

do not quite approve of the schedule will move their amendments in committee. There cannot, I feel sure, be much discussion on a small Bill of this description. It received a great deal of consideration in the other House, and I propose to show very briefly what are its main provisions. In the town of Bunbury it is proposed to close a street for the purpose of a recreation reserve. In the town of Pinjarrah a street is to be closed to include land in a school site. In North Fremantle the object of the closure is for the erection of a station. In Coolgardie it is for park lands. At Bardoc it is to allow for the extension of the recreation ground. At Chidlow's Well and at Bridgetown it is for purposes in connection with the Railway Department. I need not say any more till hon. members raise some question.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 9:15 p.m. till the next day.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 15th December, 1897.

Water site near Coolgardie, plans and reports—Question: Lease of Government coal area, machinery, &c., at the Collie—Motion: Proposed Railway, Esperance to Norseman; division (negative)—Motion: Water boring and conservation, Eastern agricultural districts—Motion: *Credit foncier* system re agriculture—Motion: Stock Diseases Act Administration; division on adjournment of debate—Municipal Institutions Act Amendment Bill: third reading—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

WATER SITE NEAR COOLGARDIE, PLANS AND REPORTS.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest): On the 8th November, the

member for Central Murchison (Mr. Illingworth) moved, "That there be laid upon the table of the House the plans and reports of a water site near Coolgardie, prepared by Messrs. Noel, Brazier, Grant, and Atkinson, in 1894." That motion was put and passed. I have made inquiries, and I now have to state that the plans and reports referred to are not, so far as can be ascertained, in existence. There is no knowledge of the preparation of such plans, and diligent inquiries have been made in all directions with the same result.

QUESTION—LEASE OF GOVERNMENT COAL AREA, MACHINERY, &c., AT THE COLLIE.

HON. H. W. VENN, in accordance with notice, asked the Premier: Whether the Government would be prepared to let on lease or on tribute the coal area from which the thousand tons of coal were taken, together with the plant and machinery erected for the Government by Mr. Pendleton.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest) replied:—The Government consider it inadvisable to do so at present, as they desire to keep this area in their own possession for a time, in case the lessees of coal leases fail to raise sufficient coal for the demand, in which case the Government will be able to arrange to raise coal from the Government reserve, which contains 320 acres. As there is a large area of coal lands, no injury to the industry is likely to result from following this proposed course; but if such is likely, the matter will be reconsidered.

MOTION—PROPOSED RAILWAY, ESPERANCE TO NORSEMAN.

MR. CONOLLY (Dundas), in accordance with notice, moved—

That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable that, in consequence of the satisfactory proof lately given of the intrinsic value and permanence of the Dundas Goldfield, some measure should be taken at an early date for the construction of a railway from Esperance to cope with the exceptional difficulties in traffic, and the supply of goods and machinery to the said goldfield.

He said: In bringing under the notice of the House this motion for the construction of a line for connecting the Dundas fields with the port of Esperance, I am aware that this is a subject on which there has

been considerable diversity of opinion, and which has been adversely commented upon by a good many people who have given it deep and serious consideration. I am aware that some of the best and most far-seeing men in this colony have considered this subject from different standpoints, and have, in many cases, come to different conclusions. But I would ask hon. members to look at this subject from a broad and national standpoint, and to put on one side that tendency—I may call it a dangerous tendency—to centralisation which, I think, lies at the root of much of the opposition which is sometimes displayed with reference to this project. This tendency to centralisation has already proved a source of great danger to other young countries, as, for instance, to our sister colonies; and it is, to an even greater extent, threatening the industrial and commercial prosperity of Western Australia. I am well aware many hon. members are not favourably disposed to the construction of this line at the present moment. But there is not an hon. member who would willingly bring misfortune to a lot of people, or attempt to divert commerce from its natural course, and retard the development of a great and very promising goldfield. I shall endeavour to put the motion before the House in a fair, straightforward manner, trusting hon. members to give the motion fair and unprejudiced consideration. I hope the question will be looked at from a national standpoint, with the desire, which I am sure every hon. member feels, to do justice to the country and all parties concerned. The construction of this railway would have for its first and immediate object the best and cheapest means of developing the Dundas goldfield. Those who have seen the goldfield have, without exception, formed very excellent opinions, not only of its resources, but of its extent and possibilities. Indeed, I may say that the unanimously high opinion of this field is very marked by everybody competent to judge, who has had an opportunity of visiting Dundas. Still I think it will be necessary to explain why goldfields which have been so favourably spoken of have, until this last year, failed to show those large gold returns which have characterised other rising gold-mining centres of Western Australia. The

early gold returns of all young fields are invariably based on the alluvial output. The alluvial gold, which has characterised the early discoveries of almost every big mining centre in Western Australia, has invariably been the first source of wealth; and the great value of alluvial gold in the early days of a field is well known to every hon. member of any experience. This alluvial gold is the best assistance and the greatest benefit to the early settlers in their task of development. It is the source from which the prospector receives, as it were, assistance in the more arduous work of prospecting and developing the permanent reefs of the district. But the alluvial gold is more than that: it is the greatest advertisement which a young field can have. It attracts a large population, and is a source of production at the very first. At the Norseman, however, those early gold returns were not forthcoming, because there was no alluvial gold there. Yet this field maintains a larger population than many other young fields which have returned more gold. To show to hon. members the immense importance of alluvial gold as compared with reef gold, I will quote a few returns from some of our oldest fields. Pilbarra, for instance, last year out of a gold output of 11,810oz. returned 5,922oz. from alluvial sources, and 5,461oz. from reef sources. Out of the very magnificent output of gold, as the result of eight years' work on that field, of no less than 111,279oz., only 28,198oz. were derived from reefs, the balance of 82,082oz. coming from alluvial sources. Again, we can turn to Yilgarn, where out of a total output of gold for eight years' work amounting to 181,064oz., alluvial gold alone represented 131,064oz., while only 50,715oz. came from reefs. That will show to hon. members the immense disadvantages which the Norseman field has had to contend with. The immense alluvial resources which assisted other goldfields to show those high gold returns did not exist on the Norseman, and consequently prospectors there were thrown back on the more arduous task of developing the reefs. That is the reason why, until this year, the Norseman has been unable to show that gold output which other young fields can boast of. The alluvial gold was not there, and, at the time, machinery was not available to extract the gold from the reefs. It must not,

therefore, be supposed that, because until this last year the Dundas field has not yielded high returns, the field has not been worked, or that the gold resources are limited. On the contrary, the field has been worked under most difficult and arduous circumstances, and possibly any other field under the same conditions would never have retained the population which the Norseman has succeeded in retaining. Later returns have fully justified the very high opinions formed of this country. Even with the few batteries which up to the present moment are operating on the Norseman, very excellent results have been obtained; and any doubts which may have been entertained as to the permanency and value of the field have long since been put on one side by those who have seen and watched its progress. I would like to quote some returns of the gold which, during the last year, has been yielded by a few of the Norseman gold mines. A single mine, during last year crushed 351 tons for no less than 816 ounces. The Norseman Gold Mine, which is situated on the fissure lode, in the development of which a very large amount of foreign capital has been employed, crushed 612 tons for 648 ounces. These are very excellent returns, and considerably in excess of what was expected from that lode. It is a very big reef, which has been tested for no less than 500ft. The St. Agnes mine crushed 30 tons for 166oz.; the Break o' Day mine crushed 183 tons for 446oz.; and the Albemarle, in a small trial crushing of 25 tons, obtained no less than 100oz. That trial crushing was supplemented with another of 50 tons, which yielded the magnificent output of 421oz.

MR. MORGANS: Why do they not keep on with those sort of crushings?

MR. CONOLLY: So they would, but it is only lately they have had the machinery on the field. I think I can show that the mines at Norseman could crush large amounts almost as well as they could small amounts. For a crushing of 183 tons the result was no less than 2,174oz. For a further crushing of 757 tons the result was 1,145oz. These are from only a few of the Norseman mines, and merely represent crushings from those few mines which have

been sufficiently fortunate to be able to erect batteries.

MR. MORGANS: What is the total monthly output?

MR. CONOLLY: The total monthly output has reached over 3,000 ounces. That has not been turned out the whole year round, because the machinery was not there during the whole of the period. The amount of gold which Norseman has returned has been steadily increasing month after month, in accordance with the amount of machinery operating on the fields; and one crushing after another has only confirmed the good opinion of this field. The future of Norseman field is based not only on its bare gold return. It is based also on the immense amount of development which has been carried on at that field during the last three years. People who live on these goldfields have had to go through much hardship and difficulty, and the population have been retained there with practically no reward for their labours. It is only within the last year they have been enabled to obtain any gold from the reef resources. The gold output, as I said before, has increased in proportion to the machinery erected there. While there were only 10-head of stampers erected on the field, the output was very small, amounting to only 4,369 ounces. But as development has increased, that output has been augmented by no less than 400 per cent. this year, and at the expiration of twelve months it is confidently expected—in fact the gold is almost returned already—that 20,000 ounces will have been realised. When taking into consideration the permanent sources from which these gold returns are obtained, it will be understood that the reputation of the Norseman mines is by no means fleeting. It is an extensive field with permanent resources, and the returns for this year will be augmented in proportion to the machinery in operation. It is a permanent field, and all that is required to develop it is a railway.

MR. OATS: How many head of stamps are you working now?

MR. CONOLLY: About 120. In making this request we are not altogether without precedent. When the people of Dundas goldfield note the manner in which other young goldfields have been treated by the Government, they cannot fail to be assured that the request which

they are now making will receive favourable consideration. When we consider the manner in which the Government have assisted such goldfields as the Yilgarn, we cannot but feel that the Dundas field has been in some measure neglected up to the present time.

THE PREMIER: No, no.

MR. CONOLLY: I will prove it to you, sir. During the early days of the Yilgarn goldfield it was a bad time for the people of that district to ask for a railway.

THE PREMIER: They never asked for it. It was the only goldfield we had then.

MR. CONOLLY: And yet we have been asking for one for two years and have never got it, and our field is a great deal better than theirs. At the time that railway was granted, the gold returns of the Yilgarn field amounted to 12,833oz., and its population, as far as Government statistics show, consisted of 300 people; whereas the Dundas field at the present moment has returned 20,000oz., and has a population of over 1,400 people. I think it is a fair contention that, if a goldfield like the Yilgarn is justified in having a railway, surely a big goldfield like Dundas is not unreasonable in making a similar request. The request is even more potent at the present time than it otherwise would be, on account of a very heavy road over which the Norseman field has had to obtain its supplies up to this moment. This road is probably one of the heaviest in the colony; it is heavy sand, similar in many respects to the road leading from Geraldton to Mullewa on which the sand obstructs the traffic, and in a similar degree the sand plain extending from the sea coast to Norseman renders the road next to impassable. Although the road is almost impracticable for teams, it would yet be a very cheap road over which to construct a railway. It would probably be one of the cheapest railways in the colony. The country between the sea coast and the goldfields being largely sand-plain, it would require no costly cuttings; nor are there any difficult gradients on the road. It would be little more than a matter of laying sleepers and rails; but so bad is the road at the present moment that the inhabitants of Norseman are almost entirely dependent on camels for their means of transit; and, as everyone will

readily see, that is not an easy and practical way of carrying large and cumbersome machinery. The trade on this road is very considerable. The tradespeople of Esperance have already opened up branches of their firms at Norseman, and the cost of transit for the last two years of eight mining companies on that field amounted to no less than £100,000, while, adding the cost of transit to smaller firms on the fields and others at Esperance, this amount would be increased to £150,000 for that period. This is a very considerable figure, and this amount alone would have almost paid for the construction of this line; and, when we take into consideration the amount of revenue which this goldfield has yielded to the country, which in customs duties alone totals no less than £63,000, hon. members will see that had this amount of money been expended in the construction of a line, the cost of the work would have been more than covered by the revenue from the district, and the field would have been in an advanced and progressive condition. But at present the cost of the erection of batteries at Norseman is almost prohibitive. The cost of transit is greater than the cost of the machinery itself. It would cost, under present conditions, about £2,000 for carriage alone from Esperance to Norseman for a small ten-head battery. I have seen an eight-ton boiler loaded in Esperance which, before it has reached the Dundas field, cost the mining company £200 for freight. Considering that this goldfield depends entirely on machinery for its development, it is impossible that in the absence of railway facilities it should continue to progress in a satisfactory and prosperous manner. I would like to say a few words in reference to Esperance. I have heard many reports with regard to its harbour, and it seems to me that some people have almost made a point of depreciating the shipping resources of this port for the purpose of prejudicing the public mind. For instance, when this proposal was last brought forward, it was, I believe, stated that we had already expended nearly a million of money in forming a splendid harbour at Fremantle, and that we were asked to spend another million down at Esperance to do the same thing. Moreover, at a still later period, since I have been in this House, I have heard it

stated—I believe by the Premier himself—that it would cost at least £50,000 to make a harbour at Esperance. But there is no question of making a harbour at Esperance, because nature itself has made a harbour there.

THE PREMIER : A roadstead.

MR. CONOLLY : The right hon. gentleman says a roadstead. I cannot believe that he thinks so himself, because he has seen that harbour, and he must know that there is no roadstead about it. It is absolutely enclosed.

THE PREMIER : It is a good place, but not like Albany.

MR. CONOLLY : I think the Director of Public Works has also been there, and I do not believe he will say it is a roadstead. The criticisms on the port of Esperance have assumed various forms. I have heard that it is an open roadstead; I have heard that there is no water there, and that it is a dangerous harbour; I have heard that it is not a harbour at all. All these statements have been made public. In reply, I would tell this House that the port of Esperance is almost entirely enclosed, save for two entrances—the east entrance and the west. These have recently been surveyed, with the result that it was proved that there is at each entrance a depth of water of from 18 to 32 fathoms.

THE PREMIER : Only one entrance has been surveyed—the one from the south-west.

MR. CONOLLY : I shall accept your statement.

THE PREMIER : It was a very good entrance, however.

MR. CONOLLY : In any case, I think the general opinion formed upon the survey of that harbour was that it could be entered with absolute safety by any vessel trading on the coast; and that shipping could lie there completely sheltered from the weather, and in perfect security. A few days ago the Premier stated that it would take £50,000 to form this harbour; but I have no hesitation in saying that it could be completely equipped for £25,000. Very little more is required in addition to what has already been done, than what I asked for a short time ago, namely, a lighthouse. The coast is unsurveyed, and there is no beacon to guide vessels. Whatever the harbour at Esperance may be, it

is well-known that the coast is a stormy and rugged one, and that this is the only port between South Australia and Albany. I think there is a lingering idea in the minds of people that it would cost a great deal of money to open up this port, whereas in reality it would require very little. The harbour has been almost completed by nature. Before leaving this question, I should like to say a few words as to the route which a railway to the Dundas field should take, as some people are in favour of a line from Coolgardie. For myself, I look upon it from a broad standpoint, and say that, while the Dundas field must have a railway of some sort, if the House is in favour of constructing a line from Coolgardie, by all means let it be done, and I can assure hon. members that the people of the district will be satisfied with it. But they will never be satisfied with bringing their goods from a harbour 450 miles away, when they have a port a hundred miles distant.

THE PREMIER : It is more than 100 miles distant.

MR. CONOLLY : Not by direct survey. It was surveyed at 120 miles; but that was not a direct survey.

MR. A. FORREST : What about Menzies, which also wants a railway?

MR. CONOLLY : I have abstained, as far as I can, from drawing invidious comparisons between the Dundas and other young goldfields, for I do not think it fair to do so. With reference to Lawler's, I have no doubt that field will open up, and that, with a railway, it would become a very permanent and valuable district to this colony; but I am quite prepared to let the Dundas field fight its own battle on the merits, and I think it quite capable of doing so. Though I should not oppose the construction of a line from Coolgardie, still this, in my opinion, would be doing a great injury to the people of Esperance, whose town has been called into existence by the presence of the Dundas field, and who have spent time, money, and labour in building up the trade of the port. I cannot see that it would be to our advantage to ignore these people, who have come with their wives and families from the eastern colonies and made their homes in this country, and to bring them to absolute ruination, for that is what it would mean. It would mean the divert-

ing of the trade from its natural course, and giving it to another district; and it would mean that the supplies of the Dundas field—which, like those of other mining districts, come from the eastern colonies—would have to be carried past Esperance, which is within a hundred miles of the Dundas, landed at Fremantle, brought through Perth to Coolgardie, and down to Dundas, instead of being landed at Esperance and sent right up to their destination, only a hundred miles away. I would remind hon. members that such a suggestion for the diversion of trade stands unparalleled in the history of the globe. I do not think there is a country in the world—there certainly is not a colony in Australia—with a port such as Esperance, within a hundred miles of a leading centre of industry, which would compel that centre to carry its goods a distance of 1,100 miles instead of 100.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: How do you make that out?

MR. CONOLLY: I make it out in this way: it would be 600 miles further by sea.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: Goods cost no more to take them to either port.

MR. CONOLLY: But I would point out that, in these commercial days, time is money; and does the hon. gentleman mean that it is nothing to a person coming to this colony as to whether he travels 600 miles further or whether he can reduce the journey by 600 miles? But, taking the railway journey only, here is a journey of 450 miles as against 100 miles; and is not that difference a sufficient reason for preferring the shorter journey? The Minister of Railways may say he will give these people differential railway rates.

THE COMMISSIONER OF RAILWAYS: There are differential rates existing already on the railways.

MR. CONOLLY: But even those differential rates will have to be still further differentiated, if you are to compensate people for all that difference in distance; and, according to the present rates, a direct railway would be able to carry cheaper to the Dundas goldfield than the railway can carry to Coolgardie now, and a great deal cheaper. I do not think it will be necessary for me to enlarge further on the difference of the

distance. Every hon. member, and indeed every man who thinks, must see the absolute anomaly which would be created by such a state of things. It simply remains for me to prove that the Dundas goldfield must get a railway, if this field is to be developed on a large scale; and if those persons who have expended years of labour and a deal of money in the development of that country are ever to be rewarded, and if those great goldfields are ever to be opened for the benefit of this colony, this must be done by the construction of a railway; because a reefing field can never be equipped with the necessary machinery, if the transit of that machinery is to be by teams. Such a thing has never been done, and this goldfield is not going to be the exception to the rule. I think I can with safety leave it to the good judgment of this House as to which section of the railway should be built, whether from Esperance or from Coolgardie, to the Dundas goldfield. There has been another contention, that by the construction of a line connecting the Dundas field with Esperance, the port of Esperance would be made a port for the Eastern colonies trading with our goldfields—in other words, that the Eastern colonies would get the benefit of our goldfields trade. In support of that contention, the case of Broken Hill and Port Adelaide have been quoted; but I would point out to hon. members that the positions are in no degree analogous. In the first place, the distance from Port Adelaide to Broken Hill was, in round numbers, about 300 miles as compared with 600 miles from Sydney. That is a case in which the distance was about double; but in the case I have placed before this House, the difference is more than four-fold. There is a bigger question; for when New South Wales sanctioned the construction of a railway from Broken Hill to South Australia, the Parliament of New South Wales practically handed over the trade of that great silverfield to the port of another colony. The people of Broken Hill, by having their trading connection transferred to another colony, were thus paying rates, taxes, revenue and customs which would go to swell the revenue of South Australia; and that is an important difference which lies between the two cases.

THE PREMIER: You said "customs;" but they were all goods going into bond.

MR. CONOLLY: Certainly, we may concede that, which is a big item; but undoubtedly the trade of Broken Hill went to swell the revenue of South Australia indirectly, and went to build up that colony instead of benefiting New South Wales. But even in the face of that, the New South Wales Parliament ratified the construction of that railway. Comparing that with the present case, we have here both the goldfield and the port within the same colony; and the people who are living there are paying rates, taxes, and contributing to the revenue of the colony, and also to the development of its resources. They are people who have come from the eastern colonies and settled on the Dundas goldfield, or at Esperance, making their homes here. Furthermore, what is the ratio of trade between this colony and other parts of Australia, as compared with the trade of this colony with England and other parts of the world? Our statistics will prove that the trade done between this colony and other parts of Australia is almost double the trade which this colony carries on with Great Britain and all the rest of the world. Another argument used in this connection relates to the construction of a railway connecting the Broken Hill line with Port Pirie, as against the interests of Adelaide as a port. The Port Pirie line made the distance by water 70 miles shorter to Broken Hill, and it was contended in South Australia at the time that if that line were constructed it would greatly injure Adelaide; but, notwithstanding that argument, the good sense of the South Australian Parliament ratified the construction of a railway to Port Pirie, as being in the best interests of the trade and industry of South Australia, and the result has been that Adelaide is progressing, and its trade is absolutely untouched as a consequence of connecting Broken Hill with Port Pirie. I hope hon. members will give this question fair and impartial consideration; and I feel confident the people of the Dundas district will hail with great joy any assurance from the Premier as to speedy assistance being given in this matter. I would impress on hon. members the absolute necessity for the construction of this line,

because, until it is constructed, that goldfield can never be developed, and the hopes and the welfare of those people will be seriously injured. I appeal again to hon. members to give this matter fair and reasonable consideration; and if I have appeared a little warm in bringing it forward, I should like them to realise that I know this district, and am convinced that until some active step is taken with reference to this question, so long as that goldfield is left without cheap transit, so long will the people there be starved off it, and so long will this colony be prevented from receiving the benefit which that goldfield would confer on the rest of the colony by its adequate development. In appealing to hon. members to give this matter fair consideration, I am not saying it in any spirit of exaggeration, but on this matter depends the welfare and happiness of every home in the Dundas district, and at Esperance also. Unless that railway is built and something is done to assist that district, so long these people cannot prosper, and that goldfield cannot be opened up.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest): I am sure, if anything would influence hon. members to agree to this motion, it would be the earnest and temperate manner in which it is brought forward by the member for Dundas. We all sympathise with the hon. member in his exertions on behalf of the district he represents; and we all feel he is only doing his duty, and that if we were similarly circumstanced, we would feel it our duty to advocate, probably as strongly although not perhaps so eloquently, the claims of our district to the consideration of hon. members. It goes without saying that every place in the colony requires increased and better means of transit, if it is possible to be obtained. There is not an agricultural centre in the colony, and certainly there is not a goldfield centre, that does not desire a railway, if it have not one already; but whether that railway when made would pay is a question that does not always enter into the consideration of those persons who are anxious to obtain it. We know from our everyday experience, and members of the Government know particularly from the petitions we receive from persons asking for hundreds of thousands of pounds to

be expended, how many are the claims; and we know that these claims are made without any word whatever from these persons to show whether the railway they advocate will pay or not when constructed, or whether it is justifiable. The hon. member, in his very eloquent address, has not touched on that aspect of the question. He has not said a word as to how much this railway will cost, or what is likely to be the revenue obtainable from it. He has not told us in any way whether it will pay if it be constructed. I am disappointed somewhat in that part of the hon. member's speech, for he has had opportunity of forming an opinion, and has a knowledge of his district, so that he should be in a position to lay before us an estimate of the amount of traffic at the present time, and the probable amount which may be depended upon if a railway were constructed. Although I am not going to say the traffic at present is to be the standard or the basis of the traffic of the future; still if there is a present traffic, and we know there is, it will be as well to place figures before us so that we may have an opportunity of seeing what the traffic has been during the last two or three years, and what it is likely to be in the immediate future. The hon. member might have told us what the whole output of gold has been up to the present time from that goldfield, and what it is likely to be so far as he is able to judge. All these things have been altogether omitted from his remarks. He has told us it is the life of that community to have good means of transit; but we all know it is desirable to have a railway to carry our goods, whether we live in one part of the colony or another. This proposed railway to Esperance Bay is no new matter. I do not think the case has ever been placed before this House so eloquently or in terms which would command approbation and support to the same extent; but it has been before the country and this House previously. Indeed I remember that even before Norseman had exported one ounce of gold, the claims of a railway from Esperance to our eastern goldfields were urged by some people then living at Coolgardie. When we were building our first railway to the eastern goldfields, before it had reached Coolgardie, and when we were using all our endeavours and

practically mortgaging everything we had in the colony to build that railway and push it on quickly, I remember that by the time it had reached Woolgangie, I was visiting Coolgardie in 1894, and at a public meeting held in Coolgardie a resolution was carried, urging with strong feeling, and not of too good a kind, that the Government should build a railway to Esperance Bay right away; and some people then on the Coolgardie goldfields were not content to have a railway connecting them with the coast at Fremantle, notwithstanding all its advantages and settled surroundings—they were not content with what we were then doing with so much exertion, but they wished to have a railway to Esperance Bay—to a place then unknown, and almost unsettled, because it was said a line from Esperance to Coolgardie would be 100 miles shorter than the railway we were then making to connect them with the coast at Fremantle. I pointed out to the people at Coolgardie that I did not like the spirit in which we were being treated, that it seemed to me they were not treating us well when we were trying to open up that country at great trouble and some risk. Thus it happened that before we had got the railway as far as Coolgardie, and when we were pushing it on as fast as possible, there was this agitation to build a railway for connecting Coolgardie with Esperance Bay, the only reason for it being that the line would be rather shorter. I said then that when people travelled by railway between Perth and Albany, leaving Perth in the afternoon and arriving at Albany next morning, hardly one in a hundred of those travellers were aware that their journey by rail was 100 miles longer than it would be if a straight line could be taken. The old coach road between Perth and Albany was about 252 miles long, and the railway route was 353 miles, so that there were 100 miles further to travel by railway between the two points; and yet how few people who do travel over that railway are conscious of the difference! Some people at Coolgardie were then using that argument about the distance as if it would be seriously felt, and were trying to make us believe that Esperance was the proper outlet for the Coolgardie goldfields, and that they did not want to have anything to do with the old,

fossilised port of the colony on the Perth and Fremantle side. I hope those ideas have passed away, or are passing away, and we certainly scarcely hear an echo of them now; but I mention this matter to show that this question of a railway to Esperance Bay has been before the country some years, and we know it has also been before this House on one occasion. We are not asked in this motion to deal with the railway question at present, but only to deal with the question of giving facilities of transit to the Norseman goldfield. The hon. member has touched on one point upon which I do not intend to say much. In speaking of Esperance possibly becoming the port of the Coolgardie goldfields, I may say it is no use for us to blind ourselves to the fact that there are political considerations surrounding this matter, and that there are people in this colony who do take into consideration the question as to whether Esperance Bay is to be the port of the eastern goldfields, or whether Fremantle is to be the port for those fields. It is no use trying to blink this question. The people in this part of the colony desire that Fremantle, on which we have expended so much money and are still expending money, shall be the chief port of the colony. The hon. member for Dundas did not go so far as to advocate that Esperance should be the chief port. Had he done so, I do not think he would have had much chance of success. The hon. member has been more moderate and reasonable, and all that he has asked for are better means of transit to the Norseman goldfield from the port of Esperance. I do not admit for a minute that his contentions are altogether accurate in regard to the Norseman languishing because of 100 miles of cartage. There are many places in the colony which have not turned out a few thousand ounces but £1,000,000 worth of gold, and which have hundreds of miles of carting to do. Before Coolgardie had the railway it turned out £1,000,000 worth of gold. [MR. CONOLLY: Alluvial?] I do not know that it was alluvial. Then the Murchison, before it had a railway, turned out £1,000,000 worth of gold, although it had 250 miles of cartage to contend with. When the railway to the Murchison was opened, placards were stuck about the streets to the effect that the

district had exported £1,000,000 worth of gold—a proud boast for the district, and for everyone who took part in the function of that day. It does not follow that because a goldfield has 100 miles of cartage to do, its progress is going to be absolutely retarded.

MR. A. FORREST: What about Menzies?

THE PREMIER: Yes; what about Menzies? The people of Menzies had 100 miles of carting to do from Coolgardie, and turned out a great deal more gold than the Norseman field has done. I have not the figures before me, but I should say that from Menzies about £300,000 worth of gold was turned out. Then take Lawlers, which has to contend with 300 miles of carting. Then there is the Peak Hill field, which is, I expect, 150 or 200 miles from Cue.

MR. KENNY: It is 180 miles.

THE PREMIER: That distance has not prevented an English company from investing capital in the development of the field. The people at Peak Hill have not even got a telegraph line yet, but I hope they soon will. Then we have the Pilbarra goldfield, which, according to last returns up to the end of June, has turned out nearly £500,000 worth of gold. The Kimberley goldfield has turned out a good deal more gold than the Norseman—about £90,000 worth up to the end of June last. From Yilgarn about £750,000 worth of gold has been exported, although we know that some of that gold came from Coolgardie. The hon. member has said that Yilgarn in its infancy was exploited by a railway; but if a railway was given to that field it was perfectly justified. I have told the hon. member for Dundas that his motion is inopportune at the present time, and that I cannot support it. I give him credit for the action he has taken, and will say that, if I were in his place, I would do the same as he has done. But, looking at all the circumstances of the case, a railway from Esperance to Norseman is not justified at the present time. In any case, as the hon. member knows, there are no funds available for the work. I have never expressed myself as opposed to giving better means of transit to this goldfield: in fact I have told the hon. member that at the very first opportunity I intend to visit both Esperance and Norseman, with

a view of gaining information for myself, in order that I may be able to lay the facts before the House. Up to October 31st—that is for 10 months of this year—the total amount of gold exported from the Dundas goldfield from the beginning was only £66,823 worth. Up to the same date Pilbarra had exported £459,195 worth, and Pilbarra has no railway. Kimberley, which has no railway, has in the same period exported £90,536 worth of gold. Yilgarn in the year 1896—not counting this year, for which the figures are not to hand—produced more gold than the total produced by the Dundas field altogether. The amount of gold produced by the Yilgarn field, including Southern Cross, was £75,041 worth. This was the field which was spoken of by the hon. member almost with derision. The hon. member, who has certainly not made out his case, spoke about doing “justice” to the Norseman goldfield. Well, “justice” is a very nice word, but how can the Government undertake to build a railway for people who produce only £66,000 worth of gold, while they are not prepared to do the same for people who produce £459,000 worth of gold, and others who produce £90,000 worth? The hon. member has the advantage of advocating the claims of a portion of the colony where the climate is temperate. People more willingly go there, either to work mines or to reside: they would rather go to Norseman or to Esperance than to the tropical districts in the North. If a proposal for a railway had been made by the hon. member for Pilbarra, he certainly would have been able to make out a better case—on the merits of the gold production, at any rate—than has the hon. member for Dundas. The latter member said that the part of the colony whose claims he is now advocating has been neglected. I do not think that is so. I will not for a moment say that the Government always contribute as much as they receive from every district. We know that is not possible. Some districts produce more and others produce less, and some districts have a larger expenditure in proportion to what they contribute to the revenue than have other districts. But, as I said the other night, I believe that about £100,000 has been spent at Norseman and at Esperance Bay.

MR. CONOLLY: You cannot put that on paper.

THE PREMIER: I can. I have the figures before me, and I am inside the mark when I say that £100,000 has been expended on works at Norseman and Esperance Bay during the last three or four years. I told the hon. gentleman himself, and also a deputation from Esperance Bay, that if he persisted in his motion, there was no other course open to me but to oppose it. At the same time I told him I had promised to visit that part of the country to see the developments going on; and of course it goes without any words from me that, if it were possible to give greater facilities of transit in order to encourage production and an expenditure of capital there, it would be a very pleasant duty to go as far as possible in the direction he desires. But the hon. member did not take my advice to withdraw his motion. I do not say that I gave him that advice very strongly, but, at the same time, I do not think for a moment he will be able to carry the motion; and, even if he does carry it, there is no money available for the work. However, as I take it, the hon. member only desires an expression of opinion in favour of the work.

MR. SIMPSON: Leave it to private enterprise.

THE PREMIER: That is not the motion of the hon. member. I appreciate the way in which the hon. member for Dundas has dealt with the subject. He has done his duty to his constituents and put the matter before the House in a reasonable way. At the same time he has not made out a case why the Norseman goldfield—which is in its infancy, and is not isolated as other places are—should have this railway communication. Norseman is only 100 miles from Coolgardie and 120 from Esperance. It is in a temperate part of the country and has a fairly good water supply; at any rate, the water supply is better than that on the fields to northward. I cannot see myself that Norseman labours under such great disadvantages as the hon. member desires to make out. So far as Esperance Bay is concerned, unless the people there fear the competition of Coolgardie, I do not think the hon. member is giving good reasons for his present attitude. Esperance Bay is favoured by the difference of

600 miles of sea and 300 miles of railway as compared with Coolgardie, and surely ought to be able to hold its own against the northern mining town. Esperance Bay may be left out of the question, unless it fears the competition of Coolgardie. I do not suppose that Esperance Bay would be any more flourishing if it had railway communication with the Norseman field. At present it lives on the team traffic to that goldfield, and gets it all. Traffic by teams is certainly no more disadvantageous than traffic by railway to any community. Towns as a rule do not benefit by such railway communication, and of that plenty of instances can be gathered in the colony. It would be no great advantage to the people at Esperance to have goods landed on the jetty and immediately carried off to Coolgardie by train. From the Norseman point of view, I can understand that cheaper means of transit would do a great deal of good; but Norseman is not singular in this respect, and indeed has not been so badly treated as some other places. The Norseman has been a sort of favoured child of the Government—can I say a spoilt child? At any rate the Government have been somewhat lavish, knowing there was a new community there trying to settle that part of the country. On all occasions the Government have gone out of their way to try and assist those people to a far larger degree than the people in any other place in the colony. I do not believe there is any town on the goldfields that has been so liberally treated as Esperance Bay, and I am certain there is no goldfield in Western Australia producing so little gold that has had so much public money expended on it as the Norseman. These are facts which there is no gainsaying. Pilbarra, which has produced £500,000 worth of gold, has not had £100,000 expended on it. A few thousand pounds is all that Pilbarra has had, and the hon. member for that district might fairly ask, "Why is this?" They have not been so urgent in their demands; they have been more reasonable, and more easily satisfied. Still, for all that, they have been doing a great work there; they have turned out gold to the value of half-a-million sterling; and I only hope that, if the Government have not done what we ought to have done for them in the past, we will be able to re-

trieve that in the future. I believe in helping those who have done good work for the colony; and I say that the people of Esperance Bay, except in regard to this one matter of a railway, which they have set their hearts on, have been more liberally treated, in comparison with the gold they have exported, than the people in any other part of the colony. I hope the hon. member will not think I have said anything that he does not like. It is not pleasant to say anything against an hon. member who, I know, is most generously inclined, and whom I would much rather please than displease. I know he has a difficult position to fill in this House. At the same time, when a member desires to open the money-bags of the Government, we have to say what we think; and whether what I have said be taken as friendly to the Norseman and Dundas goldfields or not, I cannot help it. I have to do my duty, and I do it to the best of my ability. After I have visited those fields, and when we meet again in six months' time, I have no doubt I shall be in a better position to speak definitely on the subject; but I think the hon. member would have acted wisely if, after he had made his speech, he had withdrawn his motion. I hope he will do it now. Six months hence we will be able to speak more confidently on the subject, but at the present time I can only judge from the facts before me and from the public records; and, judging of this motion by those facts and those records, I regret to state that, if the hon. member goes to a division, I shall not be able to support the motion.

MR. CONOLLY (in reply): Referring to certain statements of the Premier, I would like to say that he has certainly shown by his figures that other fields have given excellent gold returns; but he has not told the House that more than two-thirds of those returns consisted of alluvial gold. He did not tell the House that every ounce turned out by the Norseman field has been the result of reefing; for the people there, however willing they may be to work, cannot put alluvial gold into the ground. In regard to the statement that there is no money available for this work, I have no hesitation in saying—and nobody knows it better than the Premier—that if the Government will only sanction the construction of this line,

there will be plenty of people willing to build it. We do not ask the Government to spend money on it, but merely to allow others to do what they will not do themselves. If the line does not pay, then the Government will not have the responsibility on their shoulders. Let those who are willing to build it take the responsibility. It has been stated on various occasions, from the Government benches, that the Ministry are not favourably disposed towards private enterprise. The Premier knows there are people who, at the present moment, would willingly build that line, and build it without any objectionable conditions such as land-grants and other concessions.

THE PREMIER: I do not believe it.

MR. CONOLLY: Give them a chance, sir.

THE PREMIER: There has never been a fair offer yet.

MR. CONOLLY: You have had offers verbally and in writing; and all you have said is, "I do not believe in them."

THE PREMIER: They were from men of straw.

MR. CONOLLY: If private people can make such agreements with others as will guard their interests, surely the Government, who have the best legal advice procurable in the country, can make arrangements of the same kind. The Premier has stated that I did not give the gold returns of the Norseman. It appears to me that I gave the gold returns very fully. I pointed out that, for this year, the gold already there amounts to 20,000oz.; and that quantity, together with the returns for former years, gives a total of 25,000oz. This 25,000oz. is absolutely reef gold; for, during the years that other young fields have been turning out alluvial, the Norseman has had to be content with reefing. It was on alluvial gold that Coolgardie depended during the first two or three years; and the same may be said of Kalgoorlie and Kurnalpi. But because the Norseman field could not bring up its returns to the same level for the first few years, people said it was no good. The difference, however, between reef and alluvial gold is that the first is a permanent source of supply, while the other is not. The Premier knows that the alluvial digging at Kalgoorlie does not

maintain 200 people at the present time; and that the gold yields of that town and of Coolgardie are obtained from their reefs. The alluvial gold which has swelled the returns quoted by the Premier a few minutes ago has been worked out. The member for Pilbarra (Mr. Kingsmill) will bear me out when I say that even his field based its immense returns on alluvial gold, and when that was worked out—

MR. KINGSMILL: They are getting it still.

MR. CONOLLY: I am glad to hear it. Everybody knows the nature of alluvial gold in this country. The permanence of the mining industry in Western Australia depends on the reefs; and I do not think the Premier, in quoting these figures and omitting that fact, has done to the Norseman that justice he might have done to it. Although I am well aware that the people whom I represent expect and desire to see a division on this question, I think that, before this is settled, it would be advisable that the Premier should see the district, and decide for himself what he is prepared to do in this matter. All things considered, I think it would be best, in the interests of those whom I represent, and in the interest of the field, to withdraw this motion.

MR. MORGANS (Coolgardie): I think my friend the member for Dundas (Mr. Conolly) has taken a wise course in withdrawing this motion. It is very evident that the motion which he has so ably brought before us has not the sympathy of the House, and I cannot see the object of going to a division in view of what I see around me at the present moment. But I should like to say, in regard to the remarks of the Premier, that this is a question which has always occupied a very prominent position in the minds of the inhabitants of the Coolgardie district. Their strongest argument in favour of the Esperance Bay railway is the fact that it would bring them, so to speak, a hundred miles nearer to the coast. During the election campaign which I had the honour of fighting in Coolgardie, one of the questions which was always asked at meetings was: Are you in favour of the construction of the Esperance railway? And whatever views we may hold upon the subject in this House, there is no doubt whatever

that the question is a popular one upon those goldfields.

MR. A. FORREST: That depends on where it starts from, I suppose.

MR. MORGANS: I am quite prepared to admit that. But as far as I can understand it, the point is this: Is the time ripe for the construction of a railway from Esperance to Norseman? That is really the practical question. The Premier, in his very able reply, which certainly was a telling reply, although there were some weak points in the arguments he used, admitted that it was not altogether an economic question, but that political considerations were mixed up with it. I am glad he was frank enough to admit that; for such is undoubtedly the case. There are certain vested interests in Fremantle, Perth, and other places, which I think it is the duty of every member of this House to take into consideration before coming to a decision on a question of this kind. I think the time is not far distant, however, when the Government will construct this railway. I do not say it will be done in the next year or two, but within a reasonable time. I think the town of Fremantle has nothing to fear from the competition of a second port, and that, when the traffic with the goldfields increases to such an extent as to justify the building of a second line of railway, the Government will be forced to construct it by the pressure of public opinion, not only on the fields but on the coast. I would not for one moment advocate the construction of this railway if it would interfere with the capital invested by the Government and by private individuals in the port of Fremantle; but I believe that, if it were built, say, three or four years hence, it would have no bad effect whatever on the trade of that port. From what we see of the increase of traffic at the present time, it will soon be necessary to duplicate the line of railway from Fremantle to the fields; but when that happy period arrives, it will be a much better policy for the Government to construct the line from Esperance to the goldfields than to double the present line, which would then be relieved of much of that pressure, the evil consequences of which have for the present been removed by the very able management of the Commissioner of Railways.

MR. GREGORY (North Coolgardie): Assuming that the motion is to be withdrawn, I will say a few words on the question of railway communication between the goldfields and the coast. The Premier has told us one objection is that there is no money available for this railway. I do not know that the passing of this motion would cause inconvenience in that respect, because a long time must necessarily elapse before the railway surveys could be completed, and at least twelve months would pass before any money could be required for the construction of this line. It has also been said that the mover has not proved that the Dundas district has shown sufficient development to warrant such an outlay of money at the present time. On that point I may say that, during my recent visit to that side of the colony, I was surprised at the immense amount of auriferous country there is in the Dundas goldfield, and the progress made with the limited means at command appeared to me to be truly wonderful. One good sign in favour of this railway is that the operations on those goldfields are rapidly increasing, and during the last four or five months the gold output has increased very much.

MR. A. FORREST: And in other parts of the colony too.

MR. GREGORY: Yes, no doubt; but this is going to be a very large field.

MR. A. FORREST: No larger than Lawlers.

MR. GREGORY: The ores at Norseman are generally of a low-grade character, and a large tonnage is needed to produce a considerable output of gold. The number of people working in the district, when I was there some six months ago, appeared to be quite a thousand in and around Norseman; and the expenditure they have to incur in getting not only machinery, but ordinary supplies to the mines and the townships, is excessively costly, and must keep those districts back. I do not like comparing any of these fields, for I consider that I am able to make out a big claim on behalf of the district north of Menzies, where there are many large fields growing up; but as to the Norseman field, it has been said that less enterprise is shown there than in some other fields.

That, I think, is accounted for by the want of railway facilities; and if a railway is to be constructed on that side, it should certainly start from Esperance Bay, where there is a splendid port, and it would be useless to argue otherwise, for I consider it is one of the finest ports in Western Australia, and that Esperance ranks next to Albany as a port. It is true the Government have expended a lot of money in that part of the country, and some of the expenditure is of a kind I have not seen elsewhere; but I fancy this expenditure has been made with the object of giving to the people on that side everything they desire except a railway. As to the fear of competition, if Esperance becomes a great port, I can quite sympathise with the people living in Perth and the older settled districts on this side of the colony, because they naturally consider that a railway starting from Esperance Bay would not stop at Norseman, but would be carried on to Coolgardie or Kalgoorlie, and would thus do a great deal of injury to Perth and Fremantle in the way of trade with the goldfields. I do not think, however, that any great loss would accrue if that railway were constructed; for it is not to be expected that the line would be continued to Coolgardie or Kalgoorlie for some years to come, and we are getting such a splendid port now at Fremantle that we should be able to land goods from England and other parts of the world so cheaply as to secure all that trade to Fremantle, instead of importing so much by way of other Australian ports. Over a million pounds worth of English goods were landed at Fremantle from the eastern colonies last year, but that cannot continue to be the course of trade now that Fremantle is becoming so good a harbour, and Fremantle will be able to attract the whole of that English and Continental trade which has hitherto been done through one or other of the Australian colonies.

Question put, and decided on the voices against the motion. A division being demanded, it was taken with the following result:—

Ayes...	...	...	10
Noes...	...	...	16
			--
Majority against...	...	...	6

AYES.
Mr. Gregory
Mr. Illingworth
Mr. Kingsmill
Mr. Leake
Mr. Morgans
Mr. Mason
Mr. Simpson
Mr. Wallace
Mr. Wilson
Mr. Conolly (Teller).

NOES.
Mr. Hurr
Mr. Ewing
Sir John Forrest
Mr. A. Forrest
Mr. George
Mr. Hall
Mr. Holmes
Mr. Lefroy
Mr. Locke
Mr. Founfether
Mr. Phillips
Mr. Piesso
Mr. Solomon
Mr. Thross
Mr. Wood
Mr. Hubble (Teller).

Motion thus negatived.

At 6.30 p.m. the SPEAKER left the Chair.

At 7.30 p.m. the SPEAKER resumed the Chair.

MOTION—WATER BORING AND CONSERVATION IN EASTERN AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS.

Mr. QUINLAN (Toodyay), in accordance with notice, moved:—

That in the opinion of this House artesian boring and conservation of water are essential to settlement of the land, and that the Government should commence operations in the Eastern agricultural districts as soon as possible.

He said: In rising to move this motion, I feel confident it will be the unanimous feeling of hon. members that the Government should include in their financial policy such measures as are indicated in this motion. Our country, unfortunately, is not blessed by nature the same as other portions of Australia are, in respect to rivers and other means of obtaining a plentiful water supply for agricultural and other purposes; and my reason for wordng the motion, so that such action shall be commenced in the eastern agricultural districts, is for the purpose of assisting those parts of the country where settlement is taking place to some extent, and where supplies of water would be of the greatest value to new settlements. Further, I may say that my object in asking that this work shall commence there is, not that it shall stop there when commenced, but that these operations shall begin there and extend all over the colony, so far as the Government have the means and the plant available for such purposes. With regard to artesian boring, I do not venture an opinion, but leave that to the scientific men whom the Government

will doubtless employ for the purpose. Suffice it to say that any member of this House—and I presume all have more or less travelled over portions of this colony—will at once admit there are considerable areas in the interior of the colony, and especially on some of the lands which are now being disposed of by the Government, which may be turned to profitable account by some method of water supply. We have seen in the other colonies the advantages of irrigation, and it does seem to me a great pity, to use the mildest term, that the water which falls throughout various portions of the colony, and especially the uncertain rainfall in the Eastern agricultural districts, should be left to flow away to the sea as if of no practical value. I know this subject is not a new one to the Government; but I am not aware that any formal step has been taken in the direction of this motion. Knowing the good sense of the House, my object is to further emphasise, if necessary so to do, the opinion which will be generally shared by members that the Government should, at the earliest opportunity, and as soon as means are available, direct their attention to boring for and conservation of water in the agricultural portions of the country. The want of sufficient water is the great drawback to settlement. I admit that railways do afford facilities for settlement, and are doubtless very valuable in helping it forward; but, without water, it is impossible to maintain a permanent population on the soil; and, although in many instances the existence of an artesian supply of water has been abundantly proved, especially in and around Perth, a great deal more might be done in that direction to supply the needs of agricultural districts, especially for the promotion and increase of settlement. I ask hon. members to be good enough to accept the terms of the motion; and if any hon. member desires that some concession be granted in a particular part of the country, I hope he will avail himself of the opportunity which this motion provides for placing his ideas before the House, with a view to providing water supplies not only for agricultural but for pastoral purposes, in various districts of the colony. I desire, therefore, to commend to hon. members the favourable consideration of this motion.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. G. Throssell): The member for Toodyay will be glad to learn that the object of the motion has been anticipated. The conservation of water, to the extent of providing a main supply on new agricultural areas until the settlements are in a position to make provision for themselves, has been the recognised policy of the department for some time. Instructions are given to surveyors to report upon all likely places for water, and to recommend the resumption of wells and water-holes. In addition to this it is recognised as a desirable policy in connection with land settlement to introduce a system for tapping the sand-plains and agricultural areas for water. It was found desirable, however, to utilise the services of a geologist to report on the most likely places, and an officer has been promised for the work by the Mines Department. However, owing to the representations of settlers, a bore was sent up to the Tammin agricultural area by the Works Department at my own request, and, by a happy coincidence, I have to-day received intelligence of the success attending these operations, which is an agreeable proof of the possibility of securing fresh water on our driest areas. The following is the message to hand from Mr. Hodgson, the officer who has these works in charge:—

Your Minister will doubtless be pleased to hear that our foreman of boring operations for Tammin Farms Water Supply reports having struck a good supply of fresh water on Packham's road, i.e. between Mr. Lowles's and Doongin Peak. Water was first struck at 51 feet below surface; then an increased supply at 64 feet. Water rose 23 feet in bore hole. Depth at present about 80 feet; material passed through for last 30 odd feet being very nice quality of chalk.

I may mention that, in concert with the hon. the Director of Public Works, I hope to initiate a scheme which will meet the wishes of the country settlers. In South Africa a system is in use by which the Government supply boring apparatus and an expert to work it at a nominal charge per day, the farmer providing all labour. The machine is constantly going amongst the farmers requiring it. Such a plan here will, I am sure, work admirably, not only amongst the farmers, but especially in connection with our

homestead lease or grazing farm system. A large number of areas are now being taken up in the eastern districts, consisting chiefly of sand-plain, and it is in this kind of country that the system will be appreciated. I may further mention that at Goomalling excavated tanks are to be put down in order to provide a main supply for the area. From what I have said, the hon. member will see that the Lands Department has already carried this motion into practice, and that it has formed a part of the policy since I have had the honour of holding office. The system I have referred to as existing in South Africa can be introduced here without legislation, and I hope very soon to be able to set the plan going.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Central Murchison): The report read is exceedingly interesting in regard to the action which the Government have taken in this matter, but I would like to know what has been the cost. In these times we would like to know if there is to be any termination to the action of the Government in expending money without the authority of Parliament. I am not going to take exception to this particular expenditure, but I do take exception to this constant taking up by the Government of matters which involve considerable cost and great principles without consulting Parliament. I should like to know what has been the expenditure incurred, and from what vote the money has been supplied.

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. F. H. Piessé): It is difficult to give the cost off-hand for these works. If you refer to the report as to the boring for artesian water in the vicinity of Perth, it will be seen that the cost approximately has been £1 per foot. At Guildford a depth of a thousand feet has been attained at a cost of £1,100, which covers all expenses. The contract for that boring is at a fixed rate of 22s. 6d. per foot. There, after 130 feet has been reached, the pipe has been reduced from 8 inches to 6 inches, and from 180 to 1,000 feet we will continue with the 6-inch pipe; consequently we are paying a little more in this instance, but are getting better service. This boring work has been carried on in several places. In regard to the boring in agricultural areas, the work at the

Canning has been carried on out of a loan vote for the development of agriculture. That vote has not been drawn upon very heavily. The proposed expenditure during the year is anticipated to be about £10,000 in connection with boring for water and the development of agriculture, together with draining operations which we intend to carry on. The cost of boring at the Canning is very small indeed, the whole amount being not more than £120 up to the present. The bores used there are hand-boring machines of a similar type to those used at Guildford in the first instance. The bores mentioned by the Minister of Lands are hand bores used purely for test purposes, and not for boring for artesian water. I quite believe we will not obtain artesian water there, because we are behind the ranges. The same objection that applies to Coolgardie possibly applies to the country between Northam and Coolgardie. The object of the boring is for surface supplies at a depth of 200 or 300 feet. After the bore is proved, it is proposed to sink wells in places. This work has been going on for some weeks, and in every instance salt water has been struck; but fresh water has now been obtained at a depth of 40 feet, and the bore is passing through chalk, which is a further indication of fresh water.

Question put and passed.

MOTION—CREDIT FONCIER AND AGRICULTURE.

MR. QUINLAN (Toodyay), in accordance with notice, moved:—

That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable the Government should, during the recess, consider the advisability of introducing an amendment of the Agricultural Bank Act, thereby extending its operations so as to embrace the *crédit foncier* system.

He said: In rising to submit this motion, I do not desire to bind the Government definitely, but simply ask them to consider the advisability of introducing an amendment of the Agricultural Bank Act, and thereby extending its operations so as to embrace the *crédit foncier* system. That term is often applied to our own Agricultural Bank; but what I believe to be the strict meaning of *crédit foncier* is, that money should be lent on holdings on what is known as the building-society principle. The Agricultural Bank at

present is doing good work in this colony, especially in the Northam district, where apparently people have been somewhat more enterprising, and have availed themselves of its advantages more than in other districts. The present Act only applies to new improvements, or to some extent to new settlement; and what I desire is that the Government should, during the recess, consider the advisability of adopting a method somewhat on the principle of that now established in Victoria. We know that prohibitive charges are made by banks and other financial institutions for money advanced, more particularly on these kinds of security. It is hard at present to get an advance almost on anything, but especially on agricultural properties. It might be asked very properly by what means is it proposed to raise the money? But I am looking forward in a short time to a very material alteration in the present state of things; and there will be various means of obtaining money, possibly from the Savings Bank and other directions such as are now availed of in Victoria. The *crédit foncier* system, as generally understood, has been in existence for upwards of 50 years in France, where it has borne the test of time, and is, I think, worthy of consideration at our hands.

MR. SIMPSON: What are the advantages of the *crédit foncier* system over our present system?

MR. QUINLAN: I propose that money should be lent on improved properties, or on properties which may be somewhat burdened, and the owners of which are desirous of extending or further improving their holdings. The Agricultural Bank only allows advances for new improvements, and people who have large holdings are unable to obtain from financial institutions, for various reasons, any advance at a reasonable rate. I know of instances myself where if holdings could, under such a system, be split up in any way among the families of settlers who have long been established, great benefits would result. At present those estates are tied up, and the owners are, so to speak, unable to spread their wings for the benefit of those who come after them. There is no doubt that this is one of the chief or primary causes which deter settlement at the

present time. My proposal, if carried out, would improve the public estate, and now that railways are being built throughout various portions of the colony, would, by developing settlement, increase the revenue. I may be pardoned if I quote from the report of the Royal Commission which sat in Victoria in 1895. That report states:—

The almost unanimous testimony of country witnesses, supported by evidence in Melbourne, disclosed the very distressed condition of the producers who have been under the necessity of seeking financial assistance from banks. The practice of loaning moneys, repayable on demand, to farmers who, from the nature of their occupation, require the loans for long periods, has proved to be a source of ceaseless anxiety and trouble to those who have been compelled to borrow. This system has proved to be unsatisfactory to both borrowers and lenders, and from its results it appears to be thoroughly unsound. When farmers have mortgaged their land to either institutions or private lenders, the terms, although including a fixed period extending from three to five years, were of little advantage. This period for farmers' purposes is altogether too short; and although, according to evidence, there is less interest charged, yet the commission and valuation fees, together with legal charges and the uncertainty of renewal at the end of the term, constitute a burden which under present conditions of production is too hard to be borne. The result of these hard terms was evidenced in the utter lack of hope displayed by many witnesses, when they dilated upon their almost unendurable position.

The Act in Victoria gives the following powers:—

(a.) To pay off liabilities already existing on such land; (b.) To pay off any money owing to the Crown in respect of such land; or (c.) To make improvements on, or to improve and develop, or to utilise the agricultural, horticultural, viticultural, or pastoral resources of such land, or to enable the borrower to carry on agricultural, horticultural, viticultural, or pastoral pursuits on such land.

MR. SIMPSON: How long has that Act been in operation? Is the Victorian Parliament not passing a Bill this session?

MR. QUINLAN: The Act I have quoted from was passed in 1896, and is now in operation. This is a matter of very great importance. I submit the motion in all sincerity, believing that the results would not only be for the benefit of the agricultural community, but of immense advantage to the colony generally. I ask the favourable consideration of members for this motion.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS (Hon. G. Throssell): The object which the hon. member for Toodyay (Mr. Quinlan) has in view is a thoroughly good one; but I very much doubt the wisdom of the new legislation suggested. It is quite true that under the present Act money is only advanced on improvements that are actually in existence. That, to me, appears a special recommendation of the Act, the object of which is to prevent farmers being ruined. The Act provides that for every £100 advanced to farmers, improvements to the value of £160 are made. It will not be advisable to have fresh legislation before the present Act has been fully tried. So far as we have gone, the Agricultural Bank has more than fulfilled the anticipations formed of it. I venture to say that in a year or two, owing to the present Act, the country will not only have sufficient produce for its own requirements, but will be ready to export. The Act is now well known, though there has been a great deal of uphill work in its administration. One departure I should like to make myself in connection with the present Act would be in the direction of the dealing with large estates by the owners themselves. While it is unreasonable to suppose that the owner of a 5,000 acre block would surrender the title for so small a loan as £800, the maximum allowed under the Act, there is nothing to prevent an owner subdividing his estate amongst his family. A number of the owners of large estates have grown-up lads waiting for a division of the property, and I would like it to be generally known that there is nothing to prevent the owner of a large estate calling in a surveyor and settling 1,000 acres on his son, or each of his sons, and thus enabling them to come under the Land Act and have improvements made. Large estates could thus be subdivided under the best possible conditions for success, and then properties of 10,000 acres would not be found with only 500 or 600 acres under cultivation. That would surely be a good means of "bursting up" the large estates. I mention this in answer to the objection that the Government, while making provision for new men, are doing nothing for the old settlers. I am sorry I cannot support the motion submitted by the hon. member for Toodyay. The present

Act, which may be said to be on its trial, serves every purpose, and it would be very unwise for the Government to take the departure suggested by the hon. member.

MR. QUINLAN: After the explanation of the Commissioner of Crown Lands, I beg leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

MOTION—STOCK DISEASES ACT AND ITS ADMINISTRATION.

MR. LEAKE (Albany), in accordance with notice, moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the administration by the Government of the Stock Diseases Act, 1895, is unsatisfactory, and not in the best interests of the pastoral industry.

He said: It will be seen that this motion aims at what I submit is a particular blot in the administration of the Government, and it is directed against a particular statute. All hon. members are aware that for years past precautions have been taken to prevent the introduction of disease in a variety of forms; nor does it require any word of commendation from me to impress upon the House the necessity of such precautions. We have been threatened lately with the development of what has proved in other places to be a most virulent and devastating disease, namely, that of tick in cattle. Much has been said during the last twelve months, both in private and in the press, with regard to this particular complaint. Deputations have waited on the Government; correspondence has been published in the press; discussions have taken place amongst the squatters; and we find that the Government were so much alive to the necessities of the occasion that, as far back as May, 1896, regulations had not only been framed but had been directed to be carried out for the purpose of restricting it. In May, 1896, when Mr. Richardson was the Commissioner of Crown Lands, he gave instructions that the regulations with regard to the introduction of cattle to the Kimberley district were to be strictly carried out; and as far back as May, 1896, tick was reported to have been discovered on the Ord River. Now, from time to time, regulations have been made; and the most particular of these regulations seem to have been

made in January of the present year, when, by an Order-in-Council of the 20th January, not only was the introduction of cattle from the colony of Queensland and the Northern portion of South Australia prohibited, but the prohibition was also extended to sheep, dogs, and horses; and further, there was prohibition against the introduction of hides from the same places, unless they had been specially treated and disinfected. That order was not given until after mature consideration by the authorities, and up to that moment they acted upon what had been their declared policy with regard to the prevention of the spread of disease amongst stock. From time to time attempts have been made to remove or to limit those prohibitions; and it was not until the 3rd November that anything like success attended the efforts of those who were interested in so doing. I need only remind hon. members of what took place in Perth—deputations to the Acting Premier, correspondence in the press, influence brought to bear in many directions; yet, notwithstanding all this, the Government firmly resolved to adhere to their resolution, and prohibit. But on the 3rd November we find that an Order-in-Council was made, by which the prohibition was revoked, for dealing specially with a particular mob of cattle belonging to particular persons, and which were then in a particular locality. The questions which were put by me to the Government a short time ago elicited particulars relating to these 900 head of cattle. We were told that they belonged to a corporation known as Connor, Doherty, and Durack, Limited; that they had come from the prohibited country, and that they consisted of 900 head. Not long ago, when the papers which are now before hon. members were asked for by motion, particular reference was made by myself to the circumstances surrounding the issue of this order; and I then attempted to point out to the House that the order was improperly framed; that it was not strictly within the limits of the Act. The facts which led up to the passing of that order were shortly these. The firm I have mentioned, who are large cattle dealers in this colony, and particularly in the Kimberley district, had, previous to this, brought into the colony, contrary to the regulations, a

herd of cattle. The Government very properly directed a prosecution, and prosecuted somebody for bringing them in, with the result that a fine was inflicted, and the parties were penalised to the extent of something like 1s. 8d. per head of these cattle. Those cattle, however, were allowed to remain in the colony, and were ultimately distributed in the market. So you see, sir, that the firm in question did not suffer any particular hardship when they openly defied the law, and were mulcted in the small penalty of about 1s. 8d. per head. Emboldened no doubt by their success on this occasion, they appear to have made subsequent efforts to introduce other cattle. One might reasonably suppose that, with such a warning as a fine before them, and in view of the existence of regulations absolutely prohibiting the introduction of such stock, reasonable men would not attempt to defy the law; and indeed that they would hesitate, perhaps, to deal in cattle in the prohibited district, or to deal in cattle which, according to law, they must have known they could not introduce after these were purchased. It would seem, however, that subsequently to this they became possessed of this particular mob of 900 cattle; and, of course, actuated no doubt by the best of motives, they thought to themselves: We will not defy the law, but we will make representations in a certain manner and in certain quarters, and we will ask for special favours, and have these cattle admitted. The success of those efforts was apparent. On the 28th October the cattle were introduced. That is, before the passing of the order on the 3rd November; and, if we go back according to these papers a few days, we will find that in the report—I think it was a telegraphic report from the Chief Inspector of Stock, who was at Wyndham, or at any rate from some official—this particular firm had sent instructions up to Kimberley to bring this particular herd in as early as the 20th October. From that it would appear that special favours—special concessions—had been given to this corporation, which we know to be Messrs. Connor, Doherty, and Durack, Limited; and I want the Premier to give us clearly and emphatically his reasons for so favouring this particular firm, and abrogating these distinct and prohibitive

regulations in favour of these particular persons. Before I leave the question of this order, I was impressed on first seeing it with the fact that there were present at the meeting of the Executive Council which passed the order, the Treasurer, the Minister of Mines, the Commissioner of Railways, the Commissioner of Crown Lands, and the Minister of Education; thus only one out of the six Ministers being absent, namely the then Attorney General (Mr. Burt). At that time there was no doubt the Attorney General was *in transitu*; and whether he approved of this order being issued I cannot say, but he is a member of this House, and will be able to speak for himself. I know that the hon. gentleman, as a rule, has always been in favour of the strict observance of ordinary law and every regulation; and why I particularly noted his absence was that this Order-in-Council was not, strictly speaking, within the terms of the Act. The object of the regulations, and indeed of the Act, was primarily to prevent not only the introduction, but the spread, of this devastating scourge known as "tick." Its existence has been known for a considerable number of years in Queensland and in the Northern Territory of South Australia.

THE PREMIER: And in Kimberley too.

MR. LEAKE: With what devastating effect it has visited Queensland and the Northern Territory, I need not remind hon. members. By degrees it has developed to such an extent that the authorities in Queensland and South Australia have found it necessary to quarantine cattle—I refer particularly to the Northern Territory of South Australia—for the purpose of preventing the introduction of tick into the southern portions of South Australia. No one who has read the reports on this question in the other colonies can but be impressed with the idea that tick in cattle is a terrible scourge. I was reminded by the Premier, a moment ago, that not only was tick known to exist in the Northern Territory and in Queensland, but that it also has existed in the East Kimberley district of this colony; but how the tick came into our territory we do not know, though it is a reasonable presumption that the tick was brought there from time to time by tick-infested cattle travelling from Queensland and

from the Northern Territory of South Australia into this colony. In fact, the greater part of the cattle within our own borders came from the Northern Territory of South Australia, and from Queensland. Time has not permitted us to judge as to how long it takes to develop or acclimatise these insects; and we are not informed how long they have been known to exist in Queensland, but they must have been there for many years. So far as damage is concerned, that damage has not been done until comparatively recently; and the introduction of tick into the Kimberley district may be only the beginning of the same state of things in our colony which has existed in Queensland and the Northern Territory. At any rate, the existence of tick in the Kimberley district is a fact, and it was deemed necessary at a former period, to take stringent precautions against the introduction of more tick. Hon. members will excuse me if I have referred more than once in the course of my observations to the corporation of Connor, Doherty, and Durack, Limited; but it seemed at one time to have been a somewhat vexed question in the minds of members of that firm as to whether or not tick did exist in Kimberley. One member of the firm appears to have blown hot and cold on the subject, for on the 12th May, 1896, a telegram sent from Mr. F. Connor to the Premier said:—

Reports of tick in Ord River cattle, as per yesterday morning's telegram, unauthenticated. Only malicious rumour.

On the 9th June, 1896, less than a month after that telegram had been sent, another telegram appears to have been sent by Mr. Connor to the Premier, saying:—

Ticks discovered by Duff have existed on all Ord stations for last ten years. No danger need be apprehended.

Thus in one month that member of the firm described reports of tick in Ord River cattle as being a malicious rumour, and in the next month the same authority declared that ticks had infested the Ord River cattle for ten years. That is a circumstance. It seems that this gentleman, Mr. Connor, took a somewhat active part in the negotiations with the Premier and with the Acting Premier at this time—I mean in May, 1896, when there was prohibition. Order-in-Council has been made, and so important was

this matter deemed to be by the Government, that it was thought necessary to send the Chief Inspector of Stock, Mr. Morton Craig, up to Kimberley to report; and this officer, upon whose recommendation the Government had hitherto acted, went to Kimberley with certain instructions from the then Acting Premier, Mr. Wittenoom. The right hon. the Premier (Sir J. Forrest) was at that time away in England, and the Acting Premier (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom) had undoubtedly put his foot down firmly with regard to this matter, in answer to the various deputations that waited on him, and in answer to correspondence addressed to him. The Commissioner of Crown Lands (Hon. G. Throssell), in answer to correspondence addressed to him, had declared emphatically that the prohibition should be maintained, and not removed. There is no doubt that in this respect Ministers were acting on the advice of their Chief Inspector of Stock. So important was the question considered, that in paragraph six of the instructions given to the Chief Inspector the Acting Premier asked him to report, in the event of ticks being found in East Kimberley district, what would be the best method of preventing their importation into the southern districts without absolutely preventing the traffic in fat cattle; and the Chief Inspector says:—

I am reluctantly compelled to recommend that the whole of the East Kimberley district be proclaimed a quarantined area until the 30th April, 1898, during which time, should no tick be found, the quarantine can be removed. This proceeding will not materially affect the traffic in fat stock, as there are absolutely none, with the exception of those now on their way south, and a few on the Ord station available for the market.

He says further on in his report:—

During my first visit I inspected most of the principal herds of the East Kimberley district; but on finding that I arrived too late for the tick season, I did not spend so much time among the cattle as I should otherwise have done.

Subsequent reports, as well as reports received within the last few days, have shown that tick must have existed then, and that they are now in the locality. Eventually Mr. Craig, who was specially sent to the district, recommended strict quarantine; but notwithstanding that recommendation, we find that on the 3rd November the prohibition was re-

moved, and that Connor, Doherty, and Durack, Limited, who have so persistently defended their own interest in this matter, were prepared, practically in defiance of the law, to bring their stock to this market. It was actually in defiance of the law, because their cattle came in from the prohibited areas before the Order-in-Council had actually been signed. It surely cannot be argued, or if it is argued hon. members will hardly be impressed with it, that tick is not dangerous. Again I wish to remind hon. members that even experts find a great difficulty in discovering the existence of tick; for it is not without the strictest inspection that they can be discovered. Mr. Craig, in his report, quotes the opinion of Inspector Alston, who says, "Kimberley is not a congenial home for the tick." I know this point will be argued at great length by those who seek to justify their action in this particular. They will say there is no risk, because Kimberley is not a congenial home for the tick, and that tick have been found in great quantities. In this particular, Mr. Alston is not the only man who can be quoted to show that possibly Kimberley is not a congenial home for tick; but in any case, this kind of evidence only proves that the tick pest, where it occurs, is a terrible scourge. In support of what I say about the difficulty of discovering ticks, I will refer to the experience of Mr. Pound, who is, I believe, a great authority in Queensland. His experience at Gracemere and Mount Cornish is detailed in his report to the Stock Department of Queensland, and shows the difficulty of detecting ticks on live cattle, and the futility of depending on inspection, even when it is carried out in a cattle crush. I quote from a newspaper report as follows:—

The experiences of Mr. Pound at Gracemere and Mount Cornish, as detailed in his report to the Stock Department, show the difficulty of detecting ticks on live cattle, and the futility of depending on inspection even when that is carried out in a crush. It would probably be hard to find two more practised and observant men among cattle than Messrs. Edkins and Archer, and yet these two gentlemen were greatly surprised when shown, the one on a cow recently dead, and the other on a white heifer which had been thrown for the purpose of inspection, innumerable ticks in all stages of growth. If the control of the tick pest had to depend on inspection only, a very short time would elapse before the ticks were all over Australia. Another matter of very great

importance is brought out in Mr. Pound's reports. It has frequently been stated in these columns, by correspondents, that cattle apparently free from tick one day were found to have numbers of matured ticks on them the following day, and it was sought to infer from this that full-blown ticks must travel from one beast to another, ignoring the carefully worked-out life history of the tick. Mr. Pound convinced them at Mount Cornish of the fallacy of this reasoning. Drawing a red ink line round some young ticks found on an animal, the size of which did not exceed the eighth of an inch, the same animal was brought into the yard the following day, when it was found that some of the female ticks had grown to the size of three-eighths of an inch, while others had matured and fallen off. It appears that during the last few days—the last day, in fact—the female tick grows from very small proportions to the ordinary size of a fully-matured tick.

I quote that to show really the futility of inspection, or rather how easy an experienced person, not an expert, may be deceived with regard to the existence or otherwise of these insects. Here it is shown clearly that they developed from one-eighth of an inch to three-eighths of an inch in less than 24 hours; and yet we may be told this evening — [THE PREMIER: Do not prophesy]—that there is no danger, and that those cattle which were let in were properly inspected and properly reported on. But will the hon. gentleman tell us that each of these 900 cattle was thrown and inspected in the way those cattle were inspected in Queensland? I submit that is the only effectual inspection which can be made. How idle it is to suppose that the most experienced person can ride round a mob of 900 cattle, and declare that none of those cattle have ticks on them! It is absurd. But no doubt we shall be told that is so; and no doubt it is the only excuse that the right hon. the Premier can have, in overriding the decision of his colleagues given previously to his dictum, and which he apparently fished for, namely, that no tick was discovered on inspection. I mention this fact to show how futile inspection is when carried on in the way it must have been carried on in the Kimberley district. We know that the Northern Territory of South Australia is conterminous with our own territory on the East Kimberley border, and, of course, cattle in the Northern Territory can re-cross the border without let or hindrance because, the

border being only an imaginary line, it is almost impossible for them to be kept back. Again I say there was no lack of thought and deliberation on the part of the Government with respect to formulating the regulation which existed up to November 3rd, and which exists at the present day. There were deputations, meetings, letters in the newspapers, and finally there were threats. A threat came from Mr. Frank Connor, whose telegram I have read, and who waited with the deputation on the Acting Premier (Mr. Wittenoom) during the Premier's absence in England. A fairly lively meeting was held in the Premier's office, at which there were representatives of a large number of stock owners and parties interested in the meat trade. Mr. Connor insisted on the regulation being revoked, and said if some alteration was not made he would move a vote of want of confidence in the Government as soon as the House met.

THE PREMIER: Is that reported in the press?

MR. LEAKE: That is reported in the press.

THE PREMIER: I never heard of it before.

MR. LEAKE: In conclusion, Mr. Connor said—

He wished to say distinctly that if the Parliament of the country were sitting he should rise in his place and propose a want of confidence motion in the Government; and in regard to this particular question he had not the slightest doubt in his own mind that it would be carried.

THE PREMIER: He expected your support, I expect.

MR. LEAKE: The funny part has not come yet. Mr. Wittenoom, in replying to the deputation, said that

Mr. Connor had said that if the Parliament were sitting—and he (Mr. Wittenoom) wished it were, in order to take the responsibility of this matter—he would propose a vote of want of confidence in the Government. [Mr. Connor: So I will.] He (Mr. Wittenoom) did not mind whether he (Mr. Connor) did or did not, but he (Mr. Wittenoom) wished to say, in conclusion, that he hoped he (Mr. Connor) would never think that any threat of that kind would influence the Government when they were doing what they considered best for the colony.

That is a dignified answer to an undignified attack made upon an important public occasion.

THE PREMIER: He thought he would get your support.

MR. LEAKE: He would have got it, too.

THE PREMIER: There is no doubt about that.

MR. LEAKE: And we find that that threat of Mr. Connor's was not an idle one. It was made deliberately, and was not the ebullition of a moment. He seems to have followed it up, for no sooner does the Premier come back than the papers disclose that further representations were made by the corporation of Connor, Doherty and Durack, Limited, with the result that the regulations were set on one side, to enable the gentleman who had made the threat to bring his cattle into the colony.

MR. JAMES: And keep his seat on the right side of the House.

MR. LEAKE: I thank the hon. member for East Perth (Mr. James) for that interruption, because I really think the Premier may have imagined that there were two votes in the House that he might rely on. I dare say that that influenced the Premier when he yielded to the pressure which was brought to bear on him. At any rate, there was no vote of want of confidence, and the Government got support from that particular quarter. It is singular that the prophecy was fulfilled, for the order of the 3rd November was issued as soon as conveniently after the return of the Premier to business, notwithstanding the fact that the Premier's colleagues had, after mature deliberation, declared in favour of prohibiting cattle from this particular quarter.

THE PREMIER: The Government approved of that being done, and the Minister recommended it.

MR. LEAKE: Oh, they did!

THE PREMIER: Yes.

MR. LEAKE: Without a murmur?

THE PREMIER: Oh, read the papers.

MR. LEAKE: You cannot stand cross-examination on that question. The conduct of the Government was inconsistent on that occasion. Compare the action of the Government with regard to the scab. We know that scab was a source of great danger to the settlers at one time. And what was done? In many instances flocks were absolutely confiscated and destroyed, in order to get rid of the

scourge of scab. It was owing particularly to the great efforts of the Chief Inspector of Stock (Mr. Craig) that the disease of scab was ultimately eradicated.

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION: The House did that.

MR. LEAKE: The House did it with Mr. Craig's assistance, and I want this House to get rid of tick in the same way as they got rid of scab; and the Government can do it if they insist on the law being administered as it should be.

THE PREMIER: It was the Government that got rid of the scab.

MR. LEAKE: At any rate, scab was got rid of, but only after most stringent regulations and the closest and strictest inspection.

THE PREMIER: How are you going to get rid of the tick? That is the question.

MR. LEAKE: I will tell you how I would start. I would follow up the line which the Government themselves adopted. I would prohibit the importation or exportation of those cattle from particular quarantined districts. I would confine the cattle within certain areas, and then the chances are you would get the ticks under. But you will not get the ticks under if you allow the cattle to scatter all over the country. It is not the way to get the ticks under to bring infected cattle down to an island near Fremantle, and start a tick farm. You will not get rid of ticks by experimenting, and ascertaining whether they can live under particular conditions. We know that all those pests take some time to get acclimatised. It is impossible to say how long it took to get tick acclimatised in Queensland, where it is now flourishing. We know well it took rabbits a long time to become acclimatised in Australia. It took a long time to acclimatise foxes in Victoria, or to acclimatise many of the destructive birds now in Australia. But there is no doubt that all those pests can become acclimatised, and before they are acclimatised it is comparatively an easy matter to eradicate or check them. We have special legislation and specially stringent regulations in regard to rabbits, insects, and birds, all of which can and will become acclimatised if they are allowed to spread at their own free will. Why should not the same regard be paid

to the dangerous scourge of tick? I really hope the hon. member was not serious when he told the House a few weeks ago that it was his intention to experiment with tick down here to see whether or not they would grow. I do not want to say anything that is improper, but I want to make an observation which I hope will draw from another hon. member some emphatic statement. There are rumours about—which I do not say I believe myself—that not only has undue pressure been brought to bear on the Government by the firm of Connor, Doherty, and Durack, Limited, but that there is another hon. member in the House who knows a great deal about the question. I refer to the hon. member for Beverley (Mr. Harper), and I want that gentleman to give us an explanation of rumours about, and say whether or not he is in any way interested in those particular cattle.

MR. HARPER: I will explain to you.

MR. LEAKE: That is right, and I will be satisfied with your explanation.

THE PREMIER: Hit them all round.

MR. LEAKE: I will if I have a chance. I am not afraid to hit anybody, if I think the circumstances justifiable. I particularly should like the hon. member for Beverley to explain the difference in tone of two leading articles which appeared in his own paper; one dated May 26th, 1897, and the other dated September 25th, 1897. In the article of May 26th this newspaper took the side of the Government, and commended them for the firm stand taken in regard to the prohibition. I do not propose to read the articles, because that would, perhaps, occupy too much time, but an extract or or two will not be out of place. In a leading article in the *West Australian* of May 26th, we read: "The subject is one of the most important ever brought under the notice of the Government." Then again: "Nevertheless there can be little doubt that the decision of the Government will be generally approved." Again: "To bring the dreaded Queensland tick into Western Australia would threaten the entire cattle industry, which is now in a flourishing condition, bring immense loss on numberless stock-owners, and finally raise the price of beef to a point which is alarming to contemplate." Again: "The importation of

tick into Western Australia would be a disaster of the first magnitude, and no Government would ever be forgiven which allowed the herds of those it was appointed to protect to face the peril of this devastating scourge." It will be seen that when I used the words "devastating scourge," I was not coining a phrase, but using a quotation.

THE PREMIER: Where did you get all those quotations from? They are all prepared ready.

MR. SIMPSON: We will hand them to you: they are very interesting reading.

THE PREMIER: They were supplied for the purpose.

MR. LEAKE: Certainly they were, and you can have them if you want them. When I talk on an important matter I like to have facts before me, and not to rely on my imagination or my memory. I cannot quote a better authority in the hon. member's opinion than the *West Australian* newspaper. The concluding words of the article of the 26th May are these: "In any contingency this is a case in which it will never do to be wise after the event." But the article of September 25th is altogether in favour of the admission of this mob of 900 head of cattle.

MR. A. FORREST: What newspaper is that?

MR. LEAKE: The *West Australian* again, and I think I could give you a little of the *Morning Herald*. The Government, up to the 26th May, had been acting according to the advice of the Chief Inspector of Stock, and also according to what was fair and right, and the newspaper supported them. In the article of 25th September we read: "Accepting his own version of the facts, Mr. Craig's recommendation that the whole of the East Kimberley should be proclaimed a quarantine area until April 30th next may for the present be put out of court." There, it will be seen, was clearly a change of front. The newspaper supports the Government on one day, and the firm of Connor, Doherty, and Durack, Limited, on the next. I think I have said sufficient to show the House that a distinctly important question has been raised. I have shown, too, I think, that the Government have yielded to pressure. And when I say the Government, I mean particularly that the Premier has yielded to pressure to which he ought not to have yielded.

The regulation of the 3rd November was distinctly framed in order to favour one particular firm, upon whose support the Premier had in the past been able to rely, and on whose support, no doubt, he can rely in the future. It would seem that one of the chief excuses that the right hon. gentleman will give you is this, that the 900 head of cattle which had been depasturing near the border were fat cattle; and the minutes passing between the Ministers leading up to the issue of that order showed that they were chiefly impelled by the idea that they would not prevent fat cattle from coming in. As long as they were fat and free from disease, they might come in. In one of the official minutes penned by the Premier, he directed that these cattle should come in if they were clean. Now the word "fat" was, for some reason or other, dropped out of that minute.

THE PREMIER: I beg your pardon. It was an incorrect copy. The word "fat" is below in the next paragraph. It does not affect the sense at all. It would be only repeating what is in the third or fourth paragraph, where the question "Are they fat?" is asked.

MR. LEAKE: Here is a minute of October 18th, which reads: "I have consulted Cabinet in regard to your suggestion—"

THE PREMIER: That is not the one where the words are struck out which you are referring to.

MR. LEAKE: This is the minute I am going to read, and which has been laid upon the table.

THE PREMIER: You can read it, but you will not follow up what I say.

MR. LEAKE: I will read it; and, if I can, I will then discover the other minute. It is as follows:—

Hon. Commissioner of Crown Lands.—I have consulted Cabinet in regard to your suggestion that "the taboo should be removed from border cattle," and it is agreeable that the 900 cattle on the border now awaiting admission may be allowed to come in as a special case, provided the Inspector passes them as clean, and takes every precaution. I attach Mr. Craig's report, and he should now give the necessary instructions. Every precaution and care should be taken to be certain that the cattle are free from disease. John Forrest, Premier.

You will notice, however, that the word "fat" is not mentioned, and the

officer who handed it to the Chief Inspector of Stock two days after that, on the 20th October, telegraphs to the Inspector of Stock at Wyndham:—

Proceed without delay to border and inspect Connor and Doherty's 900 cattle depasturing there. If after careful examination you find them clean, admit into colony and travel down with mob to Wyndham. You will have good opportunity for minute examination while travelling. These instructions confidential, by order Minister.—NORMAN MALCOLM, for Chief Inspector of Stock.

There is no mention of "fat" there.

THE PREMIER: In the report of the Chief Inspector, a little before that, he says they were "fat." They were reported to be "fat."

MR. LEAKE: Thank you for reminding me of that. I had almost forgotten that minute. That is the minute of the 9th October, 1897, as follows:—

My Dear Craig,—I have been thinking over what you told me yesterday, and I should like you to send in a short report on the following points:—(a) How many cattle are now waiting on the east side of the border to come in. (b) What station have they come from. (c) How long since they left the station. (d) Are they fat. (e) Have they been inspected, and if so by whom and how many times. (f) Is there any sign of disease on them. (g) Would there be any more risk in admitting to our Southern market these cattle, than there has been in admitting the Sturt Creek cattle. (h) If you think not, what quarantine and conditions would you impose. If these cattle are clean and fat, and ready to come in, how would it do to subject them to searching inspection, and to quarantining before shipping, and then let them in as a special case. Is Wave Hill clear of ticks? Please reply to these queries, and let me have them by Monday morning. Return this letter for file at same time.—JOHN FORREST, Premier.

On the same day Mr. Craig replies:—

The Right Hon. the Premier. Sir,—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of even date, submitting certain questions from a to h relative to certain cattle on the east side of the Northern Territory boundary awaiting admission. In reply I beg to state that I will deal with these questions *seriatim*, as follows:—(a) There are 900 cattle on the border now awaiting admission. (b) They have come from the Wave Hill country. (c) They left the station some time during the month of June. (d) They are reported to be fat. (e) Inspector Stephens informs me by telegram, dated the 2nd inst., that Inspector Alston has inspected the cattle, and found them free from tick and healthy. I am not aware of any other inspection having been made, as Mr. Alston's journal is not yet to hand. (f) According to Mr. Stephens' telegram, they are perfectly healthy.

Now I want hon. members to listen to this. This is in answer to this query, and it is very well put, too, from the other side's point of view:—

(g) In my opinion, if these cattle are again inspected at the border, and accompanied to the port by Mr. Stephens, there would be no more risk in bringing them to our southern markets than there was in bringing the Sturt Creek cattle.

You see, some cattle had come in from the tick-infested district of Sturt Creek.

THE PREMIER: Not tick-infested.

MR. LEAKE: Well, a tick-infested country.

MR. DOHERTY: It is the Sturt's Creek in East Kimberley which is referred to.

MR. LEAKE: Well, that was the question, and I have read you the answer. You will observe how it is worded: "There would be no more risk in bringing them to our southern markets than there was in bringing the Sturt Creek cattle." But the inspector is not asked whether there was any risk at all. He is simply asked the question whether there was more risk in admitting Connor and Doherty's cattle than there was in admitting the other cattle. Thank you for nothing: we did not want that. We say we have a right to assume that if the question had been put fairly and squarely to the inspector, he would have said that neither mob should be admitted. There is the question which suggests an evasive answer, and that is the answer upon which the hon. gentleman will rely. Then the inspector goes on:—

(h) 1. As these cattle have been so long away from a tick-infested area on clean country, i.e., country where no Northern Territory cattle have ever been, the only conditions I should require are—a further inspection by Inspector Stephens at the border, and that he accompanies them to the port. I think the latter step necessary, because there are no yards or other conveniences for close inspection of the cattle at the border, and the inspector by closely following them day by day would be sure to see any ticks if they were present. (2). If the cattle are clean and fat, they have undergone sufficient quarantine, i.e., isolation from other cattle since June to enable the inspector to decide whether they are tick-infested or not, and might be allowed to come in as a special case. (3.) Wave Hill has been reported clean by Inspector Alston.

The inspector was never asked whether or not he was in favour of those cattle coming in; in fact he has mentioned in his last report—in his following minute of

the 30th November—that he was in favour of strict quarantine. There is a minute, too, on these papers from Mr. Gordon, the Chief Inspector of Stock in Queensland, saying that Mr. Pound "is, however, of opinion that if ticks are once introduced into your North-coast country, and if the climate is at all humid, they will flourish there."

THE PREMIER: It is not humid there.

MR. LEAKE: I have always understood that the climate of Kimberley is humid.

THE PREMIER: No; it is a dry heat there.

MR. LEAKE: Hon. members will notice that the qualification of "fat" appeared to have been disregarded, and there is no definite report that the cattle were fat. Mr. Craig says they were reported to be fat, and we had it on the authority of the hon. member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest) the other night that of these 900 head of cattle, a number that came down here to Fremantle were only stores, and were sold at Northam. Now, how is it that cattle supposed to be fat and clean come down and have to be sold as stores?

THE PREMIER: They were kept knocking about too long.

MR. LEAKE: Then you can never get fat cattle down here. They only ran the same risk that all other cattle run when they come down from Kimberley. If they started fat, they would have been landed fat. We are told, on no less an authority than that of the hon. member for West Kimberley (Mr. A. Forrest), that a great number of these cattle were stores and were sold as stores; and some of them are stores still over at Northam. With those cattle, too, were some bulls belonging to Kilfoyle. The minute is here, being a telegram from Thomas Kilfoyle, Wyndham, dated November 2, 1897:—

Chief Inspector of Stock, Perth.—Now as the Wave Hill cattle came in, have you any objection to my bulls coming in, as they are from there also. Came in with them.

THE PREMIER: They came over with them.

MR. LEAKE: "Came in with them," and in a minute of the same date the Premier says, "Mr. Kilfoyle's request as to bulls should certainly be refused."

A MEMBER: He was not a member of Parliament.

MR. LEAKE: The minute goes on to say:—

Any request to admit cattle should be made through the Chief Inspector, and no application should be entertained or considered, except for fat cattle for slaughter, reported on by Government inspector as absolutely free from disease, and healthy. Bulls and store cattle, or breeding cattle, should not be admitted at all.

Bulls came in with these; store cattle came in with them; and I am told that cows also came in, and there had been an application to remit the duty on cows because they were breeding cattle. I make that statement on hearsay, in order to give someone an opportunity of contradicting it. We find, at any rate, such an utter disregard both of the law and of the practice in this particular instance, that they let in cattle which are not for slaughter, cattle which are not fat, cattle which are not meant for breeding purposes, and cattle which are only stores. Now, those are facts; and I will defy any hon. member in this House to refute them. In these circumstances, can any member say that the administration of the Stock Diseases Act of 1895 has been satisfactory, and in the best interests of the pastoral industry? I have placed before the House as clearly as I can the facts of this particular case; and it really seems to me that there has been an utter disregard of the law, an utter disregard of the best interests of the country, an utter disregard of the best advice, and merely an attempt to curry favour with particular individuals. I say it is a shame that favour should be shown to any particular firm or any particular individual, when it comes to so serious a question as the administration of this Act. There is a lovely little paragraph in one of these minutes in a letter from Messrs. Connor and Doherty, where they ingenuously observe that Mr. Durack is in favour of the cattle being let in—Mr. Durack, a member of their own firm and a cattle holder in the district, is in favour of the cattle being let in! That is a little bit too rich; but it is here all the same. Here is the letter, signed "Connor & Doherty," dated 24th April, 1897. It says:—

Mr. Durack, a representative pastoralist of East Kimberley, whom you saw with our Mr.

Connor to-day, when the interview took place, would rather see the cattle come in, than be kept out.

I notice hon. members laugh, and I admit it would be humorous if it were not so serious.

THE PREMIER: You laughed yourself.

MR. LEAKE: I did laugh; but my laugh was ironical, and you know it; and there is no humour in it. Much as the hon. member for North Fremantle (Mr. Doherty) affects to be pleased with this debate, I do not think he is half so delighted as he appears to be. At any rate, he will perhaps throw a little humour into it when he comes to reply. I say there has been an utter disregard of law and regulation, and a defiance of what we may call pastoral justice in this particular instance; and I sincerely trust that there will be such an emphatic expression of opinion in the House to-night as will prevent any one member of the Ministry overriding law and regulation for the benefit or favour of one particular firm.

MR. SIMPSON formally seconded the motion.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest): The hon. member (Mr. Leake) has given us a long speech, and I have not the slightest doubt that the pastoralists of this colony, if they really thought he had ever befriended them in this House or out of it, would probably be grateful to him for the great interest he has displayed in regard to them.

MR. LEAKE: I am more interested in the public.

THE PREMIER: It is the pastoralists this time, according to the motion before us; but the hon. member, in his desire to make a case against the Government, as usual oversteps the mark. If he had desired to gain any support for this motion, I do not think he would have observed the tactics he has taken, because he seems to have made this altogether a party attack. That is the hon. member's object, I have no doubt; otherwise, I am quite sure he would not have been selected—probably he has selected himself—to make this attack on the Government. For there are plenty of members here who have had a life-long experience in regard to diseases in stock and are also interested in pastoral pursuits; and surely they would have moved in the matter if they had thought

it necessary. rather than ask the hon. member who has had no experience in regard to stock, who does not own a hoof in the country, and has not shown the slightest interest in regard to the pastoral industry. We know very well the hon. member's reason. He does not care twopence for the pastoralists or for the tick. His object is to attack the Government. I do not desire that this should be made a party question; and looking upon it as I do, merely as a question of the administration of the Stock Diseases Act, I admit at once it is quite possible for the hon. member or for any person to differ from the Government as to the administration of this Act in circumstances of difficulty. There is no question in the mind of anyone who is acquainted with the pastoral industry, or has taken any interest in it—and I may say I have been associated with pastoral pursuits all my life, and have some interest in them now, and if I were on the opposite side of the House and were accustomed to make such exaggerated statements as the hon. member does, I might say I have a very large interest in the pastoral industry, therefore it is not likely I should desire to do anything that would injure the pastoralists of this colony—I say anyone who can make himself believe, after a life-long knowledge of me, that I have not all my life tried to help the pastoralists and agriculturists of this country, must have read my sayings and doings altogether in an opposite direction from what I intended. The hon. member would be the first, I suppose, to charge me with being the friend of the farmer and the squatter—for that is generally the kind of taunt hurled at me in this House for years past, and particularly from a member who owns not a hoof in the whole country, who does not take any interest in pastoral or agricultural matters, who has never befriended the pastoralists or the agriculturists, and yet who stands up here and accuses me of trying to injure the pastoral industry. All I have done, or tried to do, was to perform my duty in a difficult position; and I think I shall convince hon. members that if they had been in the same position as I and my colleagues were in, they would have acted in the same way as we have done. What were we confronted with in this colony a few months ago? We were

confronted with a loud demand for a reduction in duty on imported stock and on meat; and it was stated that the price of meat was kept up by the stock tax. We know differently; but it was made a cry, and the hon. member made a cry of it, and coquetted with it, and tried to induce members representing the gold-fields to support him by promising to help and support them, and promising to do all sorts of unknown things. The hon. member has tried in the same way to coquette with members when dealing with such questions as that of removing the Fremantle workshops, and he has taken the same course now in regard to this tick question. You never know when you have got him: he is as slippery as an eel. We were, as I said, confronted with a difficulty, and at that time there were not wanting in this House those who said the Government had banded themselves with others interested in the stock business—an absolute calumny—that we were banded together to keep up the price of stock; and there were at that time 900 head of cattle on our border, reported by our own inspectors to be clean, healthy, and ready to come in for supplying the southern market. If, in those circumstances, we had said we would not let them come in upon any conditions, I am sure the hon. member would have been the first to accuse us of keeping up the price of meat, and would have been ready to move a vote of no confidence because, as he would have said, we were trying to keep up the price of meat and were injuring the country. We know he has taken that course before; and, as the leopard cannot change his spots, we know the hon. member will take that course again every time he gets an opportunity. The pastoral industry is a great industry in this colony; and do not let anyone think the members of the Government, in dealing with this matter, had not all the facts before him. We knew that, to a considerable extent, the southern parts of the colony are dependent on the supply of cattle from East and West Kimberley districts. I have a return here showing the number of cattle that have been carried from those districts to supply the southern markets in this colony during the last three years. In 1895 there were shipped 2,470 cattle

from Wyndham, East Kimberley district, to the southern markets, and 1,407 from Derby, West Kimberley district; in 1896, the cattle shipped were 4,743 from Wyndham and 2,673 from Derby; in 1897 the cattle shipped were 5,441 from Wyndham and 3,456 from Derby; these making a total of 12,654 shipped from Wyndham, and 7,536 shipped from Derby, or a gross total of 20,190 cattle shipped from the two Kimberleys for the southern markets in the last three years. These figures show there is a great industry in that district, and it is the bounden duty of the Government and this House to encourage it—I do not say at the risk of spreading disease all over the colony, but we must try to obtain for the southern parts of the colony the advantages of that large and rich pastoral country. There can be no doubt that tick has existed in the Kimberley district for many years. At first it was thought the tick in that district was a sort of tick dissimilar from that found in Queensland; but anyone who has followed the course of events must now come to the conclusion that the tick which has been there for years is exactly the same tick that is there at the present time.

MR. LEAKE: You mean it is the Queensland tick?

THE PREMIER: Yes, the Queensland tick. We will hear what an authority on stock—not a member of the firm of Connor and Doherty, but Mr. I. S. Emanuel—has to say in regard to it. In a letter addressed to the Commissioner of Crown Lands, Mr. Emanuel says:—

I can scarcely think it is the true cattle tick that has now been discovered in East Kimberley. The existence there of the description now reported by Inspector Duff has been known for years and has never caused the death, so far as I have heard, of a single beast; but until a decided opinion is obtained on the subject, no means should be neglected to prevent the disease from spreading to the other cattle districts of the colony. It will be found that the danger in this direction will occur entirely from stock travelling by road. Shipped cattle can be carefully inspected at the start and finish of the journey, and cannot spread the disease during the trip; the risk of contagion from them is, therefore, reduced to a minimum.

That is the opinion of Mr. Emanuel, who is recognised as an authority on stock; and he says there is very little danger,

if you inspect the stock before they are shipped and again on landing.

MR. JAMES: You can give individual inspection, in that case.

THE PREMIER: The same as is given when cattle go into a race. Mr. Emanuel means the same inspection that has always been given since tick was first reported. Some hon. members may differ from the Government as to the advisability of having admitted these 900 cattle, because there are some persons who wish to be very safe, and will not run the remotest risk; yet, with the exception of that class of persons, of which I am not one—for the interests are too great not to use our ordinary common sense and judgment in regard to this matter, and not be running after some fetish—if hon. members will look through these papers, they will find (and I mention this only for the purpose of showing that this did not all originate after the return of myself from London) that some time before this, the then Commissioner of Crown Lands (Mr. A. R. Richardson), who was administering the Act, recommended to his colleagues, while I was out of the colony, that this restriction in regard to cattle coming in should be removed, and that in lieu of it they should impose quarantine and a careful inspection. That recommendation came before the Cabinet, I being then away from the colony, and the Cabinet did not agree to it; therefore it was not given effect to. But that circumstance shows that it was not only the Premier who was in favour of admitting these cattle, but that the then Commissioner of Crown Lands, knowing all the facts in regard to the administration of the Act, and before I returned to the colony, was in favour of removing this prohibition. Why? Because he knew that meat was badly wanted in the southern parts of the colony, and that the price of meat was very high; and he also knew that about 12,000 cattle had been brought from the East Kimberley district to the southern markets during the last three years, without one case of disease from tick having been imported into this part of the colony. The then Commissioner of Crown Lands, knowing that cattle had been coming into this part of the colony during these years without a single case of tick having occurred, though he may

have been wrong in his judgment, would naturally ask: Why put this absolute prohibition on cattle from Kimberley? Why not let us substitute for prohibition a careful inspection, and, if necessary, quarantine—anything, in fact, but absolute prohibition? His colleagues at that time did not agree with him—I cannot say why—-but of course it would be idle to say that every member of a Ministry takes the same interest in regard to the administration of a particular department as the Minister of that department takes in it himself, and, as a rule, Ministers are guided by the advice of the colleague who has charge of the department. I then came upon the scene, and I say at once, most freely, that pressure was brought to bear upon me—if you call it pressure—that a request was made to admit these cattle, which were reported to be clean and healthy, and which an inspector had examined, and I was asked to allow them to come in to the southern markets. I say at once it was my desire, if possible, to let them in, and that if these cattle were healthy, clean, and free from disease, my inclination was against prohibition. I said we would see what we could do. I then had an interview with the Chief Inspector of Stock, and following on that interview I sent this letter, containing a number of questions I put to him for eliciting exact information, and I will also read his answers to the questions:—

(a.) How many cattle are now waiting on the East side of the border to come in?—There are 900 cattle on the border now awaiting admission.

(b.) What station have they come from?—They have come from the Wave Hill country.

(c.) How long since they left the station?—They left the station some time during the month of June.

(d.) Are they fat?—They are reported to be fat.

(e.) Have they been inspected; and, if so, by whom and how many times?—Inspector Stephens informs me (Chief Inspector), by telegram dated the 2nd inst., that Inspector Alston has inspected the cattle, and found them free from tick and healthy. I am not aware of any other inspection having been made, as Mr. Alston's journal is not yet to hand.

(f.) Is there any sign of disease upon them?—According to Mr. Stephens' telegram, they are perfectly healthy.

(g.) Would there be any more risk in admitting to our Southern market these cattle, than there has been in admitting the Sturt

Creek cattle?—In my opinion, if these cattle are again inspected at the border, and accompanied to the port by Mr. Stephens, there would be no more risk in bringing them to our Southern markets than there was in bringing the Sturt Creek cattle.

In further questions I asked “(h) If you think not, what quarantine and conditions would you impose?” The reply was, “As these cattle have been so long away from a tick-infested area on clean country, i.e., where no Northern Territory cattle have ever been, the only conditions I should require are—a further inspection by Inspector Stephens at the border, and that he accompanies them to the port. I think the latter step necessary because there are no yards or other conveniences for close inspection of the cattle at the border, and the inspector, by closely following them day by day, would be sure to see any ticks if they were present.” I wrote, “If these cattle are clean and fat, and ready to come in, how would it do to subject them to searching inspection, and to quarantining before shipping, and then let them in as a *special case*?” Is Wave Hill clear of ticks?” The reply was, “If the cattle are clean and fat they have undergone sufficient quarantine, i.e., isolation from other cattle since June, to enable the inspector to decide whether they are tick-infested or not, and *might be allowed to come in as a special case*. Wave Hill has been reported clean by Inspector Alston.” Well, I know that a large number of Wave Hill cattle have come into the market already during the last year or two, and no disease has come down with those cattle. In addition to the inspector's report I received a report from the Minister of Lands, in which he advised me to remove the “taboo,” as he called it, from the border cattle.

MR. JAMES: Why did you not amend the regulations and not make a “special case?”

THE PREMIER: I was not prepared to amend the regulations. I was not going to let the whole Northern cattle into the colony, but had to deal with a special case which I was advised by the law officers the law was intended to meet. On receiving the report from the Minister of Lands, I consulted the Cabinet, at a meeting of which all the Ministers were present except the then Attorney General (Mr. Burt), who was thinking of severing his official connection

with the Government. As a result of that Cabinet meeting I sent the following Minute to the Minister of Lands:—

I have consulted Cabinet in regard to your suggestion that "*the taboo should be removed from border cattle*," and it is agreeable that the 900 cattle on the border now awaiting admission may be allowed to come in as a special case, provided the inspector passes them as clean, and takes every precaution. I attach Mr. Craig's report, and he should now give the necessary instructions. Every precaution and care should be taken to be certain that the cattle are free from disease.

The Minister of Lands then issued the instructions. I sent to the Law Department, telling the Attorney General what had been done, and asking him to prepare an Order-in-Council, which he did. It has been said that the cattle were in the country before the Order-in-Council was issued. I can explain that. The Government had decided to admit the cattle, and had informed the inspector he could pass them. The cattle came more quickly than was anticipated. The Cabinet meet only once a week, and, as one week was missed, the formal approval of the Order-in-Council was signed by the Governor after the cattle had come in. But the cattle did not come into the colony until the Government had advised the Order-in-Council should issue. The order was issued after the cattle came in, merely because the cattle came more quickly than had been anticipated.

A MEMBER: The instruction to bring the cattle in went up on the 20th.

THE PREMIER: It was on the 19th that the Government decided that the cattle could come in.

MR. JAMES: Did Inspector Stephens come down with the cattle?

THE PREMIER: Yes.

MR. SIMPSON: He found them inside the colony.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member knows better than that. He has read the papers, and knows well that, so far as our information went, Cockatoo Springs is on the border.

MR. SIMPSON: You have only just found that out.

THE PREMIER: As to the question of the cattle being on the border, I had not heard of Cockatoo Springs before. Here is the telegram received from Inspector Stephens:—

Received your wire to proceed to border on 23rd inst., left 24th, inspected cattle

28th, found them apparently clean and free from ticks. Connor and Doherty sent word to their drovers on the 20th to bring cattle in; never gave Alston or self any notice of their intention to bring cattle in (en?) route for Wyndham where I found them, which was five miles east of Cockatoo Springs. Are all cattle to be allowed in over border? As several lots of breeders are waiting to come in, there will be great dissatisfaction if not allowed in.

Still being cautious—very cautious indeed, I think—I wrote the following memorandum to the Minister of Lands:—

1. I shall be obliged if you will give definite instructions that the proclamation, published in *Government Gazette* on 29th day of January, 1897, as to cattle being prohibited from crossing the border, is still in force, and the inspector should not allow any cattle to come in, unless under definite instructions from headquarters.

2. Any request to admit cattle should be made through the Chief Inspector, and no application should be entertained or considered, except for fat cattle for slaughter, reported on by a Government inspector as absolutely free from disease and healthy. Bulls and store cattle, or breeding cattle, should not be admitted at all.

3. Your inspectors should be warned that a great responsibility rests upon them, and urged to be most careful in examining cattle before reporting they are free from disease.

4. Mr. Kilfoyle's request as to bulls should certainly be refused.

5. Your inspectors should also be instructed to keep a close account of all stock crossing the border, and the number shipped, so as to enable the duty to be paid.

MR. SIMPSON: Hear, hear. You were careful about the duty.

THE PREMIER: That is not the matter under discussion at the present time; but there was no reason, so far as I know, why the duty should not be paid. I have laid before the House the whole of the correspondence I have in regard to this matter.

MR. GEORGE: On what date was the duty paid?

THE PREMIER: I have not the date in my mind, but it was paid by cheque at Wyndham under the regulations, and cashed here. Hon. members have read the opinion of Mr. Pound, a gentleman who, I believe, is well versed in scientific knowledge of the tick. He has told us that the tick only flourishes in humid country, such as is found along the coasts of Queensland, where there is dense foliage, and where the sun does not get at the cattle in the same way as it does in the dry country of Wyndham. At any

rate. Mr. Pound told us — although the hon. member did not quote that part—that there is no fear of the tick flourishing except in the humid parts of the Northern Territory.

MR. LEAKE: I read that.

THE PREMIER: Did you?

MR. ILLINGWORTH: It is a matter of speculation on Mr. Pound's part.

THE PREMIER: That is so. It might have been thought that anyone not desirous of interfering with the tick, but, like the hon. member, desirous of attacking the Government, would have been able to show that the cattle had brought the tick here, and that damage had resulted in this temperate part of the country. Notwithstanding that during the last three years there have been imported 12,654 head of cattle from places where tick is known to exist, no tick has been found down here. I am glad of that for many reasons — personal, political, and otherwise. Nor has the Chief Inspector or anyone else—and I questioned the Chief Inspector in regard to it—shown what mortality, if any, has occurred in the East Kimberley district from tick. There is no evidence whatever that a single beast has died from tick in that district. Not a single tick has been found by the Chief Inspector, nor by the inspectors who followed the cattle from place to place. Not a single tick has been found on any of the animals which came down here to market. If a noise is to be made, the Government, at any rate, are going to shut the door before the horse gets out.

MR. LEAKE: And a good policy, too.

THE PREMIER: No damage has been done yet; and we can, therefore, deal with the matter in a reasonable way without casting stones at anyone. If we are in earnest in our desire to protect our flocks and herds, the House has an opportunity of doing so; and the Government would welcome any instruction from the House in regard to the administration of the Act. What occasion is there for the leader of the Opposition to make a party attack on the Government, on members generally, and on me? The hon. member for East Perth (Mr James) ought to be ashamed of himself for imputing such a motive to me as a desire to catch a vote or two. The mole can see

better than the hon. member. Cannot he see that, if I were actuated by such a motive, I would be more likely to alienate many of my friends than gain two? The hon. member must see that his observations on this score are most ungenerous and certainly uncalled for. And the hon. member for Albany (Mr. Leake) is just as bad. He sees a political move on my part to get two votes, forgetting that by doing so I should be losing half-a-dozen votes.

MR. LEAKE: And so you are.

THE PREMIER: All I can say is that those who leave me will not get amongst friends, when they get alongside the hon. member. I am afraid of no one, either friend or foe, reading the papers relating to this matter. It may be said the Government took some risk. If we did take any risk it was very little, seeing that thousands of cattle have come from that district and no tick has been found on any of them. Every precaution was taken, and any hon. member, whether on the Opposition side or that of the Government, must come to the conclusion that the Government did not rush like a bull at a gate, but acted carefully and discreetly and with a desire to do what they thought to be just. I do not profess to know much about tick. I look at the question from a common-sense point of view, and see that if tick would flourish in this part of the country it would be here now. It is possible that amongst the 12,000 beasts imported from that part, a tick may have been found hanging on to some. The immunity from tick is due, no doubt, to the careful inspection at both ends, and also to the effect of the sun after the arrival of the cattle here. We all rejoice that tick has not found a home in the southern parts of the country. I have been thinking over this matter very much during the last month or two, as to what is best to be done. I am quite certain an impartial jury would not convict the Government of any negligence in the matter, but would say every care and precaution had been taken, and that we had the Department of Stock on our side. But more tick has been found in the districts in question, and the question is — what is best to be done? I confess at once that I am puzzled. I hardly know what to do. We could have absolute prohibition. If

it meant prohibiting strangers outside, it would not be so bad; but prohibition would involve an immense territory and a lot of settlers of our own.

MR. SIMPSON: There is no fat stock.

THE PREMIER: There will be. After the rains there will be a lot of fine fat cattle, and we import a lot from there. This is a great industry; and if we are going to prohibit, some means must be taken so that the people engaged in the industry may not be ruined altogether. Works would have to be established, or something done for their relief. I should be glad to have the opinions of hon. members. It is a difficult thing for the Government to deal with those questions. I wish there was some independent authority to deal with them. Insect pests and diseases are dealt with by the Bureau of Agriculture, and I only wish the bureau would take over the management of diseases of stock. That would relieve the Government from a great deal of trouble, and would certainly relieve us from ungenerous observations by the hon. member for Albany and the hon. member for East Perth. I am glad to say that we have now a clean sheet, so far as tick is concerned. Stock has been temporarily quarantined and no damage has been done; and the House has a chance now to take preventive measures. I want the advice and assistance of this House as to the best course to pursue. We must not forget that in dealing with this question we are depending for our meat supply on that district, and if we close the door there we shall have to import. I would sooner encourage our own people, but I don't want to run unnecessary risk. We have taken such precautions that, although we have a large number of cattle, we know no tick disease has ever come down to this part of the colony. It will have been noticed that the hon. member never said anything about the cattle not having the tick, and of their having been examined and reported on as perfectly clean. I hope hon. members will deal with this matter in a practical way. Let us see what the views of the House are on this question. It is not a party question at all, so far as I can see. If the Government had done some terrible wrong, and the whole of the colony were devastated by some disease, no doubt that would be a case for which

the Government would have to answer; but our conduct cannot be called in question here, seeing that no harm has been done. Let hon. members declare their views. Whatever decision we arrive at can be reconsidered in six or seven months. Whatever decision the House comes to, the Government will take care to carry out.

MR. HOLMES (East Fremantle): The administration of the Stock Diseases Act of 1895 is most unsatisfactory. The department are at the present time harassing the settlers in the southern districts to exterminate the tick in sheep, which I personally know has existed there for 25 years, and which is only an insect, and not a pest. At the same time the department are playing fast and loose with the greater disease of tick in cattle. These are entirely different, one being a disease while the other is only an insect which appears at certain seasons and disappears at others. The most stringent regulations are enforced in the one case and not in the other. The Premier quoted Mr. Emanuel to show that tick was found in East Kimberley in June, 1896.

THE PREMIER: It was found years before, according to that authority.

MR. HOLMES: We find on inquiry that in April, 1896, 600 bullocks left Wave Hill station, in the Northern Territory of South Australia. They crossed the border in May.

THE PREMIER: No.

MR. HOLMES: I have it from a very good authority, from gentlemen on the spot. The cattle came from a station where tick had been known to exist for many years. After crossing the border in May, these 600 bullocks travelled through the herds of East Kimberley, belonging to our own settlers, and in June, 1896, the tick was found on the East Kimberley herds. It was from these herds that the 20,000 cattle have been drawn in the past. In the face of these facts, the Premier says that no harm has yet been done. The facts before the House prove that the introduction of the 600 cattle into East Kimberley was immediately followed by the introduction of tick. According to the official report, 100 out of the 600 cattle died on the way across the border. When this statement was made in the House, one hon. member interjected, "Not 100, but 70." Assum-

ing that it was only 70, and that tick appeared in the East Kimberley district a month after the herd crossed the border, the Government can not claim that no harm had been done.

THE PREMIER: I have a letter here to show that the tick was in East Kimberley years before that.

MR. HOLMES: So far as I know, there is no authority for such a statement. It will be found that Emanuel was interested in this particular lot of cattle. The remaining 500 were subsequently shipped down to Fremantle, and 50 of the same herd were found to be suffering from disease. They were shipped by Messrs. Connor, Doherty, and Durack, in defiance of the law; and legal proceedings having been taken against them, the firm were fined £50, or 1s. 8d. per head, for having defied the Government and introduced 600 bullocks, 100 of which died on the way, while 50 others were subsequently condemned. I have it also on good authority that, immediately following the introduction of these 600 cattle, drovers were sent back to Wave Hill station—although legal proceedings were pending against the company for a breach of the law—to bring 900 more cattle over. Deputations waited on the Acting Premier, who took a decidedly firm stand, and he was perfectly justified in doing so. I was a member of one of the deputations. It was pointed out by one section of a deputation that the introduction of these cattle was likely to reduce the price of meat.

THE PREMIER: The more cattle there are in the market must make the price lower.

MR. HOLMES: I pointed out to the deputation that the public were not likely to reap any advantage from that because, assuming the introduction of these cattle did have the effect of cheapening the market for the time being, yet if the tick were introduced thereby, it would be a loss instead of a gain. What do we find? That the tick has been introduced, and it is probable that our own settlers in the Kimberley district, the best cattle-producing district of Western Australia, whence we get our winter supplies, will be prohibited from supplying us any more. Only one firm has had the opportunity of introducing cattle, and if the cattle they introduced had been kept out, the tick

would have been kept out also. If the tick had been kept out, we could have gone on growing more cattle every year. As it is, the ticks are increasing each year, and it seems likely that our chief source of supply for six months in the year will be closed. The 20,000 cattle referred to did not come from the Northern Territory of South Australia, but from our own districts. We find that 900 cattle crossed the border on October 28. The Premier pointed out that the proclamation might have been published a week earlier than it was; but if the right hon. gentleman wished to get himself out of a difficulty, the proclamation should have been issued a fortnight before it was issued, because the steamer left Fremantle to fetch the cattle a fortnight before the cattle came into the colony. The Government were defied on a previous occasion over 600 head of cattle. When these cattle were landed at Fremantle the owners were fined £50 for a breach of the law, and after that the drovers were sent back to bring more cattle into the East Kimberley district. These cattle came into the colony on October 28th, and they could not have been brought down to Fremantle until November 6th, the date of the *Gazette* notice. The 600 head of cattle were brought into the colony in defiance of the Government, and the owners of the cattle were defying the Government with the 900 head. The vessel was ready to take the cattle to Fremantle, and the owners simply said, "Remove the prohibition, or we will take the cattle to Fremantle and hold the Government up to ridicule." The voyage from Wyndham takes about eight or nine days, and the vessel left Fremantle to fetch the cattle three weeks before the prohibition was removed. I know that the cattle were put on the ship on November 5, and the proclamation did not appear in the *Gazette* until November 6. In the administration of the Stock Diseases Act there is something radically wrong. The Government are certainly to blame in allowing some people to do as they like. There were cattle in the Northern Territory, but people were forbidden from introducing them into this colony. The 900 head of cattle were bought with a prohibition on them, but as soon as the prohibition was removed the cattle became valuable. Who reaped the benefit?

Not the public. I would further like to point out that the Premier stated that these 900 head of cattle were fat cattle, and no other than fat cattle would have been allowed to come into the colony. These cattle were introduced on the understanding that they were fat cattle, and that they were to be immediately shipped to Fremantle. It was found they were not fat cattle. One shipment of 300 was sent to Fremantle, and some of the cattle were distributed about Fremantle, but 200 head were sent to Northam, where some of them are now. The other 600 head are in the Kimberley district spreading disease. If anyone else had obtained permission to ship cattle to Fremantle, the cattle would have had to be shipped. The cattle were allowed to enter the colony to be sent to Fremantle, but because they are not fat cattle and are not fit to pay freight upon, they are not shipped. It must appear evident to hon. members that the administration of the Stock Diseases Act of 1895 is anything but satisfactory.

MR. HOOLEY (the DeGrey): Although not agreeing with the form in which the motion has been brought forward, I think the thanks of the community and the House are due to the hon. member for Albany for bringing so important a matter before the House. Enormous risks are run in dealing with the tick. Two dangers are threatening us at the present time. There are the rabbits in the south-east, but these we can see and deal with. Then there is in the north the cattle tick, which we cannot see and are thus unable to deal with it. Nothing but absolute prohibition, not only on the border of the Northern Territory but in the Kimberley district, can control this pest and keep it within bounds. It is possible to keep infected cattle on the other side of the Leopold Range. I have had several conversations with gentlemen from Queensland, since this pest has given so much trouble, and I heard quite recently from a gentleman from Townsville that the people of Townsville are cut off from dairy supplies, and that now they have to use condensed milk and imported butter. That is what it will come to in this colony if this pest is imported. The Premier seems to think that this is a question which only affects pastoralists and farmers, but it affects everyone in the

colony, including those living on the goldfields. People from the goldfields come to the city, and what would those people say to us if, when they came to Perth, we gave them condensed milk? Do hon. members think the people from the goldfields would spend their holidays in Perth? No; they would go to the other colonies. The Premier's own district will be one of the first districts of the colony to suffer, if this disease is allowed to spread. There are many other districts which would suffer considerably. The colony will have to depend solely on imported stock from the other colonies, if the disease is allowed to spread. In the *Pastoralists' Review* I read of the sale of a station in Queensland with 10,000 head of cattle, 150 horses, homestead, good fencing, and the country was considered very valuable a new years ago. The price the station fetched was £1,500! That is the result of the cattle tick. In the same paper another sale of a station property was reported. There were 2,500 acres of freehold land, 2,000 cattle, 200 horses, a considerable amount of fencing, and all was sold for £700. That is what we may expect in this country if the cattle tick is allowed to come in. I hope the House will arrive at some satisfactory method of preventing tick coming out of the East Kimberley district.

MR. JAMES (East Perth): It must have been a source of gratification, and have given some reassurance to the hon. member for Albany (Mr. Leake), to have listened to the remarks of the hon. member for the DeGrey (Mr. Hooley), after the somewhat rough remarks from that gentleman when he first spoke about this matter of the tick. The hon. member for the DeGrey, on a previous occasion, asked why the hon. member for Albany brought forward this matter; therefore it must be reassuring to the leader of the Opposition to listen to the remarks of the hon. member for the DeGrey, who appreciates the gravity of the danger we have to face. The Premier is always optimistic. He is always full of hope, and looks at the bright side of things. In many ways that is a good thing, but confidence like that sometimes becomes foolhardiness. When we find, all over Australia, men who have had more experience in cattle than the hon. members in this House, recognising the gravity of the position

and the absolute need of taking the most stringent steps to save the cattle from this scourge, is it not rash to separate ourselves from the general current of thought in Australia, and to hide our heads, as it were, in the sand, and say, "The tick will not reach us, because we cannot see it?" That is the position in which we are placing ourselves. Why should we delude ourselves with the fond hope that this tick disease, which is such a scourge in Queensland, and against which the most stringent steps are being taken in the other colonies, will not affect us, and sit down and start an experimental farm on Garden Island? That is the position the Government is taking up.

THE PREMIER: I do not think so. Do not misrepresent.

MR. JAMES: We have been told that we know nothing about cattle, but after all that is not the question altogether. It has been proved by experiments in the sister colonies that this is a grave evil; therefore we are not wrong in calling upon the Government to recognise the disease as the other colonies recognise it. The speech of the right hon. gentleman was beside the question. His argument was not for the purpose of justifying the exemption given to Messrs. Connor, Doherty, Durack, and Co., Limited, but for the purpose of showing that all the regulations are absolutely useless. The regulations imposed by the Government were not agreed upon in the first instance during the absence of the Premier, but the regulations were introduced during the time the Premier was in the colony, and they were introduced after due consideration, proper advice and consultation. Attention was first drawn to this matter by the knowledge of the fact that the firm of Connor, Doherty, Durack, and Co., or the predecessors of the firm, openly violated the law. Knowing that they had no right to introduce cattle, they introduced them. It was a wilful violation of the law. Is it not in itself somewhat peculiar that any man in this country, whether he occupies a seat in this House or not, should be allowed openly to violate the law, to deliberately introduce cattle when he knows that the law prohibits their introduction? These gentlemen, in whose favour the law was again suspended and stretched for the purpose of meeting their

special case, are the very men who had openly and flagrantly violated the law as it existed. I believe Mr. Durack was, at that time, the confidential adviser to the firm, and he thoroughly approved of what they did. The regulations still existed; the law was openly violated, and cattle were introduced which might have brought with them tick, or tuberculosis, or any of the diseases which we desire to keep out. This limited firm, with no soul or conscience—for as the law does not recognise a soul or conscience in corporations, we may assume that they had neither—deliberately and openly introduce these rotten and diseased cattle, knowing that they had broken the law, and that proceedings were pending against them; and yet, with a full knowledge of that fact, they sent their drovers back for the purpose of bringing 900 more cattle. It is peculiar and somewhat significant that a man sitting behind the Government—I hope the hon. member will distinctly understand that I am speaking of him as a public man—

THE PREMIER: You are not justified in doing it. You are out of order.

MR. JAMES: I say it is somewhat singular that, after the time arrived, proceedings were threatened against them. They say: "We don't care for the Government and the regulations. Go back and bring 900 more cattle!" But apparently it leaks out. Meetings are held; correspondence appears in the press; public opinion is excited, and deputations go before the Acting Premier, which represent the majority of the cattle-owners in this colony, and they say: "We want those regulations carried out." Now mark you, those deputations were held simply because of this threatened invasion of more cattle belonging to this firm; and people naturally thought, what is to happen, if regulations are to be openly broken by any individual firm? But one of the members of the firm of Connor, Doherty, and Durack, Limited, attends a deputation, and he will not stand this sort of thing. He does not believe that these regulations are meant to apply to the firm of Connor, Doherty, and Durack, Limited; and he states that, if the law is enforced—a member of this House goes to a public deputation and states that, if the law is enforced—he will use his power in this House to move a

vote of want of confidence in the Government. That is the same firm in whose favour these special exemptions are subsequently made. The Acting Premier took up a proper position with reference to that matter; and I therefore regret to note that he was one of those who was present when this Order-in-Council was subsequently made. I thought the hon. gentleman in question had more backbone than to deliberately promise the public that the Government would stand by the regulations, and would not allow themselves to be influenced by this threat of those people who had broken the law on previous occasions, and then give in after all. When that expression of opinion was given by the Acting Premier, the public had a right to expect that the Government would stand by it; and other persons who dealt in cattle had a right to assume that they would stand by it. But Connor, Doherty, and Durack did not agree to it; and, after the Government, in the most deliberate manner, promised the country that they would enforce the regulations, and enforce them for the express purpose of preventing this firm from again violating the law, what do we find? Pressure is brought to bear again. After the Acting Premier had promised this deputation that the law should be enforced, the same firm buy some more cattle. We cannot help being amused at the situation. These cattle are purchased, and are kept hanging about on the border. Now why was that done, when the firm bought the cattle with a full knowledge of the disqualification which attached to them? What moral right had they to obtain exemption from the provisions of the Act? Certainly they had no legal right.

THE PREMIER: There is no reference to show when they sent for these cattle. They left Wave Hill in June, so far as I know.

MR. JAMES: They were bought in May, so far as I know.

THE PREMIER: You had better be sure.

MR. JAMES: The Premier's own statement was that these cattle left Wave Hill in June; and the deputation was in May. This fact remains, that the Government have never yet put forward as a reason for granting this exemption the fact that

these cattle were bought before they had knowledge of it. These cattle were purchased, at any rate, after January; and the regulations suspended for the benefit of this limited firm were regulations in force ever since January. They did not come into force for the first time in May. It was in May that the Government promised they would see these regulations carried out; and I say deliberately that these cattle were purchased with a full knowledge of these regulations. Why were they admitted? The Premier himself says they were really admitted—I think he must concede this—because he himself did not approve of the regulations.

THE PREMIER: I said just the opposite. I did not say that at all.

MR. JAMES: All the arguments of the right hon. gentleman went to show that he did not believe in the regulations because tick could not thrive in that district. His reasoning was to this effect: if these cattle are fat and clean, admit them. Well, they were not fat when they were admitted.

THE PREMIER: They were reported to be. They were not in bad condition when they arrived here.

MR. JAMES: I want to know what steps the right hon. gentleman has taken since they got here. Who was responsible for saying they were fat?

THE PREMIER: They are all eaten by this time.

MR. JAMES: I understand that only 300 out of the original 900 have been sold at Fremantle.

THE PREMIER: Over 400.

MR. JAMES: That speaks for their condition.

THE PREMIER: That is not the evidence I have before me, at any rate.

MR. JAMES: They were supposed to be fat and clean. Now I will ask: what on earth has the question of fatness got to do with disease? If they were clean, that was all that was necessary.

THE PREMIER: We wanted meat.

MR. JAMES: Well, we never got the meat. It is idle to give that as a reason. If the desire of the Premier had simply been that we should get meat, why did he not pass a regulation that all fat cattle should be admitted after inspection at the border? Why did they not say that?

THE PREMIER: We did say so, practically.

MR. JAMES: You did not.

THE PREMIER: I beg your pardon.

MR. JAMES: That is what the Commissioner of Lands wanted you to say. He took up a perfectly consistent position. He said: "These regulations are unfair: have them removed." Instead of removing them, you give an exemption to one firm.

THE PREMIER: This was a special case. We will deal with any other special case on the same conditions.

MR. JAMES: It was a special case because the cattle were fat and clean.

THE PREMIER: We wanted the meat.

MR. JAMES: We never got the meat. And will the right hon. gentleman say that, if those cattle had been fat and tick-infested, he would have admitted them? Was it not the first condition that they should be clean? If we were so badly in want of meat in Perth that the Government felt justified in suspending the regulations in favour of a particular firm who had treated the law with contempt on every possible occasion, and who had even gone so far as to threaten the Government, why did they not exempt other cattle-owners from the same provisions of the Act? Why did they not make an order modifying the regulations so that any person who brought to the border fat and clean cattle could have them admitted? If that had been done, the position taken up by the Government would have been much stronger than it is now. It seems to me that the crucial question must be whether the cattle are clean or not; and the question of whether they are fat or lean is beside the point. We did not make these regulations for the purpose of excluding thin or store cattle, but in order to exclude diseased cattle. I should like to ask the Premier how it was that cattle which came from the same place as those of Connor, Doherty, and Durack, Limited, and which had the same qualifications—which were fat and clean—were not admitted? That is a matter which requires explanation; and I do not think a satisfactory explanation has yet been given. I want to know why Kilfoyle's cattle were distinguished from the cattle of Connor, Doherty, and Durack, Limited. The only reason I can get is that Kilfoyle's cattle were bulls.

But what on earth has that got to do with it, so long as they were clean? The regulations were for the purpose of dealing with diseased cattle.

THE PREMIER: I have told you several times that we wanted the meat.

MR. JAMES: Again I say, if that were the condition, we should have got the meat. But we did not get it.

THE PREMIER: That is not my fault.

MR. JAMES: Does not the right hon. gentleman see that the Government have been tricked by the firm which on previous occasions had broken the law?

THE PREMIER: I do not believe the firm knew the state of the cattle on that occasion.

MR. JAMES: The members of the firm knew well enough the state the cattle were in. I speak of the right hon. gentleman as a public man, and I myself speak as a public man. In dealing with this matter it is our one desire to see the administration of this Act is not only pure, but above suspicion; and we have to bear in mind that it is not what I, with my knowledge of the private character of Ministers, may think, but what outsiders may think, and may reasonably think, that we have to consider.

THE PREMIER: You ought to set them a better example.

MR. JAMES: I want to teach the Government an example. I want them to be above suspicion; and I say that an outsider, judging us simply by our public actions in connection with this matter, would have a right to look somewhat aside when he found that here were two lots of cattle, brought from the same station on the same date, both of them clean, both of them fat; and that one lot, which belonged to two members of this House, was admitted; while the other, the owner of which was not a member of the House, was not admitted. I think that this transaction is open to misconception on the part of people who do not know the personal character of Ministers. That is open to misconception by those who do not know the present Ministry.

THE PREMIER: Not by you, anyhow.

MR. JAMES: I am not speaking of the Ministry as private individuals. The Government ought to avoid acts open to misconception of this nature.

THE PREMIER: We can take care of ourselves without advice from you.

MR. JAMES: That is true.

THE PREMIER: Has the Ministry to be insulted by every one in the House?

MR. JAMES: There seems to be some misunderstanding in the mind of the Premier. When I address this House I do not speak to the Premier, but to the country, and it is a matter of perfect indifference to me whether or not the Premier likes what I say. I speak to my constituency, who may return or reject me.

THE PREMIER: Good manners are expected, anyhow.

MR. JAMES: Some people make a mistake in connection with these debates. I do not come here for the purpose of learning manners from the right hon. gentleman.

MR. SIMPSON: You would not get any if you did.

MR. JAMES: I come to criticise the Premier's actions, and when I do that, I do not refer to his personal characteristics. I only want to justify my suggestion that the action of the Government is open to misconstruction. The law was suspended for the purpose of assisting the special case of men who had openly and flagrantly flouted the Government, and who deliberately tricked the Premier by saying the cattle were fat when they must have known the cattle were not fat. It is idle for the Premier to say nothing has happened since. Even if nothing has happened, we want to close the door before the steed has gone. The hon. member for East Fremantle told us cattle passed through in May, and that tick was found in June. If that be so, it speaks for itself. I enter my protest against a system under which regulations of this character may be suspended. Here was a regulation adopted after full consideration, on the advice of responsible officers, and supported by deputations representing most of the cattle owners of the colony; and yet, in the face of a deliberate promise that the regulation would be maintained, a suspension is granted in a hole-and-corner way. Seven or ten days before the public had any notice, this firm had their cattle on board ship on their way to Fremantle. If there was any justification for the special case on behalf of O'Connor, Doherty, and Durack,

Limited, there was no reason why the same exemption should not have been granted to all cattle owners who fulfilled the same conditions. If the regulations had been amended to allow any clean and fat cattle to come in, nothing could have been said, beyond, perhaps, that the Government had acted rather wrongly in modifying the regulations in that way. I regret the misconstruction which may be put on the action of the Government, and will give my vote with the motion.

MR. HARPER (Beverley): It is refreshing to see the leader of the Opposition taking up the cudgels on behalf of the pastoralists, and I only hope he will continue fighting on their behalf. But I cannot help thinking that if the position had been reversed, he would have found a much better opportunity of bringing an accusation against the Government. It is a great pity and a great misfortune that the subject should be involved in the interests of two firms of cattle dealers. If that consideration had not come in, there would have been very much less heat, and very much less animadversion on all sides. I myself wish, as far as possible, to speak apart from that consideration, and I point out how the leader of the Opposition might have had a much better case if the conditions had been reversed. The hon. member for East Fremantle has suggested that a certain gentleman, when he wrote a certain letter, was interested in the export of cattle from East Kimberley, and that, therefore, the House should not place too much confidence in what that gentleman has said. Supposing the Ministry had not done what they did and had made enemies, what a much better case the leader of the Opposition would have had if the gentleman referred to had gone to the hon. member, and asked him to take up his case and attack the Premier for not having used his influence to benefit the firm of which his brother was a member.

MR. LEAKE: But that position did not come about. I am not fighting for Alexander Forrest and Co.

MR. HARPER: The leader of the Opposition, when questioned by the Premier, said he would quarantine the whole of the cattle from East Kimberley. But that would mean that the colony would lose the supply of stock from the chief export district. It may

be my misfortune, but it is my habit, to look a little further ahead than some people. It is, perhaps, very often unwise to do that, because it leaves one open to imputations which other people escape. We have a short supply of meat for our own markets. If that supply be shortened, only one result can follow, namely, that the duty must be taken off live stock. And to take the duty off live stock involves, sooner or later, taking the duty off chilled meat. I am as positive as I am standing here that to take the duty off chilled meat will absolutely annihilate the pastoral industry of the colony.

MR. JAMES: The tick will do that.

MR. HARPER: That is your assertion, and I do not know that it is worth much.

MR. JAMES: Except that that is the opinion in Queensland and New South Wales.

MR. HARPER: The hon. member refers to Queensland. One would suppose that the Queensland tick had only fallen on two places in the world—Texas and the Northern Territory of Australia. The tick had its origin in the East India Islands, throughout the whole of which it exists. It was introduced on the mainland of Australia, and spread through the Northern Territory to Queensland. It has been so deadly in Queensland because the climate of that colony favours its reproduction. No hon. member seems to have noticed that its devastating effects are due to the fact that hundreds of miles on the Queensland coast are thickly stocked with cattle from end to end. All the herds meet, and consequently there is no check on the spread of the tick, under favourable climatic and geographical conditions. Cattle from the Northern parts of Queensland have travelled through Australia to Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney, in thousands and tens of thousands; but we have not heard of tick appearing in their tracks.

MR. JAMES: The animals are quarantined.

MR. HARPER: Mobs of cattle have been travelling through Australia from north to south for the last twenty years, but the tick has only caused devastation in those districts especially suitable for its development.

A MEMBER: The cattle are not allowed to travel now.

MR. HARPER: It cannot be denied that those cattle have been travelling from tick-infected districts for the last twenty years, and we have not heard of infection appearing in inland or dry portions of the colony. If the danger had been so great as some hon. members seem to fear, the tick would have been in Victoria and New South Wales long ago. It is only within recent years, when the devastation of the tick has made itself remarkable in Eastern Queensland, that people have become terrified in other portions of the colonies. There has been the same risk of contagion for many years past.

MR. VOSPER: If there has been the same risk of contagion for twenty years, why has the disease not broken out in the same way before?

MR. HARPER: Tick has gradually drifted down the coasts, but has only got serious where climatic conditions were favourable. Why has the disease not appeared in the central parts of New South Wales and Victoria?

MR. JAMES: There are restrictions in Victoria and New South Wales.

MR. HARPER: There have been no restrictions at all until within the last year. I desire to again point out that if you close East Kimberley you will do an enormous injury to, if you will not actually destroy, one of the principal industries in that part of the colony. If you close East Kimberley, what will become of the cattle inland? The only way to eradicate the tick would be to eradicate the cattle, and that would be a drastic remedy which this House would hardly suggest. Shortly before the Acting Premier instructed Mr. Craig to visit the Kimberley district, I had a conversation with him, in the course of which he told me that he sent Mr. Craig there to get a full and accurate report of the conditions prevalent in that district. I said, "I think you are on perfectly sound ground in doing so, and you should be guided by the result." The member for Albany has insinuated—I don't know whether it comes from himself or not—that I have been somehow personally interested in the action the Government have taken. I give a direct and most emphatic denial to that, and will add that I had no more, perhaps not so much, to do with it, than the hon. member himself.

MR. LEAKE: I am perfectly satisfied.

MR. HARPER: My action has been governed by this. If there is any serious danger to be run by introducing cattle from East Kimberley to Fremantle, it is far better to run a minimum risk than to subject the country to the loss which would result from shutting up one of its principal meat-producing districts, and thus throwing the import trade into the hands of the eastern colonies.

A MEMBER: Will you vote for the abolition of the Stock Tax?

MR. HARPER: Yes; I voted in favour of it. It is not the abolition of the duty on live stock, but on dead meat, which is to be feared. Anyone who knows anything about live stock knows that it cannot possibly compete against the importation of chilled meat. Chilled meat will realise in the best markets of the world within a fraction of the best locally produced meat; and this colony could not produce locally and sell live stock against chilled meat from the other colonies. If you took off the duty on live stock, there would be such a clamour for the reduction or abolition of the duty on chilled meat that you would not only annihilate the live stock trade here, but throw it into the hands of the people outside the colony, who would be able to demand what price they liked. That brings me to another point with regard to the attack made on the Ministry. That attack was made because they have allowed a certain number of stock to come over the border and incurred the danger of the introduction of tick. I am not going to touch on the legal aspect of the question. I leave that to the legal members. All the evidence we have goes to show that the tick has been in East Kimberley for years past. The inspector of stock reports that, and we have had it confirmed from other sources as well. I say that, if you admit cattle to these parts from any portion of East Kimberley where there is tick, you are not justified in shutting out clean cattle because they come from over the water. There is no more danger of introducing tick by allowing clean cattle to be brought from over the border than by allowing tick-infested cattle to be brought here from within the border.

MR. VOSPER: Why not make it a general rule? Why make a special case?

MR. HARPER: I assume it to be a special case because only one party applied. The member for East Perth did not show his usual intelligence in discussing the question. Is it reasonable to suppose that a company of stock dealers would consign a number of sheep in poor condition to supply a market with fat stock? The case is absurd.

A MEMBER: They could not get them into the colony unless they said the sheep were fat.

MR. HARPER: It is very easily explained. The Wave Hill cattle were probably kept on inferior land on the border, and herded until they were permitted to enter. If hon. members imagine that cattle can be herded on inferior land and kept in good condition, they are mistaken. I wish to say a word in contradiction of what the member for East Fremantle said. "The tick," said the hon. member without naming his authority, "only came in with the Wave Hill cattle." Last year an officer was sent up to inquire into the matter, and he reported as follows:—

No reliable data concerning the first introduction of ticks on the Ord River run can be obtained, for the purpose no doubt of decrying the danger of the spread of these parasites. I have heard it said that they were seen there for the last ten years. This would mean from almost the first stocking of the country.

The most reasonable deduction we can come to is that the tick came from the Northern Territory and Queensland. There is no other probable source from which it could have come. He adds:—

But as few people now living in East Kimberley arrived there over ten years ago, and none of them are thoroughly acquainted with the run, and none of the men at present on the Ord River Station have been there two years, this statement, like many others I have heard, is quite unreliable. From a source I have reason to believe reliable, I heard previous to the last two years the parasite was not observed to any extent.

Therefore from a source which he believes to be reliable, he says the ticks have been there for over two years. That is much better evidence than the statement which the hon. member of East Fremantle gives us second-hand. The hon. member for Albany (MR. Leake) made what appeared to him a very good point, by reading in a letter that Mr. Durack was in favour of the introduction of a certain number of

cattle, and the hon. member at once assumed that Mr. Durack was a member of the firm of Connor, Doherty, Durack and Co. But it is obvious that if the firm had been writing of one of their partners, they would have said "our Mr. Durack." It so happens that there is another Mr. Durack totally independent of this firm.

MR. LEAKE: The letter is signed "Connor and Doherty," not "Connor, Doherty and Durack."

MR. HARPER: I do not know anything about that; I have not spoken to anyone on the subject; but I have casually met a Mr. Durack, who is not the member of Connor, Doherty and Durack, and I had some conversation with him on the subject of the tick, and I assume from it that this is the Mr. Durack spoken of. The hon. member for Albany is quite welcome to his little joke, but his reasoning is not sound from the evidence. I only desire to say a few words in regard to the introduction of these 900 head of cattle. I again repeat that if we are not to receive cattle that are clean and the duty on which has been paid, over the border, then we are not justified in receiving any cattle shipped from East Kimberley for Fremantle. In the future it will be necessary to be very careful what action is taken. I do not, however, think we are justified in taking an alarmist view and shutting out the whole of the cattle from East Kimberley district. The best thing for all concerned is to establish as soon as possible chilling works at the nearest convenient place to Wyndham. That is how our market will have to be supplied with beef in the future, and the sooner such a scheme is carried out the better. With regard to the danger to cattle in this part of the colony, some hon. members have given extremely pessimistic views. If we take the most serious case possible, that of a shipment of stock being landed and distributed, and it were afterwards found that the stock were diseased with tick, our country is so sparsely stocked with cattle that there is not the remotest possible chance of stock which had been landed being spread about so widely that they could not be discovered.

A MEMBER: But the tick might be on the ground.

MR. HARPER: Then you can quarantine the ground. I do not advocate

cattle being brought down with tick on them, but I say the alarmist view of some men is absurd. I would point this out, that the tick being indigenous to the East Indies, we are always running the risk of the disease being introduced by dogs and ponies from these places. All precaution should be taken to see that the tick is not introduced from the East Indies, Singapore, and other ports.

MR. A. FORREST (East Kimberley): I move that the debate be adjourned until the next sitting of the House. The questions raised by the various speakers are important, and I think the debate might be adjourned.

Motion—that the debate be adjourned—put, and division taken with the following result:—

Ayes ...	...	...	20
Noes ...	...	...	10
Majority for			10

AYES.
 Sir John Forrest
 Mr. A. Forrest
 Mr. George
 Mr. Hall
 Mr. Harper
 Mr. Hooley
 Mr. Hubble
 Mr. Lefroy
 Mr. Locke
 Mr. Mitchell
 Mr. Monger
 Mr. Pennefather
 Mr. Phillips
 Mr. Piesse
 Mr. Quinlan
 Mr. Rason
 Mr. Throssell
 Mr. Venn
 Mr. Wood
 Mr. Doherty (Teller).

NOES.
 Mr. Holmes
 Mr. Illingworth
 Mr. Leake
 Mr. Oats
 Mr. Oldham
 Mr. Simpson
 Mr. Vosper
 Mr. Wallace
 Mr. Wilson
 Mr. Keuny (Teller).

Motion for adjournment thus passed, and the debate adjourned accordingly.

MUNICIPAL INSTITUTIONS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

STATE OF PUBLIC BUSINESS.

THE PREMIER (Right Hon. Sir J. Forrest): Before the House adjourns, I beg to say that to-morrow I intend to ask the House to sit on Friday evening from 7:30 onward, as it seems to me that we cannot get through our business unless we do so. I mention the matter now in order that hon. members may consider it.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 11:25 p.m. until the next day.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 16th December, 1897.

Papers presented—Question: Loss of Papers in case of Regina v. Courthope—Jury Act Amendment Bill: first reading—Municipal Institutions Act Amendment Bill: first reading—Companies Act Amendment Bill: third reading—Sale of Liquors Act Amendment Bill: third reading—Public Notaries Bill: Council's Amendments insisted on—Adjournment.

The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4:30 o'clock p.m.

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the MINISTER OF MINES: 1. Returns showing expenditure incurred by the Metropolitan Waterworks Board and Public Works Department in sinking various bores. 2. Accounts of Metropolitan Waterworks Board, further particulars. 3. Return showing deaths caused by boiler explosions. 4. By-law of the Municipal Council of East Fremantle.

Ordered to lie on the table.

QUESTION—LOSS OF PAPERS IN CASE OF REGINA V. COURTHOPE.

HON. R. S. HAYNES, in accordance with notice, asked the Minister of Mines:—

1. If an exhibit was received in evidence at the Police Court, Perth, in the case of Regina v. Courthope. 2. Were the depositions, together with the exhibit, handed to the Crown Law Department. 3. Were the depositions and exhibit handed in due course to the Crown Solicitor, or were they ever in his possession. 4. If it was the fact that the exhibit was not forthcoming at the trial, and the fact adversely

commented on by the Chief Justice; and who was the person responsible for the neglect. 5. What steps, if any, did the Minister of the Department intend to take. 6. If the Police Magistrate (Mr. Roe) was in any way responsible for the loss of the document. 7. What explanation, if any, could be given of the loss.

THE MINISTER OF MINES (Hon. E. H. Wittenoom) replied:—1. An exhibit was tendered, but not received in evidence in the police court. 2. Yes. 3. Yes. 4. The exhibit was in Court, at the trial, but could not be found when required. There was no neglect for which anyone can be said to be responsible. 5. None. 6. No. 7. The exhibit had become, temporarily, lost in Court.

JURY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Introduced by Hon. R. S. HAYNES, and read a first time.

MUNICIPAL INSTITUTIONS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Received from the Legislative Assembly, and read a first time.

COMPANIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

On the motion of Hon. R. S. HAYNES, Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Assembly, with a copy of the Select Committee's Report.

SALE OF LIQUORS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a third time, and *passed*.

PUBLIC NOTARIES BILL.

THE MINISTER OF MINES moved that the amendments made by the Council in the Bill, and forwarded to the Legislative Assembly, be not insisted upon. He looked upon the Bill as purely a technical one, and one of which those members who belonged to the legal profession were the best judges. In Clause 5 the Hon. R. S. Haynes had moved an amendment to the effect that no person should be appointed to be a notary unless he was a practitioner of the Supreme Court who had served his articles of clerkship to a solicitor in Western Australia, or had practised for 5 years as a public notary in some other part of Her Majesty's dominions, and had been