

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) further moved that the blank in the last line be filled in with the word "January," and that the figure "4" in the same line be struck out, and the figure "5" inserted in lieu thereof.

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

First Schedule:

Put and passed.

Second Schedule:

MR. RANDELL moved, as an amendment, that the amount "five shillings," placed opposite the first item, be struck out, and the amount "two shillings and sixpence" be inserted in lieu thereof. He said this and other charges in the Schedule were too high for poor persons to pay.

Amendment put and passed.

MR. RANDELL further moved that the amount "two shillings and sixpence," placed opposite the second item, be struck out, and the amount "one shilling" be inserted in lieu thereof.

Amendment put and passed.

MR. RANDELL further moved that the amount "two shillings," placed opposite the fifth item, be struck out, and the amount "one shilling" be inserted in lieu thereof.

Amendment put and passed.

MR. RANDELL further moved that the amount "five shillings," placed opposite the sixth item, be struck out, and the amount "two shillings" be inserted in lieu thereof.

Amendment put and negatived.

MR. RANDELL further moved that the amount "ten shillings," placed opposite the seventh item, be struck out, and the amount "five shillings" be inserted in lieu thereof.

Amendment put and passed.

MR. LEAKE moved, as an amendment, that the amount "two shillings," placed opposite the tenth item, be struck out, and the amount "one shilling" be inserted in lieu thereof.

Amendment put and passed.

MR. RANDELL moved, as an amendment, that the amount "forty shillings," placed opposite the twelfth item, be struck out, and the amount "twenty shillings" be inserted in lieu thereof.

Amendment put and negatived.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) moved, as an amendment, that

the last item, "every registration of a place of public worship, ten shillings," be struck out.

Amendment put and passed.

Schedule, as amended, agreed to.

Third to tenth Schedules, inclusive, put and passed.

Eleventh schedule:

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) moved, as an amendment, that the words "(and under special license)" be added after the word "required," throughout the Schedule.

Amendment put and passed.

Schedule, as amended, agreed to.

Preamble and title:

Agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 12 o'clock, midnight.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 11th September, 1894.

Loan Bill (£1,500,000): in committee—Small Debts
Ordinance Bill: in committee—Adjournment.

THE SPEAKER took the chair at 2.30 p.m.

PRAYERS.

LOAN BILL (£1,500,000).

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Sir—Before moving that you leave the chair for the purpose of going into committee on this Bill, I should like to inform the House of the intention of the Government with regard to the Schedule of the Bill. We have listened attentively to the observations of hon. members on the occasion of the second reading, and I may say that we propose

that the item "Schools, £20,000," shall be struck out of the Schedule, when we come to it. The Government propose to place a sum upon the Estimates for the year sufficient, with the balance in hand, for the requirements of the year. In regard to the item "Railway to Collie Coalfields," the Government do not propose to introduce, this session, the special Act necessary for the construction of that work; so that nothing will be done in regard to that railway until we meet again, except to make and perfect the surveys that will be necessary to give members precise information in regard to the route. That will give members another opportunity of discussing the advisability of constructing this railway, because, as members know, unless a special Act is passed, the work cannot be undertaken. The Government, however, propose to introduce this session—and I give this intimation in order to take members entirely into the confidence of the Government—we propose to introduce this session special Acts authorising the construction of the two goldfields railways and also the Bridgetown railway, if those works are passed by both Houses of Parliament. We also propose to indent for the rolling stock and permanent way necessary for undertaking those works, because it takes a considerable time to indent for these articles from England and to obtain them in the colony, and it is necessary we should be well beforehand in that respect, so that the works may be carried out without any great delay. But, with regard to the Bridgetown railway, although the Government propose to take authority now for its construction, we intend that it shall come third on the list, in the order of construction, so that it shall in no way interfere with the construction of the other two lines; in the same way as we promised, on a former occasion, that the Vasse railway should come last. We have no intention whatever of hurrying on this Bridgetown line with any undue haste, and it is altogether improbable that any part of it can be put in hand for at any rate a year from now. I think members will at once see that that is almost impossible, unless the Government were to make very strong efforts indeed to have the work carried out; the surveys have to be made, and

these surveys are troublesome, and will take a considerable time. Then there will be plans and specifications to be prepared, and the material introduced into the colony; so that it is altogether improbable—in fact, it is almost impossible for the Government to put any part of this railway in hand for certainly more than twelve months from this date. I make that statement in order that members may be made fully aware of our intentions, and that we do not intend to hurry on this work unduly. Even if we were inclined to hurry it on, I do not believe it would be possible for us to place it in hand for a considerable time,—more than twelve months from this date. I thought it was right, before going into committee on the Bill, that I should explain exactly what the intentions of the Government are with regard to the most important items mentioned in the Schedule. I beg to move, sir, that you do now leave the chair.

MR. RICHARDSON: Before the question is put, I wish to ask for some little information with reference to the proposed route to be taken by the Bridgetown line. At present we have two alternative routes—there are four altogether, but the Engineer-in-Chief says that only two are worthy of serious consideration—and it appears to me that the balance of the evidence is very much divided as to the merits of these two routes, and side issues of considerable importance are involved. Members who know something of the country have their opinions formed as to which is the best route, but we gather that there is some likelihood that a route which many members do not consider the best route may be adopted. I should like to have some information on this point, and some assurance from the Premier as to the grounds upon which the rival claims of the various routes are to be finally decided. It is not altogether a question of engineering; I think other considerations as well ought to have weight—such as which route will best serve the interests of the country.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The special Act will, of course, define the route which this line will follow, with the usual margin for deviations; and between this time and the introduction of the special Act the Government will

have to make up their minds definitely as to which they consider the best route. Members will then have full opportunity for discussing this question of routes.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: I think the remarks of the Premier has shown us the wisdom of the amendment of which the hon. member for Beverley has given notice—that this line should not be commenced before the end of next year, because it appears the Government themselves have not yet made up their minds even as to the route it should take. When the Government place before us a Loan Schedule for our approval I think they should be prepared with every information about all the works included in that schedule, and with statistics showing the necessity of the work, or whether it is justified. It appears to me the Government are not prepared with the information we ought to have with reference to these railways, and I think it is a pity this Bill was placed on the notice-paper as the first item to be considered to-day. We know there are many members away, and it appears to me there is something more behind than appears on the surface. [THE PREMIER: Not at all.] At any rate I think it would be wrong to go on with this important Bill to-day, when there are several members absent, who did not know that the Bill was likely to come on at to-day's sitting. I hope at any rate the schedule will not be considered to-day.

The motion for going into committee was agreed to.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 1.—Power to raise £1,500,000 for certain purposes:

MR. ILLINGWORTH wished to remind the committee that the hon. member for the Swan, who was not present now, had, on the second reading of the Bill, expressed his intention to move that the amount of the loan should not exceed £1,000,000. He did not know whether the hon. member intended to carry out that intention; if he did, it would be only fair in his absence—the hon. member, he understood, was ill—to postpone this clause. He moved that the consideration of the clause be postponed until after the consideration of the remaining clauses and the Schedule.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he did not care whether the clause was postponed or not; but he might inform the hon. member that the opinion of the Government was that this loan should be for £1,500,000, and they intended to carry it, if they could.

Question put and passed, and clause postponed.

Clause 2.—Sums raised to be applied to the purposes set forth in the Schedule:

MR. HARPER said he had an amendment on the notice paper, to add the following words to the clause: "Provided, nevertheless, that no sums shall be raised or expended for the purposes set forth in Nos. 3 and 4 of the Schedule hereto until after the 1st of January, 1896." He should like to explain to the committee the object he desired to attain by this amendment. The first item (No. 3) was the railway towards Bridgetown. He might say that he was not personally acquainted with the land through which this line was intended to go, or with the country it was intended to tap; but, from careful inquiries from those on whose opinions he could rely, he was given to understand that the land to be opened up by this railway, speaking generally, could not be cleared, fit for cultivation, at a less cost than £10 an acre. He had heard a very much higher estimate given as to the cost of clearing some of this land, but for the purpose of his argument he would assume that it might be rendered fit for cultivation at £10 an acre. The residents of the district, a few days ago, presented a petition to the House in which they set forth the desirability of opening up their district, and the great scope it would afford for the development of the agricultural resources of the country. They also enumerated the products for the growth of which the district was adapted. His point was this: with regard to most of these products, they were pretty well able to judge of the value of them, and he did not think that many would contradict him if he laid it down as a tolerably well ascertained fact that few, if any, of the products mentioned in that petition would warrant the expenditure of £10 an acre in producing them. He thought that if any man set to work to grow oats or wheat, or in fact almost any of the products mentioned, and had to expend £10 an acre in clearing the

ground for them, that man would very soon find himself in the bankruptcy court. Therefore he thought it was most desirable they should look very carefully at what they were doing in building a railway to open up this country. He gave place to no one in desiring to see the country opened up and settled, or in desiring to see those who were settled in that part of the colony receiving the full benefit they had a right to demand from the expenditure of public funds upon public works. But the question, to his mind, was this: would building this railway be the most immediate way of giving these people the earliest benefit of public expenditure in their district? That was a question which he certainly must hesitate to answer in the affirmative. Those of them who had any experience of the work of reclaiming land from its virgin state knew that one of the first, and one of the most necessary and most reproductive actions they could take, was to destroy the timber on the land by ringing it. He could put that fact in a light which even those who were not well acquainted with it could easily understand. There was land now in the Eastern Districts which it would have cost from £2 to £2 10s. an acre to clear a few years ago, before it was rung, but the clearing of which was now being let by contract at from 15s. to £1 an acre; and the men engaged in the work, he believed, made far better profit out of it than they formerly made out of £2 10s. an acre. That indicated the rapid and the great benefit to be derived from the ringing of timber. He could not help thinking it would be better, in the interests of those who resided in the Blackwood district, and in the interests of the colony, that this work of ringing this heavily timbered land should precede that of railway construction. He was as anxious as anyone that this part of the colony should receive the benefit of railway communication, but he could not shut his eyes to that fact; and this was the main reason for his moving this amendment. With regard to the tinfields, which this railway was also intended to serve, he was rather afraid that in attempting to open up these tinfields at the present moment they would be doing absolute harm to the country. The tin as it was now lying in the ground cost nothing to keep it

there, and was an asset that might be very valuable by-and-by. At present tin was at a very low ebb in the world's market, in consequence of the very large production during the last few years in the Malay Peninsula. He believed the price had gone down about one-half what it was a few years ago. He understood that the bulk of the tin-fields in that country consisted of surface workings, which gave employment to an enormous number of Asiatics, whose labour was very cheap, and, no doubt, so long as these surface workings lasted they must have the result of depreciating the value of tin in other lands. Therefore, in expending money at the present time in the development of these tinfields we were simply cutting our crop too young. As he had already said, the tin cost nothing to keep it where it was, and it would not disappear if left there until there was a better demand for it, and a larger margin between the cost of production and the market value. This they might expect to be brought about in a few years time. Therefore, if these tinfields were left in their present condition for the present, they would be a much more valuable asset to the colony say in ten years time than they were to-day. That was a consideration that should weigh with us in dealing with this particular item; too much stress should not be placed upon the necessity of constructing this railway for the sake of developing these tinfields. The main point to be considered was the opening up of the land for agricultural settlement; and on that point he had already expressed his belief that nothing would be lost, but much might be gained, by postponing the construction of this railway, and in the meantime applying our attention to ringing and destroying the timber on the land. He was prepared to confess that the statement which the Premier had just made as to the intentions of the Government with regard to this line had in a great measure met his objection, because, after what the Premier had stated, nothing whatever was likely to be done in regard to the construction of this railway for another year; and his amendment would only delay it a few months further. As, however, he had not moved in this matter altogether on his own account, and many members had

expressed their intention to support his proposal, he did not like to withdraw it without hearing an expression of opinion from those members, in view of the announcement made by the Premier. With regard to the other item, the Collie coalfields line, he thought the statement of the Premier quite met his views for the present. But he should like to say that in his opinion it was premature to take any action to build that line. We did not know that this was the only coalfield we had; nor did we know, supposing we had more, that it was in the best position for a coalfield. It might be that other coalfields would be found in situations much more get-at-able, and which could be opened more satisfactorily and worked more profitably than this one at the Collie. Therefore he thought it was desirable that this line should not be undertaken at the present time, and he was glad to hear from the Premier that such was not the intention of the Government. He would formally move his amendment, in order to elicit an expression of opinion on the subject from other members.

MR. LEAKE said he would like to point out to the committee that this proviso of the hon. member for Beverley came rather too soon, because if they passed this proviso now they would really be affirming the necessity of these two items on the Schedule—the Bridgetown line and the Collie line. Would it not be better to wait until they went through the Schedule, and see whether these two items were passed, before affirming this resolution? This looked to him like putting the cart before the horse. It was practically affirming the necessity for these two works—not now, perhaps, but any time after the 1st January, 1896. If they affirmed this principle, they could not consistently move to strike out either of these two items when they came to the Schedule.

MR. COOKWORTHY said the great objection entertained by the hon. member for Beverley against the Bridgetown line was on account of the country being heavily timbered. The best way to get rid of this superfluous timber was to make the railway through this country, and bring the timber to market. There was a large quantity of marketable timber there, and the only thing wanted to

enable its being exported was a railway running through the country. With regard to what the hon. member said about its not paying to clear this land at £10 an acre for cultivation, he could assure the hon. member from his own personal knowledge and observation that he had seen portions of this country, not very far from the proposed railway, cleared for the cultivation of cereals—ringing the large trees and clearing the smaller timber—for 25s. an acre. That was a fact. There was not such a large expenditure required to make this land available for cereal cultivation as members supposed. With regard to the Collie coalfield railway, he really could not understand why they should put off its construction. They had a grand coalfield there, according to the reports of the experts, and of our own Engineer, who said he was prepared to make use of this coal for railway purposes. A great deal had been said in that House about encouraging local industries; some members were never tired of talking about it. The object of this railway was to develop a most valuable local industry, and why members should object to it was a puzzle to him. If, when they went deeper, the coal was as good as it was represented to be on the surface, they would have coal fit for export, as well as for local requirements.

SIR J. G. LEE STEERE said he should like to say a few words on the motion brought forward by the hon. member for Beverley. He had not yet had an opportunity of speaking upon this item, and representing, as he did, the district most deeply interested, he thought members would readily understand that it had not been very pleasant to him to be shut up in that Chair, and have to listen to some of the observations made with reference to this railway to the Blackwood. If the hon. member for Beverley was going to oppose this item altogether, he could understand his object in bringing forward this motion, but he could not see what object would be gained by moving it now, in the face of the statement just made by the Colonial Treasurer, as to the intentions of the Government with regard to it. According to that statement it would be impossible—or, at any rate, it was not the intention of the Government—to incur any expen-

diture in connection with this railway for the next twelve months; and what was the difference between that and the hon. member's proposal? Simply a question of another six months, the hon. member's proposal being that no money should be expended on the work until after the 1st January, 1896. They had been assured by the Colonial Treasurer that no money would be expended on the work until, at any rate, the House was in session again, next year, which would bring them to July, 1895; and what was there to be gained by deferring the work until January, 1896? Did the hon. member think they would be in a better position to build this railway in January, 1896, than in July, 1895? Would it cost less to clear this land in January, 1896, than it would in July, 1895? He did not think the hon. member could answer these questions in the affirmative. When they were constructing railways to the Eastern Districts, he did not think that the cost of clearing the land through the forest country until they got to the Avon valley was a matter that entered into their consideration; therefore he did not think it at all fair that because this railway would have to pass through some thickly-timbered country before it got to the valley of the Blackwood, so much stress should be laid upon this question of the cost of clearing in this instance. The question they had to consider was this: was the railway necessary for the development of the country, and were we in a position to undertake it? He unhesitatingly answered both these questions in the affirmative. It was necessary for the development of this country that a railway should be made through it, and it was a country that would well pay to be developed; and he did not hesitate to say that we were in a position to undertake the work. That being the case, we should seriously consider this question: should we go on, with the means at our disposal, in developing the country, or should we reduce taxation; because, if we were not going to spend the money in the development of the country, then he maintained that with the money at our disposal we should reduce the taxation of the country. That was a question which that House must consider and decide upon, if they opposed this railway. Some members had made a personal inspection of the

country which this line would open up, and what was their opinion with regard to it? The hon. member for Geraldton, who now asked them to wait before going on with this railway,—what was his opinion of the country? The hon. member said the land was the finest land he had ever seen in his life. That being so, would it become any finer if they waited a little longer? He did not suppose so. The hon. member also said there were millions of pounds worth of some of the finest timber in the world, in that same country. Would that timber be of more value a few months hence? He thought one of the reasons why we should make this railway as soon as possible was to enable that magnificent timber to be made use of. Unless we waited until we were very old indeed, that timber would not grow very much bigger than it was now. When this railway was first mooted, there was an opinion—because members did not know the country—that it was a railway to the tinfields, and therefore it was attempted to be talked down. But such was not the case. He, perhaps, would himself have fallen in with that view if it was a railway for the tinfields only. But that was not the real object of the line. The principal object was to open up and develop this fine country on the Blackwood; though, no doubt, it would also help to develop the tinfields in that locality. He would also like to draw attention to this fact: that this line was only carrying out and extending a railway scheme that had been going on for some years past. When it was decided by the old Legislative Council that a railway should be made from Boyanup eastward, it was first suggested it should go to a certain timber station on the Ferguson. He opposed that proposal, because he felt, if it went there, it would never get beyond there; and, principally owing to the representations he made in the House at the time, the line was not taken to that saw mill station, but to Boyanup, because it was felt that by taking it in that direction it was a step towards the Blackwood. In the next Loan Bill it was approved by the House that this railway should be continued a further distance, to what was now called Donnybrook. Why was that done? Simply as a further continuation of the line towards

the Blackwood. He did not believe that any member would have voted for either the first section or the second section of this line, if it had not been with the view of its further extension to the Blackwood. Some facetious comments were made at the time, both in the local newspapers and the newspapers of the other colonies, about the foolishness of making a railway with its terminus at the stump of a redgum tree in the bush. He thought the same argument might be applied if they allowed this railway to stop at its present terminus, Donnybrook, for it would do nothing towards developing the country it was intended to develop if it stopped there. As to ways and means, he did not suppose that any member would say that our means at the present moment were so straitened that we could not afford to construct this railway, when we were told that the colony was never in such a prosperous condition. The hon. member for the Swan told them he did not think we would be justified in raising more than a million of money at the present time, and at the same time the hon. member told them that he approved of every item of this Bill except the railway to the Blackwood and the railway to the Collie. Therefore the hon. member himself actually approved of an expenditure of upwards of £1,300,000 out of this £1,500,000, although he said we were not justified in raising more than £1,000,000. When he (Sir James) was addressing his constituents, a few months ago, he mentioned the public works which in his opinion the colony would be justified in constructing, if the Colonial Treasurer, when he came to make his statement to the country, stated that our finances were in a position to warrant the expenditure. The four works he particularly mentioned were the railway to the Murchison goldfields, the railway to Coolgardie, this railway to the Blackwood, and the Fremantle harbour works. He was almost beginning to think that in his old age he was becoming a progressive man, because he believed he was the first member of the House who addressed his constituents, and expressed the opinion that we would be perfectly justified in constructing these four works, if the Colonial Treasurer satisfied him, when he made his minis-

terial statement, that the finances of the colony warranted us in undertaking such a liability. He need not say, in the face of what members now knew, that the Colonial Treasurer had satisfied him, and he thought had satisfied most members, that the revenue of the colony was in such a prosperous condition that we were quite justified in borrowing the money for the construction of these public works. Since the Colonial Treasurer made that announcement, the finances of the colony were in a still more prosperous condition, and there could be no doubt now that the country was in a position to undertake these works. He did not suppose that anything he could say would alter the vote that any member was going to give on this item. As a matter of fact, it was generally believed that, however ably anyone could speak in support of any measure, he never altered the vote of a man who came to the House prepared to vote only in a certain way. He believed there was a good deal of truth in that. All he asked was that members would do justice to these Southern districts, and not be guilty of an injustice to them in voting against this railway. He did not appeal to their generosity; he did not think he had a right to ask them to be generous with the money of the people, but he did ask them not to do an injustice. He had never himself opposed the expenditure of public money in any part of the colony because he wanted the money for a railway to the Blackwood. He did not oppose the railway to the Murchison, nor the railway to Coolgardie; on the contrary he considered them of such urgent necessity that he had given his undivided support to them, because he thought they were of immense importance to the development of the mineral wealth of the country. At the same time he did think that, while we should do all we could to develop the gold-mining industry, we should at the same time endeavour to develop the agricultural portions of the colony. For these reasons he hoped members would agree with him in supporting the railway to the Blackwood, and that the hon. member for Beverley, seeing what very little effect his amendment would have, in the face of the statement made by the Premier as to the intentions of the Government, would withdraw it.

MR. ILLINGWORTH also hoped the amendment would be withdrawn, because they had an assurance now, that they had not before the hon. member gave notice of his amendment, that the Government would not proceed with these two railways at present. He thought that assurance accomplished everything that the hon. member for Beverley hoped to gain by this amendment, while at the same time it had this distinct advantage: this was a time of sudden changes, of sudden surprises, and startling developments, and it might be possible that within a year it might be absolutely necessary to construct this railway, but, if they passed this amendment, they would be bound to postpone it until after the 1st January, 1896.

MR. R. F. SHOLL pointed out that the resolution went further than that: it provided that, not only should the line not be undertaken, but that the money for it should not be raised until after the 1st January, 1896. All the Premier told them was that they would not expend the money for another year, except in making surveys; which was a very different matter. They had been told by His Honour the Speaker that he was becoming a progressive man in his old age, and that when he addressed his constituents he strongly advocated that four public works should be undertaken, one of which was this railway to Bridgetown. No doubt if the hon. gentleman had not advocated this railway when addressing his constituents, he would not have met with a very good reception; therefore it was no wonder he should have advocated it. He did not blame the hon. gentleman for doing so. No doubt they would all do the same, if they thought their constituents were wrapped up in any particular work. [THE PREMIER: Speak for yourself, about that.] He was perfectly certain that, so far as the Premier was concerned, he would do so, if there was any member in the House who would do it, whether it was in the interest of the colony or not. He had heard that the £80,000 put down for this railway would only carry it as far as the tinfields; he had even heard it would not carry it as far as the tinfields. He thought they ought to know exactly what this particular line was going to cost to take it to its destination, and not have

the Government coming down again for a supplementary vote. So far as this Blackwood railway itself was concerned, he would be prepared, after the assurance they had just received from the Premier, to vote for it, if they could strike out the other item—the Collie coalfield line—which, in his opinion, was a political job. At the same time, he would want some further information as to the route, and the capabilities of the country, and the probable traffic. As he said, on the second reading, he thought it was very desirable that all Loan Bills should be referred to a committee of both Houses of Parliament, to enable them to procure all necessary information with regard to all the public works proposed to be undertaken. It was absurd to ask the House to vote a million and a half upon estimates which had only been made up in the Colonial Treasurer's office, or at a meeting of the Cabinet.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. W. E. Marmion) asked why the hon. member did not apply that argument to the Murchison line, or the Coolgardie line, with regard to which there was not so much information before the House as there was with respect to this Bridgetown line, and the line to the Collie coalfield? Why did he not find fault in regard to those other works? He could tell him why: because those railways suited him, and because these other railways possibly did not suit him.

MR. RANDELL would be glad if they could be afforded some further information before they came to this item on the Schedule, information that would be useful to them in dealing with this Blackwood line,—as to the route, for one thing, the quality of the land, the ownership of the land, whether the line would go through many private blocks, and, if it did, to whom did these blocks belong; also how far this money would take the line, and how near to Bridgetown? Probably His Honour the Speaker would remember that, some years ago, he (Mr. Randell) expressed a very high opinion of this Blackwood country. From what he had read of it in the newspapers, and from what he had gathered from private individuals, he looked upon it as a country which gave promise of becoming (if he might use the term) the garden of Western Australia. He did not know

whether he was justified in that belief or not. At any rate, they knew it had a magnificent climate, a good rainfall, and, he believed, some very good land. He might say that what had fallen from the Premier that afternoon, with regard to the intentions of the Government as regards this line, had, in his opinion, entirely removed the necessity for this amendment of the hon. member for Beverley. They had the assurance of the Government now that the work would not be undertaken for the next twelve months, which he thought was rather better than the adoption of this motion. The motion somewhat bound them, by implication at any rate, to these two lines; and he was not prepared at the present moment to pledge himself to them. At the same time he admitted that the inhabitants of this district were entitled to share in the prosperity that had come to the colony from its goldfields, and also to their share of the expenditure of public money. The district was capable of producing the very products, both of the farm and of the dairy, which the colony was in want of, though it was whispered that the people of the district did not even supply the wants of their own tables in the way of butter, cheese, bacon, and other necessaries. He did not know how true this was. If it was true, it certainly was a stigma upon the character of the people of the district, which he trusted would be removed very shortly.

MR. HARPER said that after the words that had just fallen from the leader of the Opposition, he presumed there was nothing else for him to do but to withdraw his amendment. But he would make as good a retreat as he could, and claim that perhaps it was due to that amendment that they got the assurance from the Premier which they got that afternoon. He thought he might also congratulate himself upon his motion having been the occasion of affording the House the rare gratification of hearing His Honour the Speaker addressing the House.

MR. RICHARDSON would like to add that he was gratified they had accomplished one thing, and that was the postponement of the Collie coalfield line, until the information they had at present was supplemented by further information. He did not think this field was sufficiently

developed to warrant them in passing the special Act for the construction of this railway at this stage. There was also the possibility of our finding another coalfield in a more advantageous position, and, perhaps, more valuable. With regard to the route, too, it was desirable they should give that matter their careful attention. The Engineer-in-Chief suggested that they should adopt a route that would serve two purposes, but he (Mr. Richardson) was afraid that in adopting that route they would be leaving out the best of the agricultural land, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, entailing an extra haulage of the coal. The Engineer-in-Chief, in his report, said: "If there were no Collie coalfield railway to be considered, I should say it might probably be justifiable to adopt the Thomson's Brook route, in despite of its steeper grades and sharper curves, and greater cost." This difference in the cost was estimated at £18,000. If, for the sake of saving a few thousand pounds, they missed the best of the country for agricultural purposes he was afraid they would mar the usefulness of the Blackwood line in order to serve the Collie coalfield. He did not believe in sacrificing the certain advantages to be derived from the opening up of an agricultural district to the doubtful advantages of a problematical coalfield; and he hoped this question of route would receive the earnest consideration of the House when they came to deal with it, and that they would not repeat the mistakes they had made in the past in deciding upon the routes of some of their railways.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he should like to make an observation with reference to a remark that had been made implying that the Government had retreated from the position they had originally taken up with regard to this Collie coalfield line. He did not think he had ever led members to think that the Government had in any way changed its position with regard to that line. All he said was that it was not their intention to ask authority this session for a special Act, as the Government did not feel they had sufficient information at present to ask the House to pass that Act, defining the exact route which this railway should take. He should like to make this quite clear, because he did not wish it to go

abroad that the Government had in any way abandoned this part of their programme. He could not agree at all with the argument that this line should not be proceeded with because we might discover a better coalfield somewhere else. He could not realise such an argument as that. They knew there was coal here, but they did not know there was coal elsewhere; and what was the use of waiting until they might discover coal elsewhere when they had already got it here?

MR. HASSELL said he would be quite prepared to support the Government in this Bridgetown line, if they gave him an assurance that eventually it would be continued on to Albany.

THE PREMIER: I hope it will, and reach there some of these days.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 3 to 7 inclusive:

Put and passed.

MR. LEAKE moved that progress be now reported.

Question put, and a division called for, the numbers being—

Ayes	6
Noes	14

Majority against ... 8

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Illingworth	Mr. Burt
Mr. Leake	Mr. Cookworthy
Mr. Lefroy	Sir John Forrest
Mr. Richardson	Mr. A. Forrest
Mr. R. F. Sholl	Mr. Hassell
Mr. Randell (Teller).	Mr. Marnion
	Mr. Moran
	Mr. Pearce
	Mr. Piesse
	Mr. Simpson
	Mr. Solomon
	Mr. Venn
	Mr. Wood
	Mr. Harper (Teller).

Question thus negatived.

Schedule:

Item 1—"Railway from Mullewa to Murchison goldfields (exclusive of rolling stock), £409,000."

MR. RANDELL did not know that much exception was likely to be taken to this item. He believed the majority of members had expressed themselves in favour of it; but he was not sure if they had any information as to how far this £409,000 would take this railway, or as to by what route it was proposed to take it. He did not know the country himself, but he believed that very strong opinions had been expressed on both sides of the

question of the best route. He thought it would be acceptable to the committee if the Premier at this stage gave them some information on these points.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) said he would be glad to give all the information he possessed with regard to this railway. The exact route it would follow would, of course, be the subject of a special Act, but it was proposed to carry it from Mullewa to Cue, which was the centre of the Murchison goldfields, and he believed that the route it would follow would be: from Mullewa to the Yalgoo goldfields, which was about 80 miles; thence to Mt. Magnet, which was about 80 miles more; thence to the Island, which was some 30 odd miles; then from the Island to the Mainland and the Day Dawn, and from the Day Dawn to Cue. That would embrace all the goldfield centres South of Cue, and the whole distance would be about 215 miles. He was aware there were a great many people, and many friends of his own, who advocated a route more to the North, from Mullewa through the valley of the Greenough to Mt. Wittenoom, and then up the valley of the Sandford away to Cue. That was a very good route indeed from an engineering point of view, very level and easy to make, but it would avoid the gold centres altogether. It would miss Yalgoo, it would miss Mt. Magnet, the Island, and other important mining centres, and go straight to Cue. It would, however, be a better route for the pastoralists, and for travelling stock from the Northern parts of the colony. But if they looked at the map they would find it would not be very much out of the way (although a longer distance to travel by rail) for stock to go to Cue, or else join the railway at Mullewa. He had thought this matter over very carefully, and, having an intimate knowledge of the country, gained some years ago, and more recently, he had no hesitation in giving his opinion that the route they should adopt was that which he had indicated. With regard to the amount set down for this work, he believed the estimate, £409,000, was a liberal estimate. It was more than he would have put down for it, if he had had the framing of these figures; and, he might here say, although they had the statement of the hon. member for the Gascoyne that these amounts

were made up in the Treasury office, he could assure the hon. member they were the figures of the Engineer-in-Chief.

MR. R. F. SHOLL: Has he been over the country?

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) did not think the Engineer-in-Chief had been over the country himself, but he had had an opportunity of examining those who had been over the country, and these were his figures. He felt it would have been no use his giving to the House his own figures, because he knew that the first question that would be asked by the hon. member for the Gascoyne would be, "Whose estimates are these?" He was too wide-awake to allow himself to be caught by the hon. member like that. He believed this estimate would be found to be a very liberal one, and that they would be able to build this railway for less.

MR. R. F. SHOLL had not the slightest intention of opposing the line, but he thought that when building railways they should endeavour to accommodate as many industries as they possibly could. The Commissioner of Railways, when a deputation waited upon him about the excessive freight rates on the Yilgarn railway, attributed it to the fact that there was no back traffic. On this Murchison line they had an opportunity of securing back traffic in the shape of wool and fat stock, if the line went in a certain direction; and he thought the Government should try to accommodate as many of the industries of the colony as possible, and not one particular industry. He hoped that before the Government finally decided upon any particular route they would get further information, and endeavour to adopt a route that would serve both the mining and the pastoral industries. They were told that the figures were the Engineer-in-Chief's figures, and that they were not made up in the Treasury or at a Cabinet meeting. That was satisfactory, so far; but they were told that the Engineer-in-Chief had not been over the country, and had, therefore, no personal knowledge of the engineering difficulties (or otherwise) he might have to contend with. He believed with the Premier that the estimate was a liberal one, and that the Engineer-in-Chief had left a considerable margin. But, whatever the margin, they

would find there would be no balance left. No doubt the Engineer-in-Chief did his work well, but it took a lot of money to do that work.

MR. ILLINGWORTH thought the objections which had been raised by the hon. member for Gascoyne against the proposed route could be easily answered by anyone who knew the country to be traversed,—he was not so well acquainted with it himself as he should like to be. Take, for instance, the Magnet, which was one of the points intended to tap. There was a large pastoral district behind that point, which he hoped would some day supply a large amount of return traffic for this railway. If they took the other points where the line was to go, he thought they would find that nearly all the stations which now existed would be almost as well served by this goldfields route as by the route further North. He might say that one of his strongest reasons for desiring to see this railway built by private enterprise rather than by the Government had been that he was afraid that certain interests in that House would have driven this line farther North to serve the pastoralists, and that as a consequence the important gold mining centres of the Murchison would have been practically excluded from railway communication. He believed that if a private company built the line it would certainly have been taken by the route that would best serve the gold mining industry, and this was one of the main reasons why he had been in favour of the work being undertaken by private enterprise. Now, however, that they had this practical assurance from the Premier that it was the intention of the Government to take this line round by what he called the goldfields route, any possible objection he had to the line was removed. He had only one or two suggestions to make, and the first was this: that the Government would push this work on as fast as they possibly could. His next suggestion was that they would let the line in sections, instead of letting the whole contract to one contractor. [MR. A. FORREST: It amounts to the same thing.] The hon. member said it amounted to the same thing. He was afraid there was something in the hon. member's suggestion, and that it did not matter who tendered for the different

sections, practically the same people would get the contract. If the hon. member wished him to speak any plainer, he would do so. But that was not the point. A great many people were coming to the colony now, and a good many of them knew how to build railways; and he thought they might have tenders from different contractors for different sections of the line, so that they might all be constructed simultaneously, and the line completed in very much less time than if all the work were undertaken by one contractor. [Mr. MARMION: What about carrying the material over the different sections?] A great deal of work could be done before any material would require to be carried; and he presumed it would be easy to make some arrangement for that purpose, as was done elsewhere, unless contractors in Western Australia were more cantankerous than they were in other places. He thought, at any rate, it would be quite possible to have three distinct tenders for this work. He believed it would be done for far less money, and certainly in far less time than if the whole work were let to one contractor. In questions of this kind, however, he went very much on the principle that, if you couldn't get all you wanted, you should take what you could get; and, if they could not have separate tenders for different sections of this line, he would strongly urge that the line should be opened in sections as completed, so as to have as much as they could of this bad road covered as quickly as possible, and opened for traffic. He also thought some consideration should be given to another matter. There were some very ominous heaps, along portions of this country, built up by white ants. He had an idea at one time that the white ant would not attack jarrah, but he had had that idea dissipated. It was a question for the Government to consider whether, in view of this white ant difficulty, it would be wise to have jarrah sleepers on this line, or whether it would not be well to have steel sleepers? He was not sure about that, but he thought the matter was worthy of consideration. He did not wish to suggest that our own timber industry should be overlooked, but the cost of carriage would be considerable if all the sleepers on this line were to be jarrah sleepers. If there was

no doubt about the durability of these sleepers in that part of the colony, he would rather see them used; but if the Works Department were not quite satisfied as to there being no danger of jarrah sleepers being attacked by white ants, he thought it was worthy of consideration whether they should not, in their specifications, arrange for the use of steel sleepers instead of jarrah. He need hardly add that he cordially supported this item.

Mr. RICHARDSON said he had intended to have alluded to the same point as the previous speaker, about using jarrah sleepers for this line. He hoped that, before doing so, the Government would satisfy themselves that jarrah would stand. He knew that farther North it would not, but whether it would in these more southern latitudes was a question which the Government, he hoped, would ascertain before deciding what sleepers to use. They knew there were a great variety of white ants, but whether the ants in this Murchison country were those that attacked jarrah, he did not know. If they were, and jarrah sleepers were used, he could venture to prophesy a rather short life for those sleepers.

Mr. PLESSE said that, in discussing this question of sleepers, members seemed to think there was only one particular timber in the colony—jarrah. His own opinion was that the best timber had been lost sight of in building our railways, and that was the white gum timber that was growing along our Eastern railway. When the line was constructed from Clackline to Newcastle, Mr. Wright, the then Engineer-in-Chief, had a short section built of that timber, and it would be interesting to know how it stood the test. He had also seen some 3,000 or 4,000 white gum sleepers put down on the Great Southern railway. He thought the Government should ascertain which was the best timber to use on this Murchison line, and if it was considered that none of our timbers would stand, they should consider—although it might be a bad advertisement for our local timber—the advisability of using steel sleepers.

Mr. A. FORREST also hoped the Government would consider this question of sleepers. If they did so, he did not think they would be inclined to send the money out of the country for steel sleepers. It was well known that jarrah was

well adapted for the latitude where this railway would go, and he should be sorry to think that the Government were going to deprive the local timber mills of the contract to supply these sleepers. It might be thought that because he was the owner of a sawmill he was advocating the use of jarrah in his own interest, but his mill was a very small one, and only supplied the local trade; it had never gone in for these big contracts, because the timber was not there. As to using white gum, he thought the expense would be at least doubled, and he understood that jarrah would be more durable. This white gum only grew in a few localities, and not in large quantities like jarrah. The hon. member for Nannine said it would be better, and cheaper, and quicker to let the contract for this line in sections. He could hardly agree with the hon. member's contention on that point. Suppose they let the first section, starting from the Mullewa end, to one contractor, and the next section to another contractor, the latter would not be able to do much work until the contractor for the first section had completed his part of the line. He did not think the work was likely to be done quicker. He was sure the Yilgarn line would not have been completed earlier if it had been let in sections to different contractors. It was a very difficult thing to carry out this kind of work in sections, without one contractor interfering with the other. He was sure that if alternative tenders were called—one for the whole line to Cue and the other in sections—the tender for the whole line would be found cheaper for the country, and better, too, if they wanted the line completed without delay.

Mr. SIMPSON hoped the Ministry would take into consideration the remarks of the hon. member for Nannine with regard to the time to be granted for the construction of this line. It was extremely important, in the interests of the gold-fields, that as short a time should be granted as was consistent with the resources of the country and the safe construction of the line. As to the difficulty of constructing it in sections, he did not see why the first section should not be opened for traffic in twelve months, and in the meantime the earthworks on the second section might be going on. [THE PREMIER: Would it be cheaper?] He was

not contending that it would be cheaper, because he had no exact information on that point. The main consideration was the saving of time, even if it should cost the country a little more.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS (Hon. H. W. Venn) said the question to be considered was what was best and cheapest for the country. He agreed with the suggestion that the line should be opened in sections, but certainly not contracted for in sections. His experience as to breaking up a contract into small sections was that it increased the cost in every possible way, and also gave a great deal more trouble. Whatever was done, he hoped the House would not bring pressure to bear upon the Government to get them to deviate from the terms of the contract entered into, as was the case with the Yilgarn line. He thought it would be an advantage to the country to have the line opened in sections, but there should be no deviation from the contract. They had seen what had taken place on the Yilgarn line, through pressure having been brought upon the Government to depart from the terms of the original contract. He was satisfied himself that if the original agreement had been adhered to, they would have had the line completed almost as soon, and in the hands of the Government; though there was one advantage the colony had gained in being able, on an unfinished line, to open up communication with Yilgarn some months earlier.

Mr. LEAKE regretted to think it was not possible to successfully oppose this item. He had already given his reasons why he should vote against it; and, if there were any utility in dividing the House on the point, he would not hesitate to do so. He thought now, as he thought on the second reading of the Bill, it would be better for the country to save this £400,000 or £500,000 by allowing this line to be built by private enterprise. That question, however, had been practically decided, and it was useless for him to argue it any further. But there were one or two matters which, he thought, justified some remarks, particularly with regard to the method adopted by the Government in bringing this enormous Loan Bill before the House—the largest the country had yet seen. The hon. member for the Gascoyne had

touched upon this matter, and he supported that hon. member in his views. The intimation given by the Government to the country that this Loan Bill would be introduced was not made until about the end of May, a few weeks before the general election. Surely this loan must have been in the minds of Ministers long before that time, but they kept the information up their sleeves, in order to prevent a thorough discussion of their loan policy. Members did not know until a late hour what railways were to be included in the Bill, and it was a positive fact that until a few minutes ago members did not actually know what route this line to the Murchison was going to take. Was that a proper way to treat a subject of this kind? If it was, he could only say he disagreed with it entirely; and he could not congratulate the Premier or the Commissioner of Railways upon their foresight or political tact in this particular instance. It was wrong that the country should be kept in ignorance for such a long time about an important measure of this kind. It was only from the assurance gained by having so large and pliable a majority on their side, that the Ministry were able to treat everybody else's views with contempt. The House had obtained no proper estimates of the cost of this work even to this moment, and they did not know what the real financial position of the colony was. They ought to have had the Estimates of revenue and expenditure for the current year before them before committing themselves to the expenditure of at least a million and a half of money. These Estimates ought to be laid before the House early in the session, and not at the far end of the session, when members were tired and exhausted with their labours. In the event of any further loan being proposed, he trusted that ample opportunity would be given not only to that House but to the country at large to discuss the proposals of the Government. Here everything in the shape of discussion was buried, through the high-handed action of a Ministry conscious of having at its back a majority that would follow them anywhere. He protested as strongly as he could against this high-handed way of treating the House. They should have had this information long before the month of May; and the information

which had only been vouchsafed to them that afternoon might at any rate have been given to them on the second reading of the Bill. With regard to the suggestion that the contract for this line should be let in sections, he could not support it, because he could not see that anything but trouble was likely to arise from it. When they had two or three separate contractors employed on the same undertaking, diverse and adverse interests were at work; and in these long lines it was far better to leave them in the hands of one contractor, whom you could control better than you could control three or four contractors, all with conflicting interests. The main object to be kept in view was to have these goldfields lines completed as expeditiously as possible. He should have preferred a smaller sum and a light pioneer railway. If ever that class of railway was justified it was in the case of these goldfields lines. Yet here they had this matter rushed through the House, when they had a select committee actually sitting upon this very question of light railways. Nobody at present could say that Cue was going to be the permanent mining centre of the Murchison. [MR. ILLINGWORTH: Yes, it is.] No doubt the hon. member would say so, or anything else. But nobody could say that, five years hence, Cue would be the main centre of these goldfields. It might be Yalgoo, it might be Mt. Magnet, or some other centre. If they had these light lines as pioneer lines, they might afterwards be shifted and made use of in other parts of the country where they would be useful. But no. They must commit themselves to these costly lines. Once more he entered his protest as strongly as he could against this reckless borrowing.

MR. MORAN thought the hon. member for Albany was persistently inconsistent. The other day he was strongly in favour of this Murchison line being handed over at once to a private company; to-day he objected to it because the Government had not given him sufficient information about the route. The country which this line would traverse was to a certain extent of uniform conformity as regards its adaptability for railway construction. The engineering difficulties were as nothing compared with those on

the Bridgetown line, as to which there was not a murmur from the hon. member. The hon. member should at least try to be consistent in his attacks upon the Government, and when he accused other people of all sorts of political misdemeanours he should be sure that his own character as a politician was free from suspicion, and that there was no ground for believing that, when he was advocating particular views in that House, he was not there as a special pleader for a special object. As to the question of letting this line in sections, he might say that his earliest associations were connected with railway undertakings, his father having been associated with railway construction in Queensland; and he might state, as the result of his own knowledge and experience, that the system of letting railway contracts in sections had been found impracticable in that colony. He believed it would be the same here. The only conditions that were favourable to that system of construction were the existence of different ports of shipment, at either end of the line, so that the material could be landed at either end, and used from either end, without having to carry it over the line. There was one suggestion, however, he should like to offer, more particularly with reference to the Coolgardie line, and that was, that, if practicable, after the surveys were made, the construction of earth-works and surface formation should be let at schedule rates.

MR. LEFRÖY said he had been in accord with the hon. member for the Swan when he expressed his desire to see a loan proposed for a smaller amount than a million and a half; but, as it appeared to be the opinion of the majority that the loan should not be for less, it would be useless for him to attempt to have it cut down, merely for the sake of trying to cut off a little from this item and a little from that item. At the same time, he was still of opinion that there were many people in the colony who would have been glad if this Bill had only been for a million, instead of this larger sum. With regard to this Murchison railway, no doubt it was a very important line, and should be proceeded with as early as possible. He hoped it would not only tend to develop the mining industry, but also be of great assistance to the pastoralists

in that part of the colony. There was no doubt they had had a great deal to contend with in the past, and it would be a boon to them, with the present price of wool, to be able to get it to market at a little less cost.

MR. LEAKE would like to say one or two words in self-defence after what had fallen from the hon. member for Coolgardie. During the early days of the session he had been the recipient of many kind and encouraging words from that hon. member, and, while thanking him for his past patronage, he did not know that he would care very much for a continuance of his favours. The hon. member was good enough to refer to him the other day as the eighth wonder of the world,—a compliment which he highly appreciated. He might, perhaps, return the compliment by assuring the hon. member that he regarded him as the living wonder of that House at any rate. He was also accused of being a special pleader; he could only say that if his services in that capacity would be of use to the hon. member at any time, he would be only too glad to exert that special advocacy in the hon. member's own interests. [MR. MORAN: A fee, of course.] The hon. member further accused him of inconsistency with regard to the Bridgetown railway. He thought he could satisfy the hon. member, when he came to discuss and to vote on that item, that he was not inconsistent. He did not think it was for the hon. member to accuse anyone of inconsistency, when it was remembered that when conducting his election campaign the hon. member was a direct opponent of the Government; whereas, since he had been in the House, the hon. member, having evidently swallowed some Ministerial bait, had become as firm a supporter of the Government as anyone in the House. If one were to estimate the value of the hon. member's criticisms by the magnitude of his views of his own importance, one might be inclined to attach some weight to them. But what could they think of such an argument as this: the hon. member told them he ought to know something about railways, because his father had been connected with railway construction in Queensland! There might be something in it, but it reminded him of the story of the man who said he ought to

know something about law because his father was a policeman.

MR. MORAN said a little chaff now and then could do no harm, but when a serious accusation was made against him, without foundation, he felt bound to deny it. The hon. member for Albany stated that during his (Mr. Moran's) election campaign he had been a bitter opponent of the Government. He wished it to be distinctly known that such a statement was incorrect, and he challenged the hon. member, by a reference to any of his addresses to the electors, to prove his statement. On every occasion that he spoke of the present Government he said he would be most happy and pleased to support them, if he could, in all they brought forward; and he said so still. At the same time he would never surrender his right to indulge in independent criticism of all their actions.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said the hon. member for Nannine told them that his objection to the Government undertaking this railway, instead of a private company, had been removed, because they proposed to take it by the goldfields route. He did not think the hon. member knew much about the country, except what he gained during his election campaign. The pastoralists had a right to be considered as well as the miners, in this matter. He agreed with those who suggested that we should build these pioneer lines as cheaply as possible, and he thought they should defer passing this item until they had the report of the select committee on light railways. With regard to the sleepers, he had not the slightest doubt in his own mind that steel sleepers would be cheaper in the long run than any local timber, and instead of a broad gauge railway we might have a light pioneer railway.

MR. A. FORREST moved that the question be now put.

Put and passed.

Item agreed to.

MR. A. FORREST moved that progress be reported, and leave asked to sit again.

Question put and passed.

Progress reported.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) moved that the committee sit again, for the further consideration of the Bill, on the following day.

MR. R. F. SHOLL thought they should not proceed further with the Bill until the Premier had delivered his Budget speech, which he believed would be on the following Monday. They would then be better able to judge of the financial position of the colony. He moved, as an amendment, that the committee sit again on Monday, 17th September.

MR. WOOD protested against the waste of time that had taken place that afternoon. It was most aggravating to business men to see the time of the House wasted as it had been. The conduct of some members in this respect was more worthy of a lot of schoolboys than responsible legislators.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir J. Forrest) was surprised at the action of the hon. member for Gascoyne in moving that the committee do not sit again until Monday. The hon. member knew very well that some of those who were prepared to support the Government in passing the Bill were going away before Monday. The hon. member generally prided himself on being fair; did he call it fair to seek to take advantage of the absence of members, in order to try and carry his own point? Surely members had had long enough to consider this Bill; it had been before the House almost since the session opened. The hon. member seemed determined to have his own way, but he (the Premier) thought the majority had a right to rule in the House, and ought not to be dictated to by one or two members who wished to dictate to the whole body of members. He did not think the House was going to stand it. The hon. member's only object was to endeavour to coerce the majority, and to take advantage of the absence of some of the Government supporters. It was unworthy of him.

MR. R. F. SHOLL said he asked the Government, when the order of the day was called, not to go on with the Bill that afternoon, but wait until the following evening, when there would be a large number of members present. [THE PREMIER: I did not object at all.] The hon. gentleman had now let the cat out of the bag, as to why he wanted to hurry on the Bill. It appeared that some of the Government supporters were going away on Friday. He was not aware of that, or had not thought of it, when he moved the adjournment of the debate until Monday.

But he could now see the object of the Premier in trying to rush this important measure through the House. As for the remarks of the hon. member for West Perth (Mr. Wood), he was not aware that the hon. member's opinions had much weight with the House. He had no particular wish to press his amendment; his only object was to have the Bill discussed in a fuller House.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Ordered—That the committee sit again on the following day.

SMALL DEBTS ORDINANCE AMENDMENT BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clauses 1 to 7, inclusive:

Put and passed.

Clause 8—Either party may appeal:

MR. JAMES moved that the following words be added to the end of the clause:—"At the trial or hearing of any action or matter in which there is a right of appeal, the magistrate, at the request of either party before judgment is delivered, shall make a note of any question of law raised at such trial or hearing and of the facts in evidence in relation thereto, and shall state in writing his decision on such questions and facts, and his decision of the action or matter."

"Any person who has given notice of appeal shall, upon payment of a sum not exceeding 3d. per folio of 72 words, be entitled to a copy of the notes of evidence taken by the magistrate, and of the note of any such questions and facts, and of his decision thereon."

Amendment put and passed.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 9—Liberty to proceed where personal service has not been effected:

MR. JAMES moved that the words "or other process of a local court" be inserted after the word "summons," in the first line.

Amendment put and passed.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 10 to 19, inclusive:

Put and passed.

Clause 20—Proceedings where third party has a lien:

MR. JAMES moved that the words "at any time before payment" be inserted after the word "garnishee," in the second line.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) said this section had been in force for a great many years, and he rather thought they had better leave it as it stood, and follow in the steps of their fathers.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause agreed to.

Clauses 21 to 27, inclusive:

Put and passed.

New clause:

MR. JAMES, in moving that the following new clause be added to the Bill, said that the same power which he proposed to grant in an action of tort already existed in actions of contract, and he thought the same course should be open in other actions. He moved the insertion of the clause, as follows:—"Any person against whom an action of tort within the jurisdiction of a Local Court is brought in the Supreme Court may make an affidavit that the plaintiff has no visible means of paying the costs of the defendant should a verdict be not found for the plaintiff; and thereupon a Judge of the Supreme Court may make an order that, unless the plaintiff shall, within a time to be therein mentioned, give full security for the defendant's costs to the satisfaction of the Registrar of the Supreme Court, or satisfy a Judge of the Supreme Court that he has a cause of action fit to be prosecuted in the Supreme Court, all proceedings in the action shall be stayed, and in the event of the plaintiff being unable or unwilling to give such security, or failing to satisfy a Judge as aforesaid, that the action be remitted for trial before a Local Court to be named in the order, and thereupon the plaintiff shall lodge the original writ and pleadings, if any, which have been delivered and the order with the Clerk of such Local Court, who shall appoint a day for the trial of the action, notice whereof shall be sent by post or otherwise by the clerk to both parties or their solicitors, and the action and all proceedings therein shall be tried and taken in such Court as if the action had originally been commenced therein; and the costs of the parties in respect of the proceedings subsequent to the order of the Judge of the Supreme Court shall be allowed according to the scale of costs for the time being in use

"in the Local Courts, and the cost of the order and all proceedings previously thereto shall be allowed according to the scale of costs for the time being in use in the Supreme Court. In the event of any action being so remitted before the pleadings have been closed, the Magistrate of the Local Court may, on application, order particulars, or further particulars, of the claim or defence to be delivered."

Clause put and passed.

New clause :

MR. JAMES moved that the following new clause be added to the Bill:—"Any statement under Section 38 of the said Ordinance may be signed before the Clerk of any Local Court."

Clause put and passed.

New clause :

MR. JAMES moved that the following new clause be added to the Bill:—"In any action or matter it shall be lawful for the magistrate to summon to his assistance, in such manner as may be prescribed by Rules under this Act or the said Ordinance, one or more persons of skill and experience in the matter to which the action or matter relates, who may be willing to sit with the magistrate and act as assessors; and their remuneration for so sitting shall be at such rate as prescribed, and shall be costs in the action or matter unless otherwise ordered by the magistrate, but where any person is proposed to be summoned as an assessor, objection to him, either personally or in respect of his qualification, may be taken by either party in the prescribed manner." He might say that the same clause existed in the English Act, and also in the Acts of the sister colonies. It did not make it compulsory to have these assessors, but it might be necessary now and then to call in the assistance of persons of skill and experience to assist the magistrate in cases of technical disputes, where there was much conflict of evidence. He had heard magistrates themselves express a desire that they could have such assistance.

MR. PLESSE thought it would be a very useful addition to the Bill this clause, so that magistrates when dealing with difficult technical cases might be able to obtain the assistance of competent assessors.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (HON. S. BURT) very strongly objected to the clause. In the first place, it would double the expense of litigation; and what was wanted with these Small Debts Courts was to make them as inexpensive as possible. They wanted to make this remedy swift and cheap. Taken all through, it could not be said that these courts had not worked very well; but, once you started with jurymen or anything in the shape of assessors, you doubled the expense at once. Ten to one these assessors would disagree, and the magistrate would, after all, have to decide between them. He had heard of no serious dissatisfaction with these courts as at present constituted, nor any cry for reforming them, so far as the magistrates were concerned. This Bill had already reformed the procedure, and he did not think they wanted to introduce this jury system into these courts unless there was a public outcry for it, which was not the case at present. It would only be at Fremantle, possibly in some shipping case, that these assessors would be of any assistance; and, so far as he was aware, no necessity had been shown for the introduction of this new system into the Local Courts here.

MR. LEAKE did not think the clause was necessary. If there was any trouble or difficulty in dealing with a technical point the magistrate as a rule reserved his decision, and, in the meantime, consulted some authority on the subject. If there was a conflict of evidence among the witnesses the probability was that there would be a conflict of opinion on the part of the assessors, and the magistrate would have to settle the point himself. On the other hand, if the magistrate accepted the views of one assessor and did not accept the views of the other, the other would probably go outside and say the magistrate was an ass.

MR. JAMES said this was no attempt at introducing the jury system into these local courts, but simply providing technical assistance for a magistrate should he require it. There was no compulsion about it. He believed himself that it would be welcomed by the majority of magistrates.

Clause put and negatived.

New clause:

MR. JAMES moved that the following new clause be added to the Bill:—

"An interpleader summons, issued under Section sixty-five of the said Ordinance, shall be returnable within five days of the service thereof, and if no Court be then sitting the same shall be adjudicated upon by the Magistrate sitting in Chambers."

Question put and passed.

New clause:

MR. JAMES moved that the following new clause be added to the Bill:—

"A magistrate proposing to sue any person dwelling or carrying on business in any district of the Local Court of which he is the Judge may bring his action in the Court of any adjoining district of which he is not the Judge; and any person proposing to sue a Judge may bring his action in any Court of a district adjoining the district of the Local Court of which the defendant is Judge."

Question put and passed.

New clause:

MR. JAMES moved that the following new clause be added to the Bill:—

"Section ninety-nine of the said Ordinance is hereby amended by striking out, in second line, the words 'neither the value of the premises nor the rent payable in respect thereof shall have exceeded fifty pounds,' and inserting in lieu thereof the words 'the rent payable in respect thereof shall not exceed.'"

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) moved a verbal amendment, which was agreed to.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

New clause:

MR. JAMES moved that the following new clause be added to the Bill:—

"Two or more persons claiming or being liable as partners may sue or be sued in the name of their respective firms, if any, and the opposite party may in such case apply for the names of the persons who are partners in any such firm, and the Court may order an affidavit to be filed stating the names and addresses of such partners. Provided that no execution shall be issued against any persons not served with the plaint or summons. Any persons carrying on business in the name of a firm

"apparently consisting of more than one person may be sued in the name of such firm."

Question put and passed.

New clause:

MR. JAMES moved that the following new clause be added to the Bill:—

"Where an action shall have been commenced, and a person, whether a party to such action or not, shall be resident more than 50 miles from the court-house where the hearing of the action is appointed to be held; or be about to go and remain beyond such distance until after the hearing, the party desiring to use the evidence of himself or of such person at the hearing may give notice of such desire to the Clerk of the Court in which it is intended that the examination hereinafter mentioned shall take place, and which Court is hereafter referred to as 'The Court for Examination.' Such notice shall specify the name or names of the person or persons intended to be examined."

MR. JAMES said this and the next following sections of which he had given notice made provision for Local Court cases where witnesses resided more than fifty miles from the nearest court-house. Under this Bill a more extensive jurisdiction was given to these Courts than had been given hitherto, and it would save a great deal of expense if witnesses residing at a distance could give evidence in the way he proposed. Under the present Bill you could sue a man where part of the liability was incurred, or part of the cause of action arose; which you could not do under the existing law. The action must be brought where the liability was incurred. If a man at Katanning ordered goods from a storekeeper in Perth, he could only be sued where the cause of action arose. But under this Bill he could be sued at either place, and it was very necessary that some provision should be made whereby witnesses could be examined without bringing them down long distances, in these small cases, when, perhaps, the whole claim did not involve more than £5. Rather than bring an action, or rather than defend an action, involving the bringing down of witnesses a distance of over 50 miles, people would sooner lose their money, and be deprived of their legal remedy. He thought the

clause, which was very simple, would add very much to the usefulness of the Bill.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. S. Burt) did not like the clause at all. Although the hon. member said it was very simple, it would be observed from the notice paper that it took four additional clauses to deal with it. There might, perhaps, be cases arise, some time or the other, where it might be necessary or desirable to have a witness examined in this way, before a magistrate's clerk, as the hon. member proposed; but he did not think that many litigants would care to trust their cases to any evidence taken in that way. It required some consideration before they accepted these new clauses. He moved that progress be reported, and leave given to sit again.

Question put and passed.

Progress reported.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 12th September, 1894.

Railway Trucks: inadequacy of supply of—Wharfage Dues at Owen's Anchorage: collection of—Cemetery at Fremantle—Camels: licensing of and payment of duty on—Duty on Goods Imported Overland—Gold: export duty on—Land Corporation of Western Australia: disposal of lands by Excess Bill, 1893: third reading—Stirling Street (Fremantle) Closing Bill: third reading—Patents, Designs, and Trade Marks Acts Amendment Bill: third reading—Employers' Liability Bill: third reading—Constitution Act Amendment Bill: first reading—Adjournment.

THE PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir G. Shenton) took the chair at 4:30 o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

RAILWAY TRUCKS—INADEQUACY OF.

THE HON. F. T. CROWDER asked:
1. If the Government were aware that several industries dependent on the Government railways for haulage have suffered heavy losses, besides having been

put to great inconvenience, through the inability of the Railway Department to keep them supplied with trucks? 2. (a.) Had the Government any trucks ordered (b.) that will arrive here within a month. (c.) or the makings of any such trucks that can be put together here within that period? 3. When will be the earliest date that the Government may look forward to receiving trucks from England? 4. How many trucks, or the makings of same, have been ordered from England and elsewhere? 5. Were the Government satisfied that they were now in possession of sufficient trucks and rolling stock to meet demands, without the public suffering inconvenience and loss?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. H. Parker) replied:—1. No. 2. (a.) Yes. They have ironwork ordered for 275 trucks, to arrive here as early as the manufacturers can deliver them. (b.) None are expected to arrive within a month; (c.) nor are the makings of any trucks likely to be here within that period. 3. About the middle of December next. 4. Two hundred and seventy-five. 5. Not enough for any length of time. Stock will continually require adding to as long as traffic keeps increasing. Number of trucks in hand at end of May, 1891—287. Number of trucks in hand at end of August, 1894—1,082. The Government are satisfied that, with the trucks ordered, they will be able to meet the requirements of the traffic without the public suffering inconvenience or loss. Orders for further trucks will be sent as the traffic warrants.

WHARFAGE DUES AT OWEN'S ANCHORAGE—COLLECTION OF.

THE HON. T. H. MARSHALL asked the Colonial Secretary whether any wharfage was collected for cattle, &c., driven over the jetty at Owen's Anchorage?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. S. H. Parker) replied:—None has been collected up to the present time, but arrangements are being made with a view to collecting wharfage.

CEMETERY FOR FREMANTLE.

THE HON. T. H. MARSHALL asked the Colonial Secretary if it was the