farmer's prosperity and welfare are built almost entirely on the prosperity and welfare of the remainder of the community. In order that the farmer may live well, the rest of the people must do well and must have money to spend.

HON. F. H. PIESSE: The farmers are always praying for the welfare of other classes.

MR. HASTIE: If you are always praying for the welfare of others, why do you make it so difficult for them to exist? The farmer lives on the whole community. It is claimed that our greatest need is a large population; but what is the use of a large population if it simply means a number of people? Is a population of any value unless it is well employed? Will a large population in this State advantage the farmer unless that population has a lot of money to spend on farm produce? The answer is supplied by the ordinary experience of every-day life. In general business it is easy to find customers who will give large orders, but if those customers have not

the money to pay for what they order, how will their patronage benefit the storekeeper or tradesman? Hon. members must recognise the fact that the farmer will not make a fortune by supplying paupers. I fear we shall soon have to consider the question whether a large section of our population is not rapidly falling into a state of pauperism. If we are to secure a population valuable to the country, a population which will furnish the farmers with good customers, we must offer good conditions of living: we must be careful lest we kill the goose which lays the golden eggs. Everywhere, throughout the State, we hear of prices mounting up. That is so, I believe, to some extent in Perth; and the remark applies unreservedly to every one of our goldfields. The price of beef, amongst other things, is rising. On the goldfields it is now 1s. per lb., and nearly every authority on the matter assures us that within three months the price will have risen to 1s. 6d., and that it is doubtful whether even at so high a price beef will be procurable. A large section of our population is living, or rather dying, in boarding-houses; and the rates ruling for board and lodging afford a fair criterion of the price of foodstuffs. In every boarding-house I know of there has been an increase of rates; or, where the tariff could not be raised, the boarding-house mistress has arranged to put less on the plate.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: We are not taking the price of beef into consideration just now.

MR. HASTIE: I am pointing out that if meat rises in price, the boarder will have less meat put on his plate. We have few families in this country. For many years the general anxiety has been to induce men residing here to bring over their families; but the prospects of attaining that most desirable end have latterly diminished gravely. The returns show that the immigration of women and children is not increasing, but rather diminishing. The reason is that the men know they cannot keep their families here in anything like the same scale of comfort as they can with a similar expenditure elsewhere. I am dealing with the cost of living. Two important facts have to be faced: the first is that the recent increase in railway freights has, in some

measure, tended to limit employment; the second is that our rapidly diminishing meat supply is handing us over unconditionally to the tender mercies of the local squatter and butcher. The prolonged drought in Eastern Australia forbids us to look for large inter-State imports of articles of necessity; or, at least, it may do so. Therefore the outlook is grave. I make no doubt we shall keep our population; but it has to be borne in mind that a large section of our population remains here simply because the surplus has not anywhere else to go. I do not doubt for a moment that in many other communities there is a large surplus population, that in many other States it is more difficult to live than it is here. But surely these circumstances do not go to show that it is wise for us to compel our people to pay high prices for the necessities of life. We do not wish to see any section of our population reduced to the level obtaining in many other countries. Undoubtedly, this country has vast capabilities; but we must not retard progress by making it as difficult as possible for people to live in Western Australia. In a new country such as this, with many undeveloped resources, the high cost of living prevents the energetic and the enterprising from striking out on their own account and so opening new avenues for the activity of the people. It is true that, so far, we have progressed despite the high cost of living; but now, I submit, we are at the parting of the ways. Is there a man in this House bold enough to maintain that we can expand much farther if the cost of living be increased or maintained at its present level? All our people are not prosperous; hundreds of them are out of employment; thousands of those who have employment find the struggle for sustenance almost too hard to bear. Will this House ease the burden? Our duty is not only to speculate on the future, but to provide for to-day. Let us not make existence harder, but let us even risk a little, if that be necessary, to make life easier by abolishing what I hold to be unnecessary restrictions on the essentials of life.

MR. J. B. HOLMAN (North Murchison): I second the motion.

On motion by the TREASURER, debate adjourned until the next Wednesday.

MOTION—ANNUITY TO WIDOW OF LATE ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF.

MR. J. J. HIGHAM had given notice to move:

That the services of the late Engineer-in-Chief, Mr. C. Y. O'Connor, C.M.G., be considered, with the view of making some provision for his widow and family.

MR. HIGHAM (Fremantle) said: Since giving notice of the motion, he had been pleased to learn that the Government would bring in a Bill to authorise payment of an annuity to Mrs. O'Connor and the younger members of the family, for whom adequate provision had not otherwise been made. He would therefore not proceed with the motion.

Notice withdrawn.

MOTION—ABORIGINES, INQUIRY INTO TREATMENT.

MR. W. J. BUTCHER (Gascoyne) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable that a Royal Commission should be appointed to inquire into the treatment of the aborigines in the northern portion of this State, and that the Federal Government be requested to nominate two members of such commission.

He said: I need not speak at length, for nothing I could say would alter the opinion of the general public as to the treatment of the aborigines in our northern districts, and in fact throughout the country; and that is my reason for desiring a Royal Commission to inquire into and settle the question once for all. It would be useless for me to argue that no cases of ill-treatment have ever occurred in this State. Of course there have been some, more or less. But I should like those who have been guilty of this ill-treatment to be the persons to suffer. Let them carry the stigma, and let it not rest on the whole community. For a select committee to make inquiries would not, in my opinion, be satisfactory; and as most of the accusations have been levelled at this community from outside the State, by men who really do not know anything at all about the subject, I should like to see those men given an opportunity to prove the charges they have made against our people. That is my reason for the motion which I now move.

MR. A. Y. HASSELL: (Plantagenet): I second the motion.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. W. Kingsmill): I remember that many months ago there was a little agitation on this subject, raised principally in the Federal Parliament; but for a long time the matter has been absolutely quiet; and I must say that so far as I am concerned, I cannot see any possible utility in reviving it at present. And in any case, were it advisable to revive the subject, I must say I think this motion goes the wrong way about it. The Federal Government expressed an intention to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the treatment of the aborigines throughout Australia, with special reference to this country; and if that were done, I most certainly should support any motion which provided that Western Australia, which is one of the worst-accused States in Australia, should have the privilege of appointing some representatives on the Federal Commission. But why we should appoint a commission I utterly fail to see. It would be a most expensive inquiry; and furthermore, it would be reviving an agitation which in my opinion has died a natural death. If the charges made against Western Australian pastoralists and the other inhabitants of the northern parts of our country had on further investigation been found to be true, depend upon it we should have heard more of them. They have been allowed to drop; and I certainly think now is not an opportune time for reviving them in this House by the expensive and tedious process of a Royal Commission. I hope the hon. member will withdraw his motion.

MR. F. ILLINGWORTH (Cue): I concur in this matter with the Colonial Secretary. I think it would be practically making a charge against ourselves to appoint a commission to investigate these constantly-recurring statements, which are built up mostly on events that happened many years ago. And it seems to me that if we appoint this commission to investigate, and it go out to the world that we have appointed such commission to investigate, that will be a direct admission of what I think this House is not prepared to admit, that there has been any unusual or special cruelty in connection with our system. I do not think there has been any. There have been special cases, we all admit; but that is

inevitable. Consequently, I think the hon. member will be well advised if he withdraw the motion.

MR. H. DAGLISH (Subiaco): I must differ from the Colonial Secretary and the member for Cue, who advise that this motion be withdrawn; because I think, apart from any accusations that may be made, it is the duty of this Parliament to ascertain for itself beyond all question whether the aborigines are properly treated, and whether the State itself is behaving as it ought to behave. I consider we have a duty as a State to do to those who occupied this land before we came here at all. It is our duty to find out if the methods adopted by the Aborigines Department are absolutely the best methods that can be adopted in dealing with the natives; and the whole question of the treatment of natives in the North of this country is involved in the motion.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It does not affect the Aborigines Board.

MR. DAGLISH: I contend it does. I think there is ample room for inquiry. We ought not to wait until definite charges are brought before the public, but should anticipate and endeavour to prevent the occurrence of these outrages. Admittedly there have been outrages and cruelty in the past. [Dr. Hicks: In exceptional cases.] That may be; but I cannot see what harm there can be in finding out beyond all question that they are exceptional. The member for the Gascoyne (Mr. Butcher) comes forward, I believe, as one in whose electorate there is a fair number of aborigines; and I believe that on behalf of the people of his electorate, who are compelled to some extent to mix with and to employ aborigines, he thinks an inquiry desirable; and I certainly think the hon. member has made a reasonable request, and one that this House would be unwise to refuse. At the same time, I am very strongly inclined to dissent from the last clause of his motion, "that the Federal Government be requested to nominate two members of such commission," because I think this Parliament should be very careful to retain all the powers it possesses, and that it should not for a moment think of casting a reflection on its own ability to inquire into and deal with all matters that come properly under its purview. And feeling

as I do on this subject, I move as an amendment:

That all the words after "State" in the motion be struck out.

When the commission is appointed, it should be a purely local commission; for we surely have enough confidence in our own people to feel that we can get three or five persons who would be competent to thoroughly investigate this question, and who are willing as well as able to bring up an absolutely impartial report.

MR. MORAN: Would you make it a Royal Commission?

MR. DAGLISH: Undoubtedly.

MR. MORAN: It would cost about one and a-half millions to properly investigate all the North-West.

MR. GORDON: It would cost five millions, if it cost a penny.

MR. MORAN: At least £10,000.

MR. DAGLISH: I am satisfied the commission could go through the North-West and report, without anything like the expense mentioned by the member for West Perth. Though I admit the hon. member has a good knowledge of the country, I do not think that when he went there he expended anything like one-tenth of that £10,000—[MR. MORAN: I spent a fortune there]—although he had the disadvantage of contesting an election, with the additional disadvantage of having to interview electors living at great distances apart. I would therefore strongly urge that the commission, if appointed, should be purely local. [THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: And honorary?] Well, I think it would be hard to find a satisfactory honorary commission. I do not think the House is justified in refusing to spend a reasonable sum in investigating the condition of the natives. I feel we have a duty towards the natives whose land we have virtually taken. I wish to be satisfied that the State is doing its duty towards them, is affording them reasonable protection, and giving them reasonable assistance to get a living under the new conditions we have introduced in their midst; and I think that any moderate expenditure incurred would be amply repaid if on these points we could get satisfactory evidence.

DR. HICKS (Roebourne): I second the amendment.

At 6:30, the SPEAKER left the Chair.

At 7:30, Chair resumed.

DR. HICKS (continuing): I have had a somewhat extended experience in the North, and I can assure this House that with very few exceptions the aborigines have had excellent treatment. My opinion is that, if the House orders this inquiry, the verdict will be that if anything the aborigines are at the present time being too leniently treated. With the experience I have had there I certainly think that this inquiry is superfluous; but I daresay that, if the House orders it, the district I have the honour to represent will welcome it. In seconding the amendment of the member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish) I must say that I quite concur in the reason he gave for striking out the words, but I also think that another reason why we should not go to the Commonwealth for commissioners is that they have not sufficient experience in the treatment of aborigines. As far as Victoria is concerned, I believe that at the present moment there are only about 500 aborigines there. I should be very sorry indeed for suggestions made by this commission to be put before Parliament, and a statute passed to in any way affect the aborigines. The aborigines in the northern part of this State certainly are not on the decrease, proving to my mind that the treatment is good.

MR. BUTCHER (in reply): I think it is the general desire of members that I should withdraw this motion, and if it be within my province I wish to do so.

[Motion not withdrawn, MR. HASTIE objecting.]

Amendment put and passed.

Motion as amended put, and negatived on the voices.

MOTION—LIQUOR LAW, TO AMEND.

LOCAL OPTION.

MR. H. DAGLISH (Subiaco) moved: That, in the opinion of this House, the Government should introduce, as early as practicable, a Bill to amend the Wines, Beer, and Spirit Sales Act, to provide that—

1. Before any new licenses under the Act are granted a poll shall be taken of the electors upon the Legislative Assembly roll for the locality in which the license is sought, and the decision of the majority of electors taking

part in such poll shall be binding upon the licensing bench. 2. In the event of the poll resulting in a decision adverse to the granting of the license or licenses applied for, no further application for a new license in the same locality shall be entertained, and no further poll of the electors shall be taken, within a term of two years. 3. As far as practicable, such polls shall be taken upon the days set apart for the election of municipal councillors or members of roads boards, as the case may be. 4. Whenever in the future any new license is granted under the Wines, Beer, and Spirit Sales Act, a clause shall be inserted therein providing that neither the licensee nor the owner of the licensed premises shall have any claim to compensation in the event of a renewal of the license being subsequently refused for any reason whatsoever.

He said: If this series of motions be adopted, it will mean a recommendation to the Government of an amendment of the Wines, Beer, and Spirit Sales Act, with the object of introducing the principle of local option into our existing laws. I do not think it should be necessary in moving the motion to say a great deal in support of this principle. The plan of adopting local option to some extent has been tried in several of the other States, and in each instance with success. A member interjects, "in Mildura," but I may assure him that the principle has not been applied in Mildura, which is entirely outside the scope of the Licensing Act in Victoria. In Victoria there is a limited measure of local option which prevents any increase of licenses being granted in a given locality without a poll of the inhabitants being taken. There are certain restrictions which hedge in the privilege in Victoria, and these restrictions rather encumber the working of the Act; but the principle as adopted in Victoria goes much farther than the motion I have proposed recommends. In Victoria the statutory number of hotels in any town fixed by the Act is one for every 250 of the first thousand people, and one for every 500 of any subsequent population. By a local option poll the number of licenses may be reduced indefinitely until the statutory number is reached. This really affects what are termed in some instances "vested interests." I want it to be distinctly understood by the House to-night that the motion I am proposing does not in any way touch the question of vested interests. Whether it is desirable to do so or not is a matter that it

may perhaps be well to discuss at some later stage. There can be no question at present with regard to the abolition of existing houses, or the removal of existing licenses. My proposition purely applies to applications for new licenses, and it gives an opportunity to the people in any locality where licenses are applied for to say whether they require more public houses or not. At present, as members are pretty well aware, we have really had the discretion of the licensing bench, and in many cases the discretion of licensing benches is a very limited one indeed. In some districts the licensing magistrates seem to regard it as a sacred duty to grant as many applications as they have an opportunity of doing; and provided a man is of moderately good character the bench does not appear to think it is at all possible to refuse an application. The consequence is that in many of our towns the licenses are far out of proportion to the requirements of the people, and there is an undue temptation offered to those least able to resist temptation in any community where a license exists; and there is an undue temptation offered to holders of licenses, in the keen competition that exists, to sell the most inferior liquor or to adulterate liquor before it is sold. When this plan is not adopted there are farther temptations, if any liquor has been smuggled or illicitly distilled, to purchase the illicit article instead of purchasing that which is obtained by payment of the fixed duty. In the interests of the drinker it is desirable to limit to some extent the number of licenses; at all events it is desirable that the people of a district should have the right of saying how many public-houses they will have in the district. Apart from all moral consideration, the value of property in the immediate vicinity of a public-house is often materially deteriorated by the granting of a license to that house, and we find at the present time it is possible for a man, quarter after quarter, to bring forward an application that is continually and persistently objected to by the inhabitants, in the hope that he will ultimately get that license through by lack of public vigilance. In the locality where I live hardly a quarter passes without applications being made; and during the

past week two applications for licenses have been heard and both have been refused, but the refusal necessitates a great deal of inconvenience to the people who desire to block them. The refusal necessitates the preparation and canvassing with a petition against the house; it necessitates certain persons devoting a great deal of time to the work of obtaining the views of the people in and around the place where the license is applied for. I contend that it is unreasonable that anyone should be put to that inconvenience, and it is desirable that we should be able automatically to get at the will of the people; and once the people have given their decision against a license in a given locality, there should be a term set in which no person should have the right to apply, and therefore no person would have the right to put the inhabitants to the expense of fighting against the granting of the license. Very often, not only time and trouble are caused, but expense also, because people have to go to the expense of being represented at the court. This is a reasonable cause of complaint which I think it is the duty of the House to remove. The first proposal I am asking the House to consider is:—

Before any new licenses under the Act are granted, a poll shall be taken of the electors upon the Legislative Assembly roll for the locality in which the license is sought, and the decision of the majority of electors taking part in such poll shall be binding upon the Licensing Bench.

I am very happy to state in regard to the Perth Licensing Bench, the wishes of the inhabitants of any locality receive very reasonable consideration. The practice of the Perth bench is that where a reasonable number of inhabitants have shown that they object to licenses, almost invariably the bench has refused the license; but there are many localities in the State where they have not such well-constituted licensing benches, and on the goldfields the inhabitants are frequently put to great expense. There is one point about the first portion of the motion that I wish to invite attention to. I have purposely used the indefinite term "locality" in the wording of the motion, because I think when the Government are asked to introduce a measure it should be part of the duty of the Government to decide what area should be covered by

the various localities. For instance, it might be decided that a municipality or roads board district should in some cases constitute the "locality" referred to. In other cases, where the roads boards are scattered, it might be desirable to simplify it by specifying certain townsites or districts proclaimed by the Government for the purpose of constituting that a licensing district, or whatever title be given to the locality. At present it has been necessary for me to use the indefinite term "locality," because I cannot specify the district, municipality, or roads board district, or define in any way the precise area that should be covered by the licensing district. The second clause of my motion is:—

In the event of a poll resulting in a decision adverse to the granting of the license or licenses applied for, no further application for a new license in the same locality shall be entertained, and no further poll of the electors shall be taken, within a term of two years.

This is to prevent the continual repetition of applications, which in the case of a poll would mean the expense being caused time after time with unnecessary frequency, because perhaps certain speculators have land which they wish to dispose of, and they may induce other persons to take an option over the land on the speculation that a public-house be granted. Very often we know this plan is adopted, and very often a man of straw gets an option for certain land for a given time, with the arrangement that if he can obtain a license for it he will purchase. The man of straw has not the means to purchase the land, in many cases; certainly in most cases he has not the means to build the public-house for which the plans are submitted. He applies for the license on speculative grounds purely. He does not care if the license be granted; he does not care if the inhabitants of the place require or object to the existence of licensed houses: all his trouble is whether he can make a pound or two by obtaining the license first and trafficking in it afterwards to some wealthier and less clear-sighted individual than himself. The third sub-clause provides:—

As far as practicable, such polls shall be taken upon the days set apart for the election of municipal councillors or members of roads boards, as the case may be.

It is desirable that if we adopt the pro-

vision for local option polls, we should take the polls at such times when we could reasonably get the desire of the people; and if we can take the polls annually when the municipal councils or roads board members are being elected, that means reducing the cost of the poll by one-half. Besides, if we were only to have applications at a given time in the year, and therefore were only to have the polls at a given time in the year, after once a poll had been taken in any one district it would follow in the natural course that the new poll would be precisely two years after the date of the first. All that would be necessary for us to do would be to limit the right of persons to apply for licenses to the sittings of one of the quarterly licensing meetings, instead of giving the option of applying at any of the four quarterly sittings which exist at the present time. The fourth sub-clause provides:—

Whenever, in the future, any new license is granted under the Wines, Beer, and Spirit Sales Act, a clause shall be inserted therein providing that neither the licensee nor the owner of the licensed premises shall have any claim to compensation in the event of a renewal of the license being subsequently refused for any reason whatsoever.

My reason for introducing the provision is that I believe ultimately this State will adopt the system of complete local option, but whenever any proposal of that sort is introduced we are certain to be faced with the cost it will entail. In Great Britain, I believe a decision has been given by the High Court that the licensee of a public-house has no vested right in the possession of his license, that his right expires with the expiration of the license, that it has an annual term, and the licensee has no claim whatever to compensation should a renewal of the license be refused. In Victoria, the principle of granting compensation to a man whose house is closed by a local option poll has been recognised, and, undoubtedly, if we were going into the question of complete local option, the vested interests of the publican would be brought forward for our consideration, and I think the community would probably be inclined to view the matter, not in a strictly legal light, but to view it with the object of giving the fullest consideration, and even treating the publican with reasonable liberality; but if we adopt

a course such as that which I propose so that we give to any licensee a license that carries on its face that he will at no time be entitled to compensation, he is therefore entering into a reasonable deal with the Government which will be clear to both parties from the outset, and he will have no reason to complain if at any time his house be closed by reason of a poll. He will go into the matter with his eyes open; he will know what the competition is; he will get his license, and he will erect his building knowing what he has to face. He will take it on in a fair business way, and we shall be quite justified if his house is closed by the process of local option in quoting the condition as to compensation stated in his license if he puts forward any claim at all. I quoted a little while ago the provisions that exist in Victoria, and I may add that in New South Wales likewise provision has been made for local option polls. I will just briefly give the House an extract from the *Year Book*, in place of quoting the clauses of the New South Wales Act, which would be lengthy and tedious to members. The *Year Book* of New South Wales for 1898 says in regard to the liquor traffic:—

The feature which distinguishes this Act from all former licensing Acts is the embodiment of the local option principle. In municipalities the granting of a new publican's license, or of a certificate of removal of a publican's license, is made contingent on a vote of the ratepayers. This vote is to be taken every three years; and if eleventwentieths of the votes polled are in the negative, no new publican's license may issue for three years. There is, however, an exception made in favour of hotels containing not less than 20 suitable rooms in addition to the standard of accommodation required by the Act.

There the term, as members will see, is three years, but in the motion which I have introduced I have fixed the term at two years, because of the fact that we are a more newly settled State and there may be more liability of new wants arising in the back country in our midst than are likely to arise in New South Wales. There are also existing in Queensland provisions applying the principle of local option. The Queensland Act sets out:—

The provisions of this Act may be applied in any municipality or division, or any subdivision of either, or any other area which forms part of a municipality or division and

also forms part of one licensing district, and the boundaries whereof can be clearly and conveniently defined. Any such municipality, division, subdivision, or area is hereinafter in this part of this Act referred to as an area.

The provisions referred to are:—

Any number of ratepayers in any area, being not less than one-sixth of the whole number of ratepayers in such area, may, by notice in writing, given not later than the first day of November in any year, require the chairman of the local authority to take a poll of the ratepayers of such area, for or against the adoption of all or any of the following resolutions to have effect within the area, that is to say—(1.) First—that the sale of intoxicating liquors shall be prohibited; (2.) Second—that the number of licenses shall be reduced to a certain number, specified in the notice, not being less than two-thirds of the existing number; (3.) Third—that no new licenses shall be granted.

Those are much farther-reaching provisions than are embodied in the motion I have brought before the House. I do not intend to take up the time of hon. members by dwelling on the subject. The principle which I am contending for is one that, I am satisfied, is to the interests of the community, is one which, I feel sure, is demanded by the community, and is one thoroughly in touch not only with our democratic institutions but also with the opinions of reformers of the liquor traffic in all parts of the British Empire. I ask the House, therefore, to give the subject the fullest consideration; and I trust that the motion will commend itself to the minds of members. Farther, I trust that should I have the fortune to see this motion carried through the Assembly, the Government will during this session act on the request contained in the motion, and give us an embodiment of the principles contended for, in the shape of a measure amending the Wines, Beer, and Spirit Sales Act. I beg to move the motion standing in my name.

MR. C. HARPER: I second the motion.

MR. C. J. MORAN (West Perth): I do not think this local option business has been a success wherever it has been introduced. New Zealand is not, to my mind, a shining example of the benefits to be derived from local option. The matter has not yet got beyond the stage of faddishness, at any rate so far as Western Australia is concerned. Indeed, I have regarded the principle here contended for as a fad right through the

piece. The motion aims at obtaining special legislation in respect of matters which are better dealt with under the general laws of the country. Let us see what would be the effect of adopting some of the principles which the motion affirms. "There shall be a poll taken before any license is granted, and there shall be no more applications for two years." I have seen a goldfields town in which there was only one hotel, and in which, had an application been made for a new license, the chances are that it would have been refused on a poll being taken of the local people, most of whom would have been interested in the one hotel—indeed, most of them might have been employed in the one hotel. Inside two years I have seen the same town with a population of thousands; inside two months I have seen a goldfields settlement of that nature with a population of hundreds. Anybody who has resided on the goldfields knows perfectly well that a provision debarring everyone for two years from making an application for a license would prove absolutely impracticable and unworkable. Under those conditions we should have large populations left altogether without the necessary hotels.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: That would be very sad, would it not?

MR. MORAN: It would be sad for anyone travelling on the goldfields; for anyone who does not regard an hotel as merely a drinking-shop. I do honestly believe and trust that the majority of our public-houses are caravanseries designed to provide the traveller with food and accommodation, as well as to supply drink to the general public. Were it not for the enterprise displayed in starting hotels on the goldfields in the old days, in opening accommodation-houses in lonely places, in carrying on business under grave disabilities, and frequently to but little profit, the plight of the travelling public would have been indeed a sad one. Such laws as those proposed by the motion cannot be applied in a new country like Western Australia. If the mover had restricted the operation of the legislation he advocates to Perth and Fremantle, the strength of his argument would have been greatly increased; had he restricted it to Perth, Fremantle, Coolgardie, and Kalgoorlie, he would

also have been on much firmer ground. But to say that in places where 99 per cent. of the trade is done with the travelling public, and where accommodation in the shape of hotels is provided for the convenience of the travelling public alone, two or three residents or a handful of people shall prevent the travelling public from obtaining the benefit of houses of accommodation is absolutely absurd. In adopting such legislation we should be altogether overreaching ourselves. I look on the principles enunciated by the motion as mere fads under any circumstances, but as fads peculiarly impracticable throughout the length and breadth of Western Australia. I have given a case in point, and I shall be interested to learn what the mover has to say in reply. Another thing: it is a moot question whether in so important a matter as the granting of liquor licenses the powers of the Government should be banded over—because that is the effect of it—to a few people in a particular locality. If we propose to take polls on the granting of liquor licenses, why should we not have polls in connection with all kinds of public business?

MR. DAGLISH: The decision now rests with three magistrates.

MR. MORAN: Quite so; but the magistrates derive their power from the ordinary laws of the country. A licensing bench is understood to be absolutely impartial, and is expected, in coming to a decision, not to be guided solely by what the people in the immediate neighbourhood may think. A licensing bench is expected to give applications broad, general consideration. The main question which licensing magistrates are bound to ask themselves is, whether more accommodation is required, either for the residents or for the travelling public. I should say that in connection with licenses granted outside the metropolitan area and the goldfields town areas, the travelling public is the largest and sometimes the only consideration. In the old days, along the main roads of many goldfields districts the accommodation of the travelling public was the one consideration.

HON. F. H. PRIEST: But it is not so to-day.

MR. MORAN: It is still so in many outlying parts. A few years ago it would have been rather a difficult matter to take

a poll of the residents of those sandplains which we have all footed once or twice in our time. The residents I do not think would have numbered more than three or four; perhaps half-a-dozen would have represented the sum total of permanent residents. Why should the decision, whether or not there shall be accommodation on a great highway, be left to a mere handful of people? The time has not arrived when the principles affirmed by the motion can possibly be applied to the whole State. The case of large metropolitan areas with a settled population is perhaps different. There can be no question, however, that the adoption of the principles enunciated would play into the hands of the present hotel-keepers. They would be entirely in favour of local option, no doubt; for what would be the result to them if local option were adopted? The present licensees, if they can possibly get up an agitation by working on the feelings of gentlemen of a temperament such as that of the member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish), who I know holds strong views on the liquor traffic, and the member for Cue, who at any time would cry "anathema" on all hotels and would carry on a campaign against them on any and every ground, would be glad to do so, in the hope that a monopoly will rest with them for all time. Turning now to another paragraph of the motion, No. 4, we again have something of a most impracticable nature. If it be insisted that better accommodation shall be provided before a license is granted, surely to goodness it is a fair thing to recognise the vested interests created by the trade. The hotelkeeping business is a legitimate business, just as legitimate as selling meat, bread, or any other commodity. It is just as necessary a business, too; for, until all mankind turn teetotal, the liquor traffic must be regulated. Liquor, so far as I know, is a necessity, an absolute necessity. I believe the English race has been largely built up on beer, good village beer and home-brewed ale. I believe a good bottom was put into our far-back ancestors, and that they were good fighters by reason of the fact that they were good feeders and good drinkers. The liquor traffic, I say, is a necessity, and it is wise to keep the control of it in the hands of Parliament. I do not know

that any great hardship is arising under existing legislation. We know perfectly well that a tremendous amount of money is paid to the revenue of Western Australia from the drunk traffic.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Yes; and we spend it, too.

MR. MORAN: Some people may say they object to money which comes from such a source; but I look on that argument as very far-fetched.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: How much does the revenue cost?

MR. MORAN: We know that the class of hotel being built to-day in Western Australia, especially on the goldfields, is far and away better than that ever built, or asked to be built, in any other new country. The amount of money put into our hotels is enormous; the class of building is absolutely first-rate. The hotels on the goldfields are a monument to our building trade, at all events. They are a monument to the drinking capacity of the goldfields people, some members will tell us; but, to whatever the hotels may be a monument, they are indubitably a most handsome monument. We know that the principal evil to be guarded against by Parliament and by the Government, in this connection, is illicit or illegal trafficking in liquor. The best way to regulate the liquor trade is to provide that only good liquor shall be sold; and that end, I think, is perfectly attainable under our present laws, if only the authorities will administer those laws. The whole trouble lies in faulty administration. Some of the persons whose duty it is to administer the liquor laws fail in their duty. We have a Licensing Act which requires that liquor shall be sold in the full view and under the thorough supervision of the police.

MR. HIGHAM: The supervision is carried on by the Commonwealth officers now.

MR. MORAN: Then I do hope and trust that the Commonwealth officers will do their business just as well for the continent as they would do it for a State. I admit that the administration of the law is susceptible of improvement; but that is another question. I maintain that the liquor laws now on the statute book of Western Australia are such as should insure adequate regulation of the trade. If Parliament choose,

it may remove the licensing power from the purview of local benches; or perhaps some means might be discovered of improving the constitution of the benches. We might improve the body which controls licenses by making it wider, or—

MR. JOHNSON: Make it elective.

MR. MORAN: That is not a bad suggestion, perhaps. If we converted the licensing bench into an elective board based on a wide franchise, we might get better men to decide on applications. On the other hand, we might not. It seems to me that there is a tendency to carry the elective system too far. In a little, we shall be asked to elect our Engineer-in-Chief and all public officers throughout the State. If the existing licensing benches are not giving satisfaction, surely there is some method of appeal available. I do not object to provisions for appeal: I object to nothing which will tend to insure the strictest supervision over both the licensing benches and the liquor traffic. I favour anything and everything which may be done to guard against granting too many licenses, such as are found in Kalgoorlie and district. In the big rush there, everybody ran into all sorts of businesses. But I do not think much of local option as applied to any part of the State. I do not think it has ever got beyond something like a fad where it has been tried. It has not worked satisfactorily; and I certainly do not think a sweeping motion like this, if applied to the whole country, would be at all desirable or practicable. If an amendment be passed making it apply to the metropolitan area, or to the big centres, I shall be prepared to discuss and reconsider the proposal; but as the motion stands, I hope it will not be passed. I think this question should be approached properly. I scarcely think it wise for the Government to allow themselves to be compelled by the motion of a private member to bring in this legislation. I scarcely think the time is ripe for it, although I do not suppose much harm can be done by this discussion. And while respecting the member for Subiaco, who is earnest in this matter, and who honestly holds the convictions set forth in the motion, I am sure he will respect other members who, having travelled all over the country, sincerely

believe the motion could not be applied throughout the State.

MR. F. ILLINGWORTH (Cue): If I understand the motion, it is intended to suggest a line of action or certain leading principles upon which it is deemed desirable to amend the Licensing Act. If this motion be passed, I do not suppose that the Government will feel themselves bound in matters of detail, or bound to carry out all the suggestions contained in this motion or series of motions. I take it the real discussion of the question would come on if a Bill were brought in based upon the best judgment of the Government, accepting from this House a vote indicating the lines upon which such an amendment of the Act should be made. The principle that underlies this motion is, literally, local option. The member for West Perth (Mr. Moran) spoke somewhat peculiarly just now on the question of licensing, and asked us why we did not interfere with the butcher, grocer, baker, and such like. Well, the very fact that we have a licensing system, that this country and all countries have licensing systems, is a presentation of a very great and terrible reality, namely that we have in our community a traffic which is admitted by all in the community to be of a dangerous character in itself. We do, it is true, insist that the baker shall bake good bread, and that the butcher shall sell good meat; but no one suggests that the baker, the bread, or the meat have in them any element of danger. And consequently we never dream of suggesting that a man must have a license before he opens a butcher's shop, or before he starts to bake bread, or to sell groceries. The mere fact that every nation that we know, except perhaps some little communities such as Port Said, has taken on itself to control the liquor traffic, to issue licenses to certain persons to vend liquor, and to compel those persons to comply with certain conditions, shows that the control of licenses implies that the people themselves, through their representatives, have declared that there is something in this traffic that requires control, and requires control because there is a danger to the public interest and a danger to the individual; and because this is admitted, as a principle underlying it, we have in every place a system of license of some

kind or other. We must admit then that license is necessary, and that control is necessary in the community; for I do not think the hon. member (Mr. Moran) or any other member is prepared to give an unlimited right to sell intoxicants in this country, thus going to the logical terminus of the route on which the hon. member started, that every man is to have the right to sell intoxicating liquor when and where he likes and in whatever circumstances. If there be nothing in the thing itself that is dangerous to the community, why do we interfere with it at all? Why do we attempt to control it? We attempt to control it only because admittedly there is an evil existing.

MR. MORAN: Why do you license carts and trams?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: To get money.

MR. MORAN: That is a new doctrine. What about the chemist?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: We do not license the chemist: we insist that a man who carries on a chemist's shop shall be qualified to deal in drugs.

MR. MORAN: Why do you license cabmen?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The primary reason is to get revenue. I will not be led off the track by that remark. The hon. member is drawing a red-herring across the trail. If it be admitted that it is desirable to control the sale of intoxicants, what is the best authority to control them? Now the reason why a license should exist at all rests on the basis that though there is an evil, it is a necessary evil, and that certain persons in the community, or portion of the community at any rate, must be catered for. And consequently we license certain men and certain houses for the purpose of this particular traffic.

MR. MORAN: Why do you say it is illegal?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I do not say it is illegal. We license these public-houses and the persons who vend. Now the question arises as to who are the best persons to control this traffic. It is at present controlled by a licensing bench. This motion asks that the people shall control it--the people in whose district and for whose use and convenience ostensibly this license is to be granted and this building opened

for the vending of alcohol; that those people who are directly interested in the traffic or in a particular public-house shall say whether they will or will not have the house. In other words, it is a question whether the people who are to have the accommodation—or, from another standpoint, who are to submit to a nuisance, for there are two sides to the question—are to control the license, or whether some outside body, be it a licensing bench or anybody else, shall have the decision. Now on the principle of local option, we hold that the people on whose account a dangerous business is to be established in a district are the best persons to decide when, where, and how many licenses shall be granted in that district. That is the principle underlying the motion. I am not prepared to agree with this motion in all its details. For instance, I hold a pretty strong opinion on the question of compensation, namely that you cannot take away from a man, simply by a stroke of a pen, as is here suggested, something which he has acquired. The mere fact of inserting in a license that three years or five years hence there shall be no compensation if the license be cancelled, would not affect an existing right if a right existed.

MR. DAGLISH: It is not proposed to affect existing rights.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: No; but in this discussion we should not get on such side tracks, because I contend that the true discussion on the details will come when the Bill is before us.

MR. MORAN: Then the motion should be in general terms.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The whole reason for which I am supporting this motion is to remove the control, the decision as to whether a new house is or is not for the good of the district, whether the license should or should not be granted—to change the venue from the licensing bench to the persons directly affected, either for good or for ill. I think it reasonable to make the people themselves responsible for granting a concession which, for the whole community, both those who desire to drink and those who do not, has in it an element of danger.

MR. MORAN: Would you apply the principle to railway refreshment rooms?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Let us deal with the one subject. If I had my way, there would be no intoxicants on any railway station. I think that is the last place to put intoxicants, where there are trains and engines and other machinery running. But that is not the question. If 500 or 1,000 people constitute a community, and they are prepared to say "We will have 50 hotels in the district," why should not they have them? If they are prepared to take the responsibility of increasing the licenses, why should they not have the increase? And by the same argument, if they say "We do not want so many hotels, and we look on an increase in hotels as a menace to public morals and an injury to property; we simply do not want these hotels in the district"; why should not those who are to be affected by a new hotel have the decision as to whether it is or is not to be opened? The hon. member (Mr. Moran) made a good deal of the question of a wayside hotel. In such a case the road beside which the hotel is situate would have either end of it or some portion of it under the control of one or more districts, under the control of a municipality, a shire, or a roads board. The control would not vest solely in the particular district in which it is proposed to put the hotel.

MR. MORAN: The motion says "the locality."

MR. ILLINGWORTH: If it were desired that there should be communication between two towns, and it were for the good of the public that there should be one or two wayside hotels between the two towns, what difficulty would there be in getting a license? Not the slightest. The people in the community would control this question better than our licensing bench can control it; and when we have a subject that is a matter of constant debate and constant annoyance and in every way a source of danger and difficulty, then in a democratic community why can we not transfer the control of this traffic to the persons directly interested? When we consider the reasons for creating municipalities, we find that we say to the people living in the district: "We will give you municipal powers. We cannot, from the centre of the country, strike rates, and do justice to the funds of the people, and

supply all the wants of every town in this great State." Granted. And consequently we pass a Municipal Act, and give powers to municipalities to do certain work and to control certain matters by which they are individually affected. The same principle is involved in this matter of local option, by which we seek to give to the persons in a particular district the control of the licenses in that district.

MR. MORAN: Would you let them test the liquor too, and summon the vendor and hang him if he sold bad stuff?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I think it reasonable that, if we establish the local option license, we should establish local option control; and I am prepared to say that if we do, we shall have something infinitely more effective than the Government have at present. If the locality itself be made responsible for the quality of the liquor as well as for the nature of the traffic, we shall find things will be better done. Now the whole question resolves itself at last upon the public will. Are we, as a Parliament elected by the people of this country, to say that we are not prepared to let the people decide this great question—admittedly one of the most difficult questions on which any Parliament ever attempts to legislate? And as to the hon. member being correct when he says it is only a fad, will he say that it is so in America with 76,000,000 of people, where they have the principle of local option in various forms?

MR. MORAN: An absolute laughing-stock.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The man who told you so told you what is untrue, because it is absolutely known to be no such thing.

MR. MORAN: Have you been there?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: I have seen the man who has.

MR. MORAN: He may have told you an untruth.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: We will take such a strong man as Lecky.

MR. MORAN: Take Mildura, which is a case in point.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Let us get on to the subject first. [Interjection.] I do not want to get off Mildura: it is all right. Take the principle which has permeated the whole of the United States, the principle of local control, for which I

am contending, you may say it has not been effective. I grant it. No system is effective in questions where you have to control human passions. Your own State laws are not effective. Your own laws for the protection of life and property are not effective.

MR. MORAN: Would you license chemists?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Chemists have to deal out poisons, and we insist that they shall have the necessary qualifications, for the protection of life; but we do not license chemists—we only demand a qualification. I am not speaking of prohibition now—that is a very much wider subject than local option; but all through the States of America, a good portion of Canada, and in many places on the continent of Europe, there has been an attempt to exercise control with regard to spirits—not always alcohol—by the local option principle, varied according to the wants of the people. Why should we not in this State adopt that principle? Other States have gone on that principle. Victorians have had a law in existence for years by which at certain periods a vote is taken which prevents the increase of licenses, and there is also a possibility of reducing licenses. The hon. member is not dealing with the motion, which does not propose a system to reduce licenses, but advocates that there should be no farther increase of licenses without the will of the people. Of course, there are special cases, and always will be special cases, which will be required to be provided for. If, for instance, there is a district in which there are only a hundred persons to-day, or five hundred, as the case may be, and a vote were taken, there may be a provision whereby in the event of the number of the residents being materially increased, there shall be an increase in the number of licenses. We can have in the Bill a provision whereby, if the population increases largely, the wants created may be met. Local option is not intended to deal prohibitively. On the licensing question, local option is the exact opposite of prohibition, as a principle. It says that the people shall decide whether, aye or nay, more licenses shall exist; if they decide aye, more licenses shall exist; and if they say nay, no more licenses shall be granted. And whether the number shall

be more or less shall be for the decision of the people interested in the traffic. I hope this House will see the justice and wisdom of transferring the decision from the licensing bench to the people who are directly affected. That is all which is needed. We are dealing with the simple principle now as to whether the decision shall rest with the licensing bench or with the people in whose district it is proposed to put the hotel. That is the whole principle involved in this motion, and I say the power should be transferred to the people. Let the people in the municipality, the roads board district, or whatever it may be, decide the question for themselves; and I am quite in accord with the hon. member that when they have decided there should be a time limit. People should not be constantly asked to vote on these questions unless there is such a change in the population of the district as renders a special case necessary. Provision could be made in the Bill to meet such a case; but, taking ordinary communities, after the voice of the people has been taken, that should satisfy for two years at any rate. In Victoria the time is three years. The hon. member suggests two years; perhaps under the changes and conditions of this State, two years would be sufficient, at any rate for a start. I hope the House will say it is desirable and that it would be wise to transfer to the people the right of dealing with this licensing question. I believe that even hotelkeepers themselves would be in harmony with the principle, and that it cannot be adverse to the general community. Even taking the hotelkeeper himself, why should you submit him to unnecessary competition in a trade in regard to which you say by the very license, "We would rather not have it at all?" By your very license you say, "This is a business which must be controlled, and consequently we will not allow a man to trade unless he gets a license." Having once admitted that, surely the people in whose midst we propose to allow this dangerous traffic are the best to decide whether they wish it or whether they do not. And I think local option is only an extension of the great principle for which we have all along been contending in this House. I hope the House will see its way clear to pass the motion. I do not say the

details, and I do not think the hon. member is himself wedded to the details; but what we want to express is that the Government shall bring in a Bill the underlying principle of which shall be that instead of a licensing bench granting licenses, the people shall control them themselves.

MEMBER: Would you abolish licenses existing?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The principle of the motion is that the licensing bench should not be at liberty to decide whether there shall or shall not be an increase of licenses, except under the limitations that come from the vote. Some places may say, "We will take a vote as to whether there should be an increase of 10 per cent. or a decrease of 10 per cent.;" but that is not involved in this motion. What is involved in this motion is, that there should be no new licenses granted in any settled community unless the people themselves express their willingness to allow such licenses to be granted. If they say there are to be none, that decision is to last two years. If they say there is to be an increase of 20 or 30 per cent., or whatever it may be, that is to last two years. I think that is a reasonable proposition, and that it is an extension of the local government principle which is well worthy of the consideration of Parliament in this vexed question of licenses, and I hope the House will see its way clear to pass the principle. I do not think we need be bound to the wording, but to the principle underlying the motion which the hon. member has proposed.

MR. T. F. QUINLAN (Toodyay): I rise to support the motion of the hon. member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish). I believe in a great measure in the references made on this matter by the member for Cue (Mr. Illingworth), provided of course that in any amendment of the existing Act provision is made to meet the case of a material increase of population, so that existing licenses should not have the whole of the benefit through want of competition. That seems to be a point which would necessarily have to be considered in any amendment of the Act, and I hope the Government will take notice of his reference in that regard. The question of licensing the drink traffic may, I think, be a guide to another danger,

and that is the tobacco traffic, which would be another source of revenue. I think there is as much danger in selling one as the other. What is of greater importance to my mind in respect to this particular line of business is the necessity of the people having some voice in the manner proposed by the motion, whereby there will be a better character or better class of hotelkeeper in the community. There are some at present, not only in this city but in other parts of the State, who have no right to have control of a hotel, for a number of reasons, one being the danger of giving greater facilities to take advantage of those who may be under the influence of this business, especially in regard to the moral character of the people. I am sorry to say I am informed almost daily that some places in Perth might very well be better conducted, if the police or the authorities kept a better eye on them; and perhaps if the people had more voice as to the control of the liquor traffic, they would give the information necessary to put an end to what is a growing evil in this State, that of giving licenses to people most unworthy of them. I have every confidence in the present bench—Mr. Roe, Mr. Saunders, and Major Haynes—every confidence possible, but it is impossible for them to have the necessary information when the applications are made, unless the people come forward in such manner as is proposed by this motion and express their opinion as to whether a person is of sufficiently good character to have control of the liquor traffic. This alone, apart from any other point, is to my mind a strong point, that better attention should be given in regard to those who have licenses. I would farther urge that where applications are made a fee should be charged in the first instance for a license granted. I think that would have the effect of preventing so many applications being made from time to time, pestering the bench, applications being made by people who have not the means of getting the structure until they obtain the license. I am glad that the suggested legislation is not retrospective, because I consider that those who have places which have so long been licensed have a claim on the country so far as vested interests are concerned. I am quite in accord with the view that pro-

vision should be made for an increase in the number of licenses where the population has materially grown. Perhaps it is somewhat against my interests indirectly, but I feel it is only fair that where people are in a position to pay a better license fee such fee should be charged accordingly. Altogether I think the motion an estimable one, and I am glad to compliment the hon. member for Subiaco on introducing during this session a motion which will give the Government time to consider during the recess the best means of amending the Act. I hope the amendment will be a lasting one, because the same question of the liquor traffic crops up every session. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion.

On motion by the MINISTER FOR MINES, debate adjourned.

MOTION—CANNING RAILWAY, TO PURCHASE.

MR. T. F. QUINLAN (Toodyay) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the purchase of the Canning Railway Concession by the Government is essential in the interests of the State.

I intend to confine my remarks chiefly to quotations from a small pamphlet issued by the Upper Darling Range Railway League, which body has closely interested itself in the movement to purchase the concession of the Canning Jarrah Company's railway. I was urged in the first instance by a prominent settler to move in this direction; and it is right to state this, so as to make myself right with the member who represents that district, and whose support, with that of other members, I hope to receive. The Government can purchase the Canning line at a considerable amount less than the actual value. When I say that, I am giving the opinions of persons who are competent to judge, because I do not wish to appear as an authority on railway construction. I am urged to bring forward this motion more particularly in regard to the increased settlement that has been taking place of late. If the line were under the control of the Government there would be a more regular service. At present people have to wait some hours at times to be conveyed to and from over the line. A large amount of settle-

ment is taking place in the district, and I am assured settlement will be very quickly doubled if the Government purchase the line. There would be many orchardists and viticulturists who would take up land in this district, and there would be an increase in other industries, such as brick-making and gravel-getting. For the benefit of those members who are not intimately acquainted with this subject, and who were not here formerly when the concession was granted, I intend to quote the remarks of Mr. Burt, who was then the Attorney General. In February, 1891, Mr. Burt moved:—

“That this House approves of the proposed contract laid upon the table between the Government and Mr. E. V. H. Keane, relative to the construction of a line of railway on the Darling Range, and the working of a timber concession thereon.”

Mr. Burt then said:—

Mr. Keane was the holder of a timber concession. On this concession the Government had the right to sell any portion of the land. The consequence was that any person who desired to block the operations of the company had only to apply to purchase a 50 or 100 acre block out of the concession at the head of the company's tramway for the time being. Mr. Keane asked for this to be remedied, and the Government, after consideration, thought it only right that they should have some *quid pro quo*, and the result is this proposed contract. What we propose to do for the licensee is this—to allow him an unassailable right to cut timber over this concession, and not a sham right, as it is at present; but in return we ask him, as he is making a railway to his timber mill, to bind himself to carry the public, and also the general traffic of the district on that line of railway. . . . This is the principal bone of contention, the want of better facilities, especially on account of the increased traffic that is taking place.

Mr. Burt later on says:—

Mr. Keane is bound to maintain this railway up to the end of 1899. At that date or any time afterwards the Government will have the right to purchase the line. If by that time settlement takes place along this line, as I believe myself it will, and the traffic justifies it, the Government may, if they like, purchase the line. It amounts to this, we get a railway twenty miles long simply for securing to the lessee the right to sell the timber on his lease.

Mr. Hackett said:—

In looking through the contract, the provisions for protecting the interests of the public were ample, both in regard to the carriage of goods and passengers.

The late Mr. Leake said:—

As there was an abundance of land along the route of this line suitable for orchards and

farms, the benefits to be derived from the construction of this line would be very many.

Sir John Forrest said:—

I must say I think it is an excellent arrangement, so far as this colony is concerned. . . . In 1899 the contract expired, and since that date the company has claimed to be independent of all Government control. It became evident to the landowners, settlers, brick, quarry, and gravel pit owners along the line that the public was not aware of the attitude of the company, and the league was formed in March last to place clearly before the public the history of the concession, the present position of affairs, the large interests at stake, and the serious result of the attitude of the Government, unwilling to purchase the line themselves, and preventing any improvement by giving others a chance to buy.

A sufficient illustration of the ignorance of the public and of members of Parliament concerning the line is afforded by the following letter from Mr. Hastie, the member for Kanowna:—

We are all anxious to do our best to open cheap and good lines of communication between producers and consumers. As regards the Canning-Jarrah Railway, I have scarcely heard the name mentioned this session, probably on account of the modesty of the residents. To us on the goldfields fruit supply is a matter of tremendous importance, and almost everything possible must be done to increase it.

I indorse the sentiments as to the modesty of the people, because they have put up with the inconvenience of the line for so long. The extract continues:—

The settlement of Gooseberry Hill is quite an important one, and is marked by a degree of intense culture for small fruits and vegetables which obtains nowhere else in the State.

Mr. Percy G. Wicken, field officer to the Department of Agriculture, wrote:—

The great drawback to this promising district is the means, or lack of means, of communication. There is a railway run by a private company to suit itself, but certainly not to suit the public. The company will condescend to carry passengers, and even goods, if they like, if you are on the line when the train passes, but at what time it will pass is a problem which has to be decided every day by personal experience. It may pass between 6 and 7 o'clock in the morning, or they may have their dinner before they start, and run down in the afternoon.

Mr. Frank Wilson stated at a deputation to the Minister on August 22, 1901:—

The line could be purchased for £1,000 per mile. It had cost about £27,000 to construct.

If the line were acquired by the Government he had no doubt it would prove a payable one.

Mr. James Morrison says :—

A couple of years ago he had gone into the question with a view to buying ; he had been thoroughly satisfied with the prospects of the venture. However, when it was pointed out to him that the Government could at any time step in and buy the line at a price not exceeding £1,000 per mile, he had to abandon the idea. He did not think the line was dear at £1,000 per mile, and could fairly recommend to the Government a scheme he had been willing to embark upon himself. The settlement all along the line was very much greater now than at the time he had thought of buying the line.

I know Mr. Morrison is not an easy man to satisfy ; therefore when he says that £1,000 per mile is cheap, it can be regarded as a reasonable amount. Mr. Law, and I venture to say this gentleman is as good an authority as there is in the State as to the value of railroad land, says :—

With regard to the price, as a man who had built a good many railways, he could say that the Government could not have constructed that one under £2,000 per mile. He was prepared to substantiate that before a select committee, and to prove that under the agreement the Government could make a very good bargain for the State.

Possibly if the line were constructed like the Goomalling railway was, it might be £4,000 per mile.

THE PREMIER : Say that loudly.

MR. QUINLAN : I have said it so many times. Dr. Jameson says :—

Some time ago Mr. Light had prepared a report showing that the line would pay 4 per cent. profit on £30,000—£19,000 being the purchase price, and £11,000 the cost of improvements and equipments. Since that report was made settlement and production had increased.

In a speech by Mr. Statham, that gentleman gave it as his opinion :—

His quarry could turn out from 100 to 125 tons per day. The output of timber from Mr. Guppy's mill would run to close on 4,000 loads a year. It would take close on 45 wagons per day to keep the brick yards, his quarry, and Mr. Guppy's mill going. The Canning Company themselves averaged close on 15 wagons of timber per day, and the Government, if they took over the line, would get this freight. Last year the Canning Company handled 12,000 trucks, representing about 70,000 tons coming down the line. This year the company would handle about 15,000 trucks. This increase was on account of new sidings put down and industries that were likely to start in the near future. That would represent close on

80,000 tons of stuff carried on the line in the year.

The Acting Premier, in closing a speech made at a gathering at the Illawarra orchard, said :—

When he considered the figures which had been brought forward, it appeared possible, if they rested on a sound basis, profits were to be made, and if so it was better for the profits to go to the community instead of to a private corporation.

I entirely indorse these sentiments. I trust I have made out a good case. I am not asking the House to agree straight away to carry this motion to its logical conclusion, for if I had done so the Speaker would have ruled the motion out of order. I have carefully drawn the motion in such a manner as to commend itself to the wisdom of the House, and I trust the Government will be guided by the opinions expressed.

MR. M. H. JACOBY (Swan) : I second the motion, and would like to draw attention to the peculiar position occupied by the company owning this line. Some years ago an agreement was made whereby the company obtained a large concession and the right to construct this line. The agreement has expired, with the exception of that portion which places the company under an obligation to sell the line to the Government at £1,000 per mile. [THE COLONIAL SECRETARY : That is the maximum.] The position is this. There is a most profitable trade to be done along that line, and a most profitable trade is being done along that line at present, but no attempt is likely to be made by the company to put the line in good condition or to equip it while the company are under the obligation to sell the line to the Government for £1,000 per mile. The Government could not construct this line under £2,000 per mile. The position is this : if we are to give a satisfactory service to the people in that district, we must either purchase the line or relieve the company of their obligation to sell, and force them to give a better service to the people. If the House agrees to the latter alternative—and I must say that I would object to it myself—and relieves the company of the obligation of selling at £1,000 per mile, the time must arrive when the Government would have to buy that line, and I am sure we should then have to

pay an exceedingly large price for it. I understand that there are some reports on this matter in the hands of the Government, and I may be allowed here to make some slight complaint that the papers, which were asked for some days ago, have not been laid on the table of the House, so that they could have been considered when debating this motion. The papers are close at hand, and I do not think there would have been much difficulty in getting them so that the House would have had the benefit of what they contain. Everybody who knows this district is aware that it is admirably situated for suburban residences. It is within a few miles direct from Perth—15 or 16 miles—it is exceedingly high above sea level; it is one of the healthiest among the health districts that surround Perth; and it is one of the most productive districts in Australia for fruit growing. We have, in addition, a very large number of active companies carrying on such work as brickmaking, firewood cutting, stone getting, and gravel getting, and these people have to pay the Government for the supply of trucks which they use. They have also to pay a considerable amount in advance of the ordinary Government rates for freight; they have very many other difficulties to contend with, yet these people are doing an exceedingly large business along the line. If the Government were to take over the line the people would have greater conveniences, and the trade would be very largely increased. I am absolutely certain, as far as the stone, the brick, and the gravel businesses are concerned, if the Government were to take over the line there would be a large increase in the number of people engaged in these works. We have at present the extraordinary spectacle of most of the fruit grown in this district being sent to Perth by road. The line, if purchased by the Government, would carry annually 50,000lbs. to 100,000lbs. weight in strawberries which are conveyed by road from the district. Moreover, the district is particularly fruitful in ordinary orchard work. Several members had an opportunity of visiting, a short time ago, the Illawarra orchard, where they saw standing on the trees a record crop for Australia. Members saw a crop of 25 cases to the tree, standing

on trees not more than eight years old. The record, I say, was an absolute one for Australia. The district has enormous areas of land capable of growing similar crops. The orchard I refer to will probably have, in a year or two, an output of 25,000 cases of fruit per annum. The enormous possibilities of the district in the way of fruit growing alone, I submit, afford a strong argument in favour of the Government exercising their option of purchase. Now I come to what I consider the most satisfactory aspect of the question from the financial point of view—the extraordinary methods which it was found necessary to adopt in the building of the line. The zigzag makes a journey over that line one of the most popular trips for holiday makers. I remember an occasion, two or three years ago, when a trip over the zigzag was advertised, with the result that there arrived at Midland Junction twenty or thirty times as many people as could possibly be accommodated. I am absolutely convinced that during the whole of the summer months, on every Saturday and every holiday, this line will afford one of the most popular outings in the State for pleasure seekers. All who have resided in large towns adjacent to strawberry-growing districts know what a great attraction the existence of strawberry gardens in itself offers to holiday makers. Now, I maintain that the attraction of the strawberry gardens, joined with the pleasure of this unusual method of hill climbing, affording magnificent views of sixty and even seventy miles over the surrounding country, will assure the financial success of the line from a passenger point of view alone. The length of railway required to be purchased by the Government is 18 miles or so, and the cost under the agreement will therefore be £18,000. I understand—my statement can be corrected by the Minister for Railways if it is wrong—that the Railway Department estimate that an expenditure of £500 per mile will put the line in first-class working order. A rough calculation on that basis, allowing for the running of two trains per day, makes the total amount required to be earned in each year, in order to cover working expenses, interest on capital, and sinking fund, only £3,600. I appeal to every member who has had an oppor-

tunity of gaining any knowledge whatever of the district to confirm me in the statement that there should be no difficulty in the line earning so small a revenue. Possibly there is some slight objection on the part of the Government to taking over the line on the ground that this is a zigzag railway and therefore a more dangerous class of railway than they care for; but to allay any apprehension on this score, we need but glance at the records of the company. I believe only one small accident has occurred on that line since its construction. Now, if a timber company, with its rough-and-ready methods of railway working, succeeds in running the traffic for so many years without a single serious accident, there should be no fear of accident under the more careful system of working practised by the Government. If I were Commissioner of Railways, I should be indeed sorry to see the zigzag done away with, because I consider the zigzag one of the greatest attractions of the line; and anyone who has travelled over it will say the same. I appeal to the Government to inform the House and the people concerned definitely of what is intended to be done—whether the Government intend to exercise their option of purchase, or whether they will relieve the company of the obligation to sell and introduce into this House such legislation as will force the company to run a satisfactory service. The most unfortunate feature of the present position of the matter is the circumstance that, after having fully considered the question of purchase, the late Government made the acquisition of the line part of their policy. The intention of the late Government to acquire the line was announced in the Queen's Hall, and everybody concerned felt that a great burden was lifted from his shoulders. I consider it a matter for great regret that the present Government, although sticking most tenaciously to many points of the policy of the late Premier, should go back on this, one of the most important items of Mr. Leake's programme.

MR. QUINLAN: Ministers will not go back on this.

MR. JACOBY: I am extremely glad to hear that. I hope that as the result of this debate we shall hear that the present Government propose to carry out the pledge made by the late Premier in

the Queen's Hall to the people of Gooseberry Hill. I trust that this debate will lead to a satisfactory issue. The matter cannot be left in its present state. The sooner it is firmly and finally decided, the better for all concerned. I have great pleasure in seconding the motion of the member for Toodyay.

MR. F. ILLINGWORTH (Cue): I have pleasure in supporting the motion. As the last speaker stated, the purchase of the line formed part of the policy of the Leake Government, of which I had the honour to be a member. I have not yet been able to gather why we have not heard something definite from the present Government on this question. I hope they have not abandoned the idea. The members of the Leake Cabinet, I think I may say, were fairly unanimous on the point. The general feeling was that this was a project which the country ought to undertake, and the execution of which would give satisfaction to everybody concerned. The Canning railway ought to belong to the State. Under an existing agreement it can be purchased at a reasonable price. The estimate I had in my mind was £19,000 to buy the railway, and £10,000 or £11,000 to put the railway into thoroughly good working condition; the total expenditure thus being £30,000. The points raised by the member for the Swan (Mr. Jacoby) need not be elaborated. They are all strong points. On the hills which the line traverses, there exists a splendid industry, which ought to be encouraged for the benefit of the city and for the benefit of the goldfields. At the present time more than one-half of the fruit grown on those hills goes to the goldfields. Indeed the line will serve a splendid area of fruit-growing country capable of supplying the needs of our whole population in the shape of fruit. I believe that the mere carriage of fruit during the season will return more than interest on the whole outlay involved. Even supposing not another shilling were earned during the rest of the year, the fruit season alone would pay interest on capital and sinking fund; any additional revenue would represent profit. I hope the Government have not cast the purchase of the line out of their plans and arrangements. It is true that the surplus is not what the Leake Government anticipated

it would be, but no better use for £30,000 of the surplus could possibly be found than the purchase and equipment of this railway. I hope the Government will announce definitely what their intentions are, and I hope they will be prepared to support this project, which formed part of the policy of the preceding Ministry.

MR. W. M. PURKISS (Perth) : I also feel pleasure in supporting the motion. I have several times journeyed over the zigzag, but I never went farther than Gooseberry Hill until I had the pleasure of forming one of a ministerial party which, in March last year, travelled as far as the Illawarra orchard. From what I saw on my various trips, and particularly on the last trip, I came to the conclusion that the Government could not do wrong in purchasing the line at the bagatelle price of £1,000 per mile. In view of the resources developed under the adverse circumstances obtaining in the past, the Government should not hesitate for one moment to make the purchase. What I saw at the extreme end, or almost the extreme end of the line, in the Illawarra orchard, was certainly a revelation to me. I have inspected many orchards in many States, but I have never seen the equal of the Illawarra orchard. It aggregated from 45 to 50 acres covered with a full bearing crop of magnificent apples. I have never seen cleaner or finer-grown fruit anywhere. Adjacent to the Illawarra orchard I saw miles of country capable of producing equal results.

MR. JACOBY : There are thousands and thousands of acres just as good.

MR. PURKISS : I do not speak of thousands of acres, because I had not sufficient opportunity of inspecting the country. I have no hesitation in saying that the Government ought to exercise their option to purchase this line for £18,000 or £19,000. The resources developed under the adverse circumstances of the past afford ample justification for the purchase. Seeing the district again, after a lapse of six years, I was simply astounded by the strides which had been made, affording a splendid earnest of what the future has in store, provided only the settlers are furnished with speedy and easy means of communication. I heard astounding stories from the settlers of the difficulties experienced

not only in the conveyance of their produce to market, but even in getting to town themselves. I heard tales of delays at Midland Junction, of settlers waiting there not only an hour or two, but the best part of a day to get a train. Undoubtedly, better facilities should be provided. With adequate facilities, there is little doubt that we shall see on the slopes of those hills, as we may now see on the slopes of Mount Lofty in South Australia, suburban residences and chateaux to which city residents will send their families to escape the heat of the summer months. Certainly, the views from the zigzag are most beautiful and extensive. With unaided vision I was able to discern the Rottnest lighthouse. The panorama was a revelation to me. I feel sure that if the members of the present Government made the trip—I believe some of them have made it—they must agree with all I have said. I thought, indeed, that this matter was settled, after the speech delivered by our late Premier in the Queen's Hall, in the course of which he announced that it was the policy of his Government to allocate portion of the surplus then expected to the purchase of this line. After that pronouncement, I thought the business was settled. I am astonished to think it is necessary to have such a motion; and I have pleasure in giving it my support.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS AND RAILWAYS (Hon. C. H. Rason) : The member for the Swan (Mr. Jacoby) complains of some delay in furnishing certain reports for which he moved. Had the hon. member's request rested at the reports only, there would have been no delay in placing them on the table; but the hon. member asked for something more—a return of traffic, which is necessarily somewhat complicated, and which takes a considerable time to prepare. That is the sole reason for the delay. Coming to the motion itself, it is my intention to move the adjournment of the debate; but I should not like to do so without briefly giving my reasons. Hon. members will realise that in such a question there is something more than the desirableness of a work of this nature: there is the question of ways and means. Those points have for some time past been receiving the earnest considera-

tion of the Government; and if, as I hope they will, members consent to adjourn this motion for 14 days, then I have no hesitation in saying the Government will be able to give a definite answer. I move that the debate be adjourned to this day fortnight.

Motion put and passed, and the debate adjourned.

MOTION—PAIRING BY MEMBERS IN DIVISIONS.

MR. M. H. JACOBY (Swan) moved :

That the practice of pairing, as carried out in the Imperial and Commonwealth Parliaments and most of the State Parliaments, be adopted by this House.

Members would agree that great inconvenience was often suffered for the lack of the system of pairing largely availed of in other British Parliaments; hence the motion. At present, pairs might be arranged for by the whips or by ordinary members; yet the fact did not appear in the records of the House, and the motion sought to provide the ordinary form of pair-book, to overcome the difficulty.

MR. MORAN (West Perth) seconded the motion.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Walter James) : No doubt the system was good if used when really needed; for it was somewhat unjust that a member should be compelled to stay in the House pending a division, when his mind was made up on a question, and no farther debate could alter his opinion. But while pairing might be a good practice in a large House, it was open to objection in a small one. The right to pair was apt to make members careless of attending; for they might pair for the remainder of a session, or for all divisions in the course of a day; and the practice was thus open to abuse, indirectly if not directly. In such a small House as this, it was hardly advisable to recognise the system of pairing.

MR. JACOBY: It was recognised in the Federal Senate—another small House.

THE PREMIER: No doubt the Senate adopted it because of its adoption by the House of Representatives. The effect would be that members would pair and refrain from attending the House, feeling satisfied with the appearance of their names on the division lists recorded in *Hansard*. There was at present a system

by which for all effective purposes a member could pair, because the two members pairing did not attend to vote on divisions; but it was ineffective, because such pairs did not appear in *Hansard*. Consequently, if some years after a division such a member were asked how he had voted, he could not turn up *Hansard* to prove his assertion. The result of not officially recognising pairing had been that members frequently had to attend for the purpose of recording their votes, possibly at personal inconvenience, not because they had not been able to select effective pairs from members opposed to them on the question at issue, but because, if they had paired there would have been no official record of the fact; and probably on the whole exercised a good influence, although there might be occasional cases of hardship.

MR. G. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) opposed the principle of pairing. In the Federal Parliament, especially in the Senate, the power to pair was abused. Numbers of senators, particularly legal members, would never have their names recorded in the proceedings of that Parliament but for the system of pairing; and he agreed with the Premier that it would be abused if adopted here. Towards 10 o'clock every evening the Fremantle members were rarely found in the Chamber unless the question under discussion affected them or their constituencies, or were a party question. If pairing were allowed, it would be availed of in a most objectionable manner.

THE SPEAKER: The following was an extract from *May* on the question of pairing:—

A system known by the name of "pairs" enables a member to absent himself, and to agree with another member that he also shall be absent at the same time. By this mutual agreement, a vote is neutralised on each side of a question, and the relative numbers on the division are precisely the same as if both members were present. The division of the House into distinct political parties facilitates this arrangement, and members pair with each other, not only upon particular questions, or for one sitting of the House, but for several weeks, or even months, at a time. There can be no parliamentary recognition of this practice, although it has never been expressly condemned; and it is therefore conducted privately by individual members, or arranged by the gentlemen who are intrusted by their political parties with the office of collecting their respective forces on a division.

As to how the practice was carried out in the other States which had adopted the system of pairing, he was not aware; but the Clerk had communicated with the Parliaments of those States, and the system could not be adopted here till replies had been received. The motion could of course be carried to-night, but could not be given effect to till the required information came to hand.

MR. F. ILLINGWORTH (Cue): The custom in those States was that the pair-book lay on the table of the House. A member desiring to pair wrote his name for or against the specific Bill or motion; and when the division list was made up, the Clerk included not only the Ayes and Noes, but the pairs which appeared in the book. In the absence of any rule to the contrary, we were bound by the practice of the House of Commons; therefore the motion was unnecessary, though there was no apparent reason why the House of Commons practice adopted in the other States should not be adopted here. Perhaps there was much to be said in support of the Premier's view; but there was another side to the question. When a division was taken on some important subject, it might be said that had all members been present the result would have been entirely different. The pair system would have the effect of disposing of that doubt, for by it the decision of every member was recorded, supposing all absent members took the trouble to pair.

MR. MORAN: Would the Speaker, in declaring a motion passed or negatived, take the pairs into account?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: No. They were not noticed by the Speaker, but were simply recorded and appeared in *Hansard*. The effect was to record the fact that they were absent; and this was the principle in the House of Commons. It was a common thing for a member of the House of Commons to say he was going to the Continent for three months, and to arrange a pair. What had been deemed to be good and wise in the British Parliament, and had been adopted in all the States and in the Federal Parliament, ought to be the practice in this House. He saw no reason why we should separate ourselves from the ordinary practice of Houses of the same character.

MR. H. DAGLISH (Subiaco): Members of the British Houses of Parliament were without pay or allowance. If members once accepted either allowance or pay, and became paid servants, they had a greater obligation on them to be present and to attend to their duties than would be the case if they were acting in a purely honorary capacity. It was a pity, however, that we could not arrange some system whereby, in case of sickness, a person could pair; but as to the system of pairing generally, he did not think the motion would, if passed, have any other effect than that of causing members to go off in a light-hearted fashion whenever it suited their pleasure. The condition of things was quite bad enough now. Last night there was a division in which those who voted numbered 21, whereas the total number of the members of the House was 50. That was not at all creditable to the House, and what the state of affairs would be if the system of pairing were adopted, he did not know. In the Eastern States, the pairs were recorded in *Hansard*, and also in the newspapers, and for that reason a member regarded himself as having done his duty when he had made a pair. We ought not to encourage laxity in attendance or performance of parliamentary duties. He repeated that he would like to see arrangements whereby the vote of a man who was sick could be recorded.

MR. MORAN: Without pairing at all.

MR. DAGLISH: That would be better. The same did not apply in the case of a man who was engaged in trying to make money out of his business.

MR. J. L. NANSON (Murchison), concurred in the sentiments expressed by the member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish), the Premier (Hon. Walter James), and the member for Mt. Margaret (Mr. Taylor). The difficulty we had in this House was rather to get a sufficient number of members together. He was more than surprised that the member for the Swan (Mr. Jacoby) should introduce a motion of this sort after the painful experience he had the previous evening, when a Bill was thrown out in a House in which less than half the members were present. The hon. member should withdraw the motion.

MR. JACOBY: If the Speaker was waiting for farther information, he would prefer to have the debate adjourned.

On motion by Mr. MORAN, debate adjourned for a fortnight.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 9:37 o'clock, until the next day.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 4th September, 1902.

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

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the COLONIAL SECRETARY: Guano Return, showing quantity exported from Abrolhos Islands, 1901-2.

By the MINISTER FOR MINES: Papers relating to Collie-Cardiff Coal Leases—Return to Order of the House dated 3rd September.

Ordered: To lie on the table.

QUESTION—RAILWAY TO EASTERN GOLDFIELDS, RATES REDUCTION, HOW.

MR. HASTIE, for Mr. Thomas, asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Whether he has stated that the rates on the Eastern Goldfields Railway would be reduced as from the 1st of September? 2, What will be the percentage of reduc-

tion? 3, What was the percentage of the recent rise in rate.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, The rates on the following articles have been reduced:—Manure, explosives, fencing wire and standards, agricultural produce, ores. 2 and 3, Comparative statement showing old rates, new rates, and since amended on the undermentioned goods, as for mileage 37½, Perth to Kalgoorlie, with percentages:—

Articles.	Old Rate.	New Rate.	Percentage over Old Rate.	Amended Rate.	Percentage of Reduction.
Manures ..	18/7	22/4	19 per cent.	18/7	19 per cent.
Explosives ..	149/7	159/10	6½ per cent.	143/10	10 per cent.
Fencing Wire and Standards ..	80/11	98/4	21½ per cent.	55/9	43½ per cent.
1-ton lots ..	44/3	55/9	25½ per cent.	55/9	
2-ton lots ..	35/5	44/7	25½ per cent.	44/7	
Agricultural Produce, locally grown, any direction—					
Over 300 miles ..	28/-	33/6	19 per cent.	30/-	10 per cent.
Up journey ..	15/-	24/-	60 per cent.	17/3	28 per cent.
Ores—					
Not exceeding 20z. gold per ton, etc. (min. 5 tons)	15/8	19/10	31 per cent.	15/8	31 per cent.
Gold-bearing ore and concentrates not exceeding 10oz. gold per ton, etc.	15/8	19/10	31 per cent.	15/8	31 per cent.

QUESTION—RAILWAY SUBURBAN FARES, GOLDFIELDS.

MR. HASTIE, for Mr. Thomas, asked the Minister for Railways: Whether it was the intention of the Government that the suburban fares should apply to Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie as well as to Fremantle, Perth, etc.