

This reform would put the administration of justice on a better footing throughout the State, and in his opinion no expense would be too great to ensure that justice should be administered thoroughly, as compared with the fact that perhaps a score of men in a year were put in prison unjustly. What a dreadful thing for a man to be subjected to a term of six months' imprisonment by an inexperienced magistrate, on testimony which a professional Judge would not listen to for a moment. Such things could not happen in a metropolitan district, because public opinion and the vigilance of the Press would prevent such scandals. But in communities remote from the centre there was no Press to expose these wrongs, and magistrates who had no proper training for the administration of justice should not be allowed to go on committing men to prison under summary jurisdiction, without the right of trial by jury. The right of appeal as it existed at present was an absolute barrier to a man in trying to get justice; for there was first the right of appeal by way of re-hearing, secondly the right of appeal by case stated. As to appeal by way of re-hearing, a man who had been fined £10 or sentenced to a term of imprisonment had that right; and the re-hearing would be not on the evidence, but on the magistrate's imperfect notes of evidence taken, also the prisoner appealing must give security for costs of the appeal, which would in no case be less than £25. That form of appeal in a district away from a populous centre would be heard by the same magistrate who had convicted in the court below; and as it would be an appeal from his own judgment previously given, the unfortunate man who was appealing would, if innocent, have a very poor chance of getting the previous judgment reversed. As to appeal by case stated, that would go before the Supreme Court, and the Judges would have got the magistrate's notes of the evidence showing that the committing magistrate had found certain facts proved; so in that case there would be a poor chance of getting the judgment reversed. In this form of appeal also there are many

technicalities to be complied with before the appeal could be heard, and it would be difficult in some cases, if not impossible, to have all these formalities attended to properly, where solicitors were not available. Some half-dozen clauses in the Bill set forth sentences which might be imposed under summary jurisdiction for stated offences, the power of sentencing prisoners summarily being extended under the Bill from 3 to 12 months. Surely the paltry amount of money it would cost the country to get juries and to give a fair trial, as compared with the fact that justice was now administered by inexperienced magistrates performing in most cases dual functions and not trained in a legal sense, should not prevent the right of appeal being given as proposed in the clause.

On motion by the *Colonial Secretary*, progress reported and leave given to sit again.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 6.17 o'clock, until the next Tuesday.

### Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 15th August, 1907.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock p.m.

Prayers.

# QUESTION—RAILWAY EMPLOYEES, FINES.

Mr. BOLTON asked the Minister for Railways: What is the total amount of cash in hand, in the fund made up of fines from employees of the Railway Department to date?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: £1,948 7s. 10d.

# QUESTION—POLICE BENEFIT FUND.

Mr. TROY asked the Premier: 1, Has an increased rate of contribution been recently imposed on members of the Police Force who subscribe towards the Police Benefit Fund? 2, What is the amount of the increase per member? 3, What was the rate of contribution prior to the increase? 4, From what date did the new rate take effect? 5, Who authorised the levy? 6, Why such increase was necessary? 7, What amount stood to the credit of the Police Benefit Fund on the 30th June, 1907? 8, Were any of the subscribers consulted concerning the increased rate? 9, Is it a fact that many of those affected by this new arrangement were not even notified that a change was to be made? 10, Did the Police Department pay rewards to certain of its members for acts of merit from the funds of the Police Benefit Fund? 11, Are Sub-inspectors on their promotion to Inspectors paid their allowance from the Benefit Fund? 12, If so, why are these men paid what should be a retiring allowance while their services are still retained? 13, Has the Police Benefit Fund ever been audited? 14, Has a balance sheet ever been published for the information of subscribers? 15, If not, why not? 16, Have the subscribers to the fund any representative on the Board to protect their interests? 17, If not, will the Government be prepared to allow them proper representation on the Board controlling their own funds? 18, Who comprises the present Board, and do its members contribute towards the fund they control? 19, Have the present Board been empowered to determine the amount (if any) payable from the fund to members

of the force who have served with indifferent conduct? 20, What is the definition of "indifferent conduct?"

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, The increased rate is 3 per cent. of the pay of each member of the force, as below: Sub-Inspectors, £300 per annum, 15s. per month; Sub-Inspectors, £275 per annum, 13s. 9d. per month; Sub-Inspectors, £225 per annum, 11s. 3d. per month; Sergeants, 10s. per month; Corporals, 8s. 9d. per month; First Class Constables, 7s. 9d. per month; Second Class, 6s. 9d. per month; Detectives, 11s. per month; Detective Sergeants, 11s. 9d. per month. 3, See below—Sub-Inspector, 6s. per month; Sergeant, 5s. per month; Coxswain or Corporal and Detectives, 4s. per month; 1st Class Constables, 3s. per month; 2nd Class Constables, 2s. 6d. per month. Note.—The increase is the difference between No. 2 and No. 3. 4, 1st July, 1907. 5, The Government, as a result of the investigation of the Fund made by the Government Actuary, Mr. Owen. 6, To place the Fund on a thoroughly solvent basis. 7, £10,904 14s. 2d. 8, Yes. 9, No; notification of change was sent to each station. 10, No; they are paid from a separate fund termed the Police Reward Fund. 11, Yes. 12, Because there is no provision for inspectors under the Regulations of the Police Benefit Fund, to which they cease to contribute on promotion to the rank of inspector. 13, Yes; annually. 14, Yes; annually in the report of the Commissioner of Police. 15, See 14. 16, Yes; the Commissioner of Police. 17, Yes. 18, The Under Secretary, Colonial Secretary's Department, the Under Treasurer, the Commissioner of Police. They do not contribute towards the fund. 19, Yes. 20, Unsatisfactory conduct generally, in the opinion of the Board, as disclosed in the officer's record sheet.

# QUESTION—POLICE REWARD FUND.

Mr. COLLIER asked the Premier: 1, What are the particular services which entitle members of the Police Force to participate in the Annual Reward Fund?

2, By whom are they recommended? 3, What standard of efficiency entitles the recipients to be deemed worthy of the reward?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Exceptional services of skill, intelligence, or bravery in the discharge of their duties. 2, The Commissioner of Police. 3, There is no standard; each case is governed by its own exceptional merit.

#### QUESTION—BALLA BALLA JETTY AND WHIM CREEK TRAMWAY.

Mr. ANGWIN asked the Minister for Works: 1, For what term is the Balla Balla Jetty leased? 2, Who is the lessee? 3, What is the rental? 4, Under what Act of Parliament was a concession granted for the construction of a Tramway at Whim Creek?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, Two years and nine months, commencing 1st July, 1907, subject to the usual conditions governing all jetties leased by the Government and providing for cancellation by one month's notice if the trade interests of other people are not being satisfactorily conducted. 2, H. R. Sleeman. 3, £150 per annum. 4, No concession has been granted. A lease under the Mining Act has been granted to the Whim Creek Copper Company to construct a tramway from their mine to the proposed site of their smelter near Balla Balla and thence to a Jetty.

#### QUESTION—FEDERAL TARIFF, EFFECT.

Mr. DAGLISH asked the Premier: 1, Has he made representations to the Acting Prime Minister regarding the injurious effect which the proposed new tariff, if adopted, will have upon Western Australian agricultural, mining, and manufacturing industries, and the increase in the cost of living which it will entail. 2, If not, is it his intention to make such representations. 3, If not, why not.

The PREMIER replied: The Government are already taking action in regard to obtaining information on this ques-

tion, and the Government Actuary is now busy investigating the proposed Federal Tariff. As soon as his report is available the Government will determine what action it is most desirable to take, and inform the House without delay.

#### BILL—FREMANTLE GRAVING DOCK.

Bill to authorise the construction of a graving dock at Fremantle, introduced by the Minister for Works and read a first time.

#### JOINT STANDING ORDERS.

Message from the Legislative Council asking for concurrence in amendments of the Joint Standing Orders, now considered.

The PREMIER: I beg to move the adoption of the amendments of the Joint Standing Orders, as in the message of the Legislative Council. The alteration set out in the first portion of the message is, I understand, the practice at the present time. With regard to the Standing Orders Committee, we have already decided to increase the number. I understand there is no opposition by the members of the Standing Orders Committee to the proposed amendments.

Question put and passed.

#### MOTION—POLICE ADMINISTRATION, TO INQUIRE.

Debate resumed from the 31st July, on the motion by Mr. Bath: "That a select committee be appointed to inquire into the administration of the Police Department."

The PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore): The Leader of the Opposition when introducing the motion, prefaced his remarks by the statement that he did not intend to cast any reflection upon the administration but rather to refer to the practice which is being adopted in connection with promotions and the management of the Police Benefit Fund, and also with regard to the present procedure in regard to redressing grievances. He also stated he was of opinion that the Colo-

nial Secretary's Department lent itself more to the pruning knife than any other department in view of the fact that it was more an administrative department than the others. He went on to make comparisons between the cost of police administration in Western Australia and that of the Eastern States. His comparisons were on a *per capita* basis and he then stated that in Western Australia the cost per head of the population at the present time was 10s. I would like to make a slight correction there, for the cost is 9s. 5d., and I would also state, in justice to the present permanent head of the department, that the cost has been reduced during his administration from 12s. 4d. to what it is at the present time, namely 9s. 5d. The hon. member in referring to the cost in the other States said that the amount per head in Queensland at the present time was 5s. 10d. The cost now in that State is 6s. 8d. The hon. member also omitted to mention that in South Australia the cost of police administration for the Northern Territory is something like £8,000 per annum. While reckoning out the cost of police administration in Western Australia, we must all recognise that the circumstances are very different here from, and are in no way analogous to, those in the Eastern States. [Mr. Holman : They are similar to Queensland.] I do not think they are, inasmuch as we have a much larger area to administer, practically amounting to one million square miles as compared with about half that area in Queensland. There is another point that should be mentioned, and that is, in view of the rapid development of the resources of this State, we attracted a larger male population here than exists in the Eastern States, and it can readily be understood that the cost of police protection is naturally higher where there is a large male population. I have made inquiries and find that in regard to the proportion of the adult males to the total population we stand very much ahead of any of the States. The proportion in Western Australia at the present time of adult males to the total population is 41 per cent., as against Queensland 31.32, New South

Wales 28.8, Victoria 27, New Zealand 31, South Australia 26.3, Tasmania 26. So that you will see there is a difference between 41 per cent. in Western Australia and 26.3 per cent. in South Australia. I maintain that it follows necessarily that the mere fact of there being a larger male population here tends to increase the cost of police administration. Another reason that was given by the member as accounting for the higher cost of the administration of the Police Department was that he considered the percentage of commissioned officers to the rank and file far in excess of what it is in the Eastern States, and in other countries outside Australia. And he said the police force was very much like an army with nearly all officers and very few rank and file. I find the member quoted the proportions in the various States, and said that in Western Australia the percentage of commissioned officers to rank and file was 1 in 27. After making inquiries in the Police department I find that at the present time the percentage is 1 in 33, and we hope by the end of the year that the percentage will be reduced to 1 in 36.7. This is due to the fact that two vacancies have occurred and the positions are not to be filled. There was the lamented death of Inspector Connor at Albany, and we do not intend to fill that position by an officer of equal rank ; then there is Inspector Newlands, who was for some time inspector at Northam and at Kalgoorlie, and it is proposed that he should be retired and not replaced. So that consequently the percentage will be reduced to 1 in 36. I think that is approximately what the hon. member quoted in regard to one or two of the other States. The hon. member farther referred to the fact that the duties of one of the commissioned officers at the present time were confined to the supervising of six mounted constables in Perth and one or two of the adjoining suburbs of Perth, but I find on inquiry the officer referred to has under his control in all 39 constables, not six as we might infer from the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition. At the present time in Perth there are two officers, the inspector referred to and

a sub-inspector controlling the whole of the City police. The superintendent, although having a general control, his duties are not confined to Perth, for a good proportion of his time is devoted to travelling to different parts of the State to make inquiries into the efficiency of the force and in investigating charges against officers and men in different parts of the State; so that the hon. member can hardly characterise that officer as being a permanent officer attached to the City police. In no case, I understand, is an inspector and sergeant in one district.

*Mr. Bath:* What about Bunbury?

The PREMIER: I was going to refer to that place, for there the inspector takes charge of the whole of the district. Inspector Holmes, the senior officer, is in charge of the district, and there is a sergeant at the sub-stations of Bunbury, Albany, and at different other stations. But the inspector is travelling the greater part of his time, and it is necessary that a senior non-commissioned officer should be stationed at the important stations. That police district had originally two inspectors, Inspector Connor at Albany, and Inspector Holmes at Bunbury; now the two districts are combined under one commissioned officer; but sergeants will be retained at the principal stations.

*Mr. Taylor:* How long has that been done?

The PREMIER: Inspector Connor was drowned early in the year and no appointment has been made to fill the vacancy. The Leader of the Opposition referred to the fact that officers tried to justify their position by military control, which often caused pin pricks, and that members of the force found it impossible to obtain redress. He quoted the case of Tyler, which many members have had an opportunity of inquiring into. On more than one occasion the papers have been laid on the Table and members have had an opportunity of seeing whether Constable Tyler was cruelly ill-treated or not. The member for Mount Margaret was Colonial Secretary when the matter was brought before him, and he will have an opportunity of saying whether the man received just treatment or not. I may say Tyler approached me constantly on

this matter, and eventually I decided to have farther inquiries made notwithstanding the fact that an inquiry had been held; and from what I understand the board was constituted according to the procedure adopted under the Act, and consisted of the resident magistrate, an officer of the Police Department, and a local justice of the peace. The board which inquired first of all into Tyler's case was comprised of the resident magistrate of York, Inspector McKenna of Fremantle, who was sent to York specially in connection with Tyler's case, while the third member of the board was the mayor of Northam. Tyler at that time was represented by counsel and had every opportunity of proving his case. Later on he approached me and I asked the police magistrate to go thoroughly into the case, to get Tyler before him again and see if he desired to procure any additional evidence, and everything possible was done to see that the man had justice. I took more than an ordinary interest in the matter from the fact that I had known Tyler more than 20 years, from the time he was a mail driver. He was a man I had always had a good opinion of, and I was desirous of seeing if any injustice had been done, and if so that it should be rectified. No doubt he laboured under a sense of injustice with the result that he fired on the Commissioner of Police. Members who have gone into the papers will be convinced that in this case every opportunity was given for inquiry, and I maintain that in this case no injustice has been done to any extent.

*Mr. Taylor:* Only in Tyler's own mind.

The PREMIER: That is so; as far as the man is concerned there is no doubt his mind was unhinged. He wrote threatening letters to me on several occasions but when he came before me he was apparently rational enough and talked sensibly, but when outside he made all sorts of wild statements. Another case referred to by the hon. member was that of Constable Hume. He was reinstated after legal proceedings had been taken. I am informed that Constable Hume was reinstated in the service because there were very good grounds for it, and an

opportunity was given to me to see the file dealing with this subject, and a copy of the minute written in connection with this matter is as follows:—

"Ex-P.C. Hume was removed from the Police Force on account of his being found in his camp with a native girl. Circumstances have since arisen which have caused me to arrive at the opinion that he has been harshly dealt with. I therefore recommend for the approval of the Hon. the Colonial Secretary that the ex-constable be reinstated. All facts connected with the case are included in the accompanying file."

That was the case; after the injustice was done additional facts were brought before the Commissioner with the result that he wrote the minute I have just read, which members will recognise is an evidence that the Commissioner was desirous, when an injustice was pointed out to him, to see that justice was done and the police constable was reinstated.

*Mr. Bath* : After he threatened a legal action.

The PREMIER : I have no record of a legal action, but the facts of the case were gone into by the Commissioner. The last mentioned referred to ex-police constable Vaughan. He was retrenched from the Railway Department quite recently, and appointed again to the police force. He got a position as lock-up cleaner, at a daily wage of 8s. He is not a member of the force at all. Vaughan is a constable I have known for some time, and I am not quite sure if he was dismissed from the force or resigned, but he secured an appointment in the Railway Department as caretaker or night watchman and quite recently he was retrenched and afterwards secured a temporary appointment as lock-up cleaner at Fremantle, where he is working at the present time at a daily wage of 8s. and is liable to be dismissed at any time.

*Mr. Taylor* : He had a pretty bad record.

The PREMIER : The reasons given by the member for the inquiry were as he stated, that he did not consider there were proper means of promotion, that the administration of the benefit fund was

not satisfactory, and as to the means of retirement. I have already pointed out what has taken place in regard to the two instances quoted, and I may say that every commissioned officer and constable can demand an inquiry when a charge is brought against him; and the board in such cases consists of a resident magistrate, a police officer, and the mayor of the town as a rule in which the man happens to reside.

*Mr. Angwin* : More often a personal friend of the officer.

*Mr. Taylor* : Oh, no.

The PREMIER : Which officer, the constable? That is the procedure always adopted, and I understand it has given satisfaction. With a board appointed like that it must be recognised that any verdict arrived at would be fair and just.

*Mr. Bath* : The police officer generally put on the board is the superior officer who lays the complaint.

*Mr. Taylor* : No.

The PREMIER : I have just pointed out that in the case of Tyler, instead of putting Inspector Newland, his superior officer at Northam, on the board, Inspector McKenna of Fremantle was placed on the board.

*Mr. Bath* : That was an exceptional case.

The PREMIER : I cannot go into other cases.

*Mr. Taylor* : When I held office, in two of three cases officers were appointed in the manner in which you have pointed out.

The PREMIER : Any constable has an opportunity of interviewing the Commissioner, or if he is absent in the country he has an opportunity of placing his views before the Commissioner by writing. At the same time a constable can go from the Commissioner and appeal to the Minister, and I understand on these occasions the Commissioner makes the appointment so that the constable will have an opportunity of meeting the Minister and laying his complaint before him. In that respect I consider, as far as the members of the police force are concerned, they are in a better position than ordinary civil servants.

*Mr. Collier :* And you never find the Minister reversing the decision of the Commissioner.

The PREMIER : In regard to the administration of the police fund, which the Leader of the Opposition referred to, I have given this afternoon some information in reply to a question asked by the member for Mount Magnet, which will give members some idea of the position of the administration of the fund. I would like to point out that the Government Actuary, Mr. Owen, has gone carefully into the matter, and his recommendations have been adopted. At the time he made the report, the fund was not solvent; and at the request of the Government he went thoroughly into the matter with the object of making an inquiry and submitting recommendations which would in his opinion place the fund on a solid foundation.

*Mr. Bath :* It is not likely to be placed on a solid foundation when the Commissioner gives a man £400 or £500 upon his promotion to the rank of sub-inspector.

The PREMIER : The report referred to by the Commissioner of Police in his annual report, as to the changes effected as a result of Mr. Owen's inquiry, is as follows :—

"As a result of the examination into the condition of the fund by the Government Actuary, the board, as you are aware, recommended an increased contribution by the members of the force participating in its benefits, amounting to 3 per cent. of their pay instead of the rates hitherto enforced. The proposal, I am pleased to say, was adopted by the Government; and to farther insure the solvency of the fund, the annual subsidy was increased from £1,000 to a £ for £ contribution with the amount paid by the police. The privileges and gratuities in the past in force are preserved, except in one or two small details. Formerly probationers did not pay into the fund, yet when calculating the amount of the gratuity the period of probation was taken into account. This was rightly regarded as inequitable, and the rule was accordingly amended so that a member's time

of service dates from his appointment as a second-class constable. A farther amendment in the direction of enabling a sergeant on promotion to the commissioned ranks to draw his gratuity was agreed to; and with these few alterations the fund has been placed on a perfectly solvent basis.

The fund is controlled by a board consisting the Commissioner of Police, the Under Treasurer and the Under Secretary (Colonial Secretary's Department). Up to June 30th last the contributions by members of the force amounted to £875 annually; and as the State gave the greater portion (£1,000), it can scarcely be said that the men were unjustly treated by having no representation on the board. Now that the Government have made an alteration, and are contributing at the rate of £ for £ subsidy, I think it only fair and reasonable that the men should have an opportunity of being represented on the board; and in that respect I agree with the mover's contention that it would be advisable to alter the constitution of the board administering the Police Benefit Fund. This would mean that the members of the police force would nominate a member of the force as their representative. The representation on the board would then consist of the Under Secretary, the Under Treasurer, and one other to be nominated by the members of the police force. The Commissioner of Police would withdraw. We are prepared to alter the constitution of the board so that the members of the force may have direct representation. In that respect the mover's argument I consider a good one, and we are pleased to fall in with his suggestion. Arrangements will be made accordingly, so that the contributors to the fund may obtain representation on the board. I scarcely think it can be contended that a case has been made out for a select committee in this connection. In regard to the grievances stated by the hon. member, I have endeavoured to deal with the three points raised; and in regard to the matter of the administration of the fund I am prepared to fall in with this suggestion, and the Government will accordingly provide for this repre-

sensation. The appointment of a select committee would entail considerable expense, and no commensurate advantage may be expected to result. The police, as has been already pointed out, is a semi-military body, with duties entirely distinct from those of any other section of the public service; they require special qualifications, and special powers are given into their hands in the execution of their duties. It is therefore necessary that the strictest control should be exercised by the officer in charge. The regulations are on all-fours with the Police Acts and regulations in operation in other States of the Commonwealth, while the Commissioner here has the same power, and no more, as the Commissioners in the other States. Quite recently a Royal Commission was appointed in Victoria to deal with the administration of the police force; but after the commission had been sitting for two or three months, the Government of the day were so dissatisfied with the way things were going that the commission was quashed by the present Premier, Mr. Bent. I think it is not at all advisable in an organisation of this kind that any outside influence should be brought to bear on its management. This organisation, as I have said, is a semi-military one, and to my mind it is essential that the officer in command should have certain powers; and I may add that in the case of the present Commissioner those powers have not been exceeded in any way. The Commissioner is always prepared to listen to complaints made by the men, and in all cases where the men have desired to take those complaints farther, he has been prepared to provide for their going before the Minister. The only real justification that could be adduced for an inquiry of this kind would be evidence of gross inefficiency or favouritism; and I do not think any charge can be made against the administration in regard either to favouritism or gross inefficiency. My experience has been that the Commissioner and his officers are only too anxious to give every opportunity to air grievances; and I think it would be unwise to appoint a select committee to go into this matter.

Mr. P. COLLIER (Boulder) : I am sure that any hon. member who has a knowledge of the working of the police force of this State will regret that the Premier has seen fit to oppose this motion; and I am sure there is greater cause for discontent amongst members of the police force than among any other section of the public service. No one who has had opportunity of coming into touch with members of the force can but have found the dissatisfaction that exists among them. Everybody who has ever met a constable in a highway or a by-way must have realised that. The point that appeals to me is that while there is dissatisfaction among members of the force, we are largely wasting our time in sitting in this House passing laws; because after all, the efficiency in carrying out those laws depends on the calibre of the men in our police force. In the first place, I contend there is great need for this inquiry, because the salaries paid to the men are totally inadequate; they are absolutely the lowest-paid body of men, not only in the public service, but the lowest-paid class in the community. Two-thirds of the men in the police force rank as second-class constables, and the pay attaching to that rank is 7s. 6d. per day. On the goldfields, with lodging and goldfields allowances, the pay amounts in the case of a second-class constable to 9s. 11d. per day, and for a first-class constable to 10s. 11d. per day. There is no class of men on the goldfields, no matter what the nature of their employment, who do not get more than 9s. 11d. per day. It is a salary on which it is impossible for a married man to keep a family. We should, above all things, pay the members of our police force a salary that will enable them to live above suspicion. I may point out to the Premier that the wages paid to members of the force in Victoria are considerably higher than are paid in Western Australia; and moreover there are greater opportunities for promotion in the other States than exist in this State. We know that here a man, no matter how capable he may be, unless he can get the ear of his superior officer, may for practically the whole of his life remain in the police force of this State without



reaching the rank of a first-class constable. That is a question raised by the Leader of the Opposition which was not touched by the Premier. I do not remember that he touched on the question of promotion at all in his speech. There appears not to be any method of promotion in existence in this State. A constable has to depend on the recommendation of his superior officer ; and we know what that means in the back country, where perhaps there is a sergeant, or perhaps a sub-inspector, in charge of four or five men ; that if a constable happens to offend his superior officer, even though he be the best man under the officer's charge, that officer will not recommend such constable for promotion. Again, there are officers who take an interest in their men and are constantly recommending them for promotion, while other officers are absolutely indifferent as to whether their men ever move up. Hence the man who is lucky enough to secure the favour of his superior, or to be under an officer who takes an interest in his men, has greater opportunity for promotion than a man differently situated. The Premier stated that the regulations existing in this State are similar to those of other States. All I can say in this regard is that if it be so, it only proves that the regulations in the other States need altering also. The regulations controlling the Police Benefit Fund are to my mind absolutely unjust. Although the Premier has promised to make an alteration, it will not meet the case. He has promised that in future the board controlling that fund shall consist of a representative of the men, the Under Secretary of the Colonial Secretary's Department, and the Under Treasurer. Why the Under Secretary and the Under Treasurer, men who do not contribute to the fund at all ?

*The Premier :* They will represent the Government ; the Under Treasurer has to find the subsidy money.

Mr. COLLIER : I am prepared to admit that the Government should have one representative, because the Government subsidise the fund ; but why should they have two ? The method that has obtained in the past is absolutely contrary

to the fundamental principles of British justice—a board of three members controlling the distribution of funds provided by other men. The board should consist only of a representative of the Government and a representative of those who contribute to the fund. [*The Premier :* You think there should be only two members of the board ?] Yes ; two representatives of those who have an interest in the fund, the Government on the one hand and those contributing to the fund on the other hand. [*Mr. Daglish :* What if they disagree ?] If they disagree, they can appoint an independent umpire, say a police magistrate. To have both the Under Treasurer and the Under Secretary would be practically giving the Government two representatives, as the Under Secretary, being a departmental officer, would always be guided by the Under Treasurer.

*The Premier :* How will the Government be affected in any way, so long as the fund is kept solvent ?

Mr. COLLIER : I suppose the Government are desirous of seeing the fund kept in a solvent condition.

*The Premier :* But what interest would the Under Secretary have, except to administer the fund in the best possible way ?

Mr. COLLIER : He might have many interests in the direction of administering the fund in a way that would economise. We know that, under the regulations, the board has great powers as to the distribution of the money. Notwithstanding that a member of the force may have paid into the fund for twelve years, it is still within the power of the board absolutely to refuse to give him a penny if in their opinion he has been guilty of "indifferent conduct."

*The Premier :* But it is simply a trust fund.

Mr. COLLIER : I know it is ; but the board have the distribution of the fund, and how the fund should be disposed of is not laid down hard and fast. The board have under the regulations power to distribute funds as they think fit. Here is one of these regulations:—

"The character and pecuniary position of the widow, and the number of

children of a deceased member of the force, will invariably be taken into consideration when recommending gratuities from the fund; and it shall be lawful for the board to apply the gratuity granted to such widow or orphan for their benefit in such manner as the board may deem fit."

"The character and pecuniary position of the widow." That means, if a man has been somewhat thrifty, has secured a home for himself, and has left a little money to his widow, the board may consider these facts a sufficient justification for withholding a portion of the gratuity; whereas if the deceased had been thriftless and has died practically penniless, the board may take that as a reason for giving a larger gratuity. They have the power under the regulation. I say, that is wholly unfair. Any man who contributes to a fund should know exactly what he is entitled to at a given time, and it should not be left to the will or whim of any two or three men to say what he or his widow shall receive from the fund. Another regulation provides:—

"It shall be competent for the board to recommend the payment of gratuities in any deserving cases not comprised in the foregoing clauses."

The board can grant gratuities as they may think fit. Perhaps it was under this elastic provision that they recently granted £400 or £500 to an inspector. As to the Premier's remarks regarding charges against members of the force, I say there is great dissatisfaction with the manner in which such charges are heard; because, as was pointed out by the Leader of the Opposition, the inspector or the sub-inspector who sits on the board is usually the accusing officer. I have that statement from various sources. [Mr. Taylor: He is, in some cases.] Very often he is the accusing officer. I notice that in the amending Police Bill just passed in another place, even that provision is to be altered and the Commissioner given the sole right at his own sweet will to dismiss any man. [Mr. Bolton: The Bill is not yet law.] No; and I sincerely hope it will not get through this House. Some of the charges which

may be laid against a constable appear to me to be altogether unjust. Regulation 283 states:—"The charges against the members of the force will occasionally be of a somewhat general character." How is it possible for a constable to defend himself from a charge of a somewhat general character? Such a procedure does not obtain in any of our police courts. There a charge must be of a specific character; because, as everyone will realise, it is impossible for any man to answer a charge of a general character. Again, the regulations state:—

"An officer hearing a charge as above, if he gives a decision and wishes to make any remarks on the merits of the case, may do so. When a charge is dismissed simply from a defect of evidence or some technical objection, or from the evidence being of a very conflicting nature, but where there is no moral doubt that the offence was committed, an entry of the charge and the decision, with such explanatory remarks as may be considered necessary should be made on the record sheet of the accused constable."

Did you ever hear of anything more unjust?

Mr. Bath: It is compulsory to make the record.

Mr. COLLIER: It is compulsory, although the evidence is so conflicting that the charge is dismissed. The record would not matter so much were it not that when a gratuity becomes due after perhaps twelve years' service, then though the charge was dismissed because the evidence was not sufficient or was conflicting, the entry will tell against the constable by reducing the gratuity he will draw after his twelve years' service. I never heard of a more unjust provision, and it is impossible to imagine that anything more unjust could exist. Perhaps ironically, the regulations afterwards provide:—

"Little inconvenience will be experienced by prosecutor or accused if it be borne in mind that proceedings in private inquiries before officers of the police should approximate as nearly as possible to proceedings in ordinary courts of justice."

If that is the procedure in ordinary courts of justice, I hope I shall never get into a court of justice. As to the reward fund, the Premier, replying to one of my requests this evening, said rewards are granted for exceptional skill and bravery. I have here a list of those who participated last year in donations from the fund; and I am satisfied that many if not most of the recipients did not distinguish themselves during the year by any exceptional skill or bravery. And it is remarkable that all this skill and bravery should be found amongst members of the force who are at the top of the tree. The largest sum granted out of the fund is £10. We have at the head of the list Detective-Sergeants Parkinson, £10; Walsh, £10; Kavanagh, £10; and Detective Mann, £10. If these sums are distributed solely on the basis of merit and bravery, it is remarkable that all the bravery is at the top of the tree. [Mr. Taylor: It proves that the good men have been promoted.] It proves that they have a "pull" on the fund. We find the largest reward that a constable receives is £2; and it is remarkable that there is not an extraordinarily brave or clever man amongst any of the constables. But if we peruse the list we find that the Premier's statement is not correct. One of the men who received £6 last year from the fund is the constable who photographs the prisoners in Fremantle gaol. Did he display any conspicuous bravery in that position? [Mr. Taylor: He may be skilled in photography.] He may be skilled; but I am unable to see that he needs any courage. Then again, we have Constable Lesse, editor of the *Police Gazette*, who received £5 last year. Is there any particular bravery or merit in editing that paper? [The Premier: Lesse is brave enough.] So he may be; but if he is brave he is not in a position to exhibit his bravery when editing the *Police Gazette*. In the list are 20 detectives and plain-clothes constables who receive a total of £101; while 25 constables receive a total of £62, mostly made up of sums of £2 and £3 each. Surely this shows that the men who participate in the fund are the men who have some

"pull" on it; because, if the fund were distributed for merit or for bravery, the men who do the really dangerous work, who risk their lives and pad about the streets all night long, should get the bulk of the reward. Moreover, even if a detective or a plain-clothes constable does exhibit bravery or special skill, is he not paid for it? Is it not his duty? And is he not rewarded by the fact that he has greater opportunities of promotion than the uniform constable? Each of the detectives who drew £10 last year is receiving £26 a month for his skill and bravery, and is amply rewarded by having opportunities of distinguishing himself and of thereby rising to a higher position later on, which opportunities are not enjoyed to the same extent by the uniform constable. The whole distribution of the reward fund is an absolute farce, and it ought to be at once abolished. If we are to reward a man for special skill or bravery, hold out to him opportunities for promotion, instead of a paltry sum like £2 or £3 which is absolutely useless. [Mr. Taylor: How would you decide on his merits?] How is the decision arrived at now, in distributing the reward fund?

*The Premier:* The point is, we have not the necessary vacancies. You are complaining that there are too many officers.

Mr. COLLIER: I am not complaining of the number of officers; I say I am not in a position to judge of that. Nor am I complaining of the cost of the department, but I am complaining of the dissatisfaction that exists in the rank and file of the force. Two-thirds of the force consist of second-class constables who are paid 7s. 6d. a day; and I say that is not a sufficient wage to keep a man honest. I regret exceedingly that the Premier sees fit to oppose this motion, and notwithstanding his opposition I sincerely hope it will be carried. He says the contributions to the Police Benefit Fund were increased to place it in a thoroughly solvent condition. I notice by the report of the Commissioner of Police for 1906 that the balance to credit of the fund on the 31st July, 1905, was £8,838 4s. 7d.; at the end of 1906, £10,528 6s.

and at the end of the financial year 1907, £10,904, showing a continual increase for the last three years at least.

*The Premier:* Yes; but very few of the gratuities for twelve years' service have been claimed up to date.

*Mr. Bath:* Some of the constables do not get the chance of serving for twelve years.

*Mr. COLLIER:* Even allowing that the percentage of persons drawing on the fund is increasing, still, I say that a fund which has a total of £10,900 to its credit cannot by any stretch of the imagination be considered insolvent.

*The Premier:* Is not that a question for actuaries?

*Mr. COLLIER:* It would appear to be so; but you cannot get away from the figures which show that the fund has been continually increasing for the last three or four years. And even if it is necessary to increase the contributions, I still say it is absolutely unjust to increase from 2s. 8d. to 6s. 9d. per month the contribution of a man who is receiving 7s. 6d. a day, thus making his contribution practically equivalent to a day's wage, and reducing his wage from 7s. 6d. to 7s. 3d.; or, in the case of goldfields constables from 9s. 11d. to 9s. 8d. I say, there is not on the goldfields a boy of sixteen or seventeen who is not receiving more than 9s. 8d.; and yet we ask our goldfields constables to be honest and to keep themselves decent and respectable on that paltry wage. I say the wage is totally inadequate; and apart from the wage there are a hundred-and-one little grievances concerning which the constable will not dare to approach the Commissioner. It is very well to say the constable may go to the Commissioner, and if dissatisfied with the Commissioner's report may go to the Minister. But what is the use of his appealing from the Commissioner to the Minister? I have not had much experience, but all I have had leads me to believe that rarely can you get a Minister to disregard the recommendations of a permanent head. And it must necessarily be so, because the Premier has not time to enter into every detail of constables' grievances. The Premier must be guided by the recom-

mendations of the heads of departments, and if the Commissioner has given a decision it is useless for the police constable to appeal over his head to the Premier; because the Premier will simply write to the Commissioner for a report, and will be guided by the report of the Commissioner. It is all very well to say, "You can go to the Commissioner," but constables may make themselves disliked by going over the heads of their immediate superior officers. If the constable does not get his grievance remedied through the inspector or his immediate superior, it is not likely that he will go over his head to the Commissioner. I do not know about Tyler's case. Unfortunately he went off his head, but I believe he was fairly dealt with; he had had several inquiries. However, I know that in many other cases the constables are not fairly dealt with. The Premier mentioned the case of Constable Hume, which proves conclusively that men are sometimes unjustly treated. The Premier states that Constable Hume was dismissed, but that later on additional information was procured. Why was it not forthcoming at the first trial? It proves there was a miscarriage of justice at the beginning; and it was only afterwards when the constable was able to dig up some additional information that his case was reconsidered and he was reinstated in the force. I say it should not be possible for any man to be dismissed where the whole of the information is not procurable at his first trial. I sincerely trust that members will not consider this question at any rate a party question, and that we will have this inquiry which I feel certain will remedy many of the grievances members of the police force labour under at the present time.

*Mr. G. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret)* I have but very little to say on this motion. I am sorry the Premier is opposing a select committee; but at the same time I recognise there would be a difficulty if a select committee were appointed, in getting the necessary evidence without perhaps causing greater dissension than there is supposed to exist

in the police force now. My object in rising was to deal with a case as put forward by the Leader of the Opposition, practically in reference to ex-Constable Tyler. That case came under my notice when I was Colonial Secretary administering the Police Act. I am speaking from memory; but I believe that what the Premier has said in connection with that case is true. I would have been pleased to look over the files to refresh my memory; it was something like two and a half years ago, but I am speaking from memory in what I say. Ex-Constable Tyler had a grievance. I believe he had been pulled up under Section 23 of the Police Act of 1892, which I will read. It is a point the Premier did not make clear to the House. Section 23 says:—

“The Commissioner, or some other commissioned officer of the force appointed by the Governor for the purpose, may examine on oath into any charge of insubordination or misconduct against the discipline of the force against any non-commissioned officer, and the evidence taken by such officer shall be referred to the decision of the Commissioner, and the Commissioner, if he considers the charge is satisfactorily proved, may inflict a fine not exceeding five pounds, and may recommend to the Minister the reduction, discharge, or dismissal of the accused.” That section is administered by the Commissioner in this way. It had been done to my time as Colonial Secretary. If anything went wrong with the constable he was tried before the Commissioner as set forth in this section, and if he was found guilty he was punished. If it were a minor offence he was punished and went on duty again; but if at some later period he was brought up again under that section and found guilty again, in all probability the Commissioner would recommend his reduction, or discharge or dismissal. It has generally been adopted in the force that when they came up a third time under that section the Commissioner recommends dismissal, so that when a constable has been dealt with twice by the Commissioner for insubordination or anything that comes within the purview

of Section 23, he avails himself of the provisions of Section 26 of the same Act, which reads as follows:—

“Any non-commissioned officer or constable accused of any act of insubordination or act of misconduct against the discipline of the force, or any person preferring the charge, may require that the charge, instead of being heard as hereinbefore provided, shall be heard by a board; and thereupon a board appointed by the Governor, consisting of three persons (of whom only one may be a member of the force, not being the Commissioner), may summarily inquire into, on oath, and determine the charge and sentence such non-commissioned officer or constable as the case may be, to the fine or imprisonment hereinbefore mentioned; and every such sentence shall be subject to the approval of the Governor, and when approved shall be final and shall be enforceable in like manner as a fine or imprisonment imposed by Justices under this Act, and every such board shall have the same power as Justices exercising an ordinary summary jurisdiction.”

When a police officer has been punished twice by the Commissioner, he avails himself of Section 26, because he naturally recognises that, as he has already been punished by the Commissioner for two offences, his case may be prejudiced by that fact, and he demands a board of inquiry as set forth in Section 26, and the board is granted. The Minister acts on the recommendation of the Commissioner, who, in the ordinary way, the same as the head of any other department, recommends certain people. There is nothing to blame the Minister for, except that he can reject. The Minister can appoint whom he chooses except that he must appoint someone from the police force other than the Commissioner. I found great difficulty in going through these papers. I regret having to speak about these charges against ex-Constable Tyler, considering the unfortunate position in which that person was placed; but as there was so much made about it and as it was my lot to deal with the case I want to say that I went to a good deal

of trouble in reading it up. I am speaking from memory ; I have not seen those papers since, but I remember I had some difficulty in selecting an officer from the force to sit on the board who had not come into contact unfavourably, I say, with ex-Constable Tyler during his service as constable in various parts of the State. I found that the person who, in my opinion, was farthest from ex-Constable Tyler and who had not come into contact with him, was Inspector McKenna of Fremantle, and he was appointed on the board as representative of the force. I am not certain of the constitution of the board ; I believe there was a magistrate ; I do not know ; I appointed several boards during my term of office, and one cannot remember everything ; but so far as the administration of the department was concerned, in my opinion no man could have had a fairer board to prove his innocence than ex-Constable Tyler had. He told me in his correspondence, which appears on the files, that he could justify his case, and that he had been badly treated. I think it was Inspector Newland who was the person in question. The whole matter is on the file. However, ex-Constable Tyler failed to make good his charges. I think on the finding of that board he was disgraced from corporal to constable ; and then—I am speaking from memory—he resigned. The next difficulty was about his gratuity. I then pointed out to the Commissioner that ex-Constable Tyler's claim should be considered by the board administering the Police Benefit Fund. The Minister controlling the department has no say in that. The board consists of the Under Treasurer (Mr. Eliot), the Under Secretary of the Colonial Secretary's Department, and the Commissioner of Police. I believe that anybody would feel perfectly safe that the Under Secretary and the Under Treasurer in dealing with matters that come before them, no matter what persuasive powers the Commissioner of Police may possess, are perfectly capable of weighing the evidence before them and administering that fund. Tyler got some gratuity ; how much I do not know ; but he was not satisfied. In my opinion the only grievance he had was

in his own mind ; he had no other claim ; the matter worked on him. He spoke to me repeatedly about it while I was Minister, and has spoken repeatedly about it since the present Premier has held office. He of course allowed himself to be worried by the thing. In my opinion he had no grounds for it, because he had every chance. I have been told since, and I know it to be true, that the present Premier when the matter was brought before him had an inquiry made into the matter by Mr. Roe, the police magistrate of Perth, and that even in that inquiry Tyler failed to make any of his grounds sound. I think that so far as he is concerned there is no ground for complaint. The case of Vaughan has been spoken of. It was one dealt with by myself. The Premier can put me right, because I am speaking wholly from memory. I would be pleased if the Premier would put Vaughan's papers on the table and let members read them.

Mr. Walker: That is the man Drewry sacked because he would not tell the story Drewry wanted.

Mr. TAYLOR: The files will not disclose what the hon. member wants to make out. I spent three hours reading that case. Unless my memory has failed me, I believe it was the same person ; and if members read the file they will see that this constable was treated in the only manner in which he could be treated ; that is, according to the reports on the file. If one can lead himself to believe that every officer, every inspector, and every superior officer over a constable will report unfavourably against that constable from one end of the State to another, and that these officers' reports are not to be relied on, then I say Vaughan has been badly treated ; but if we can believe the reports that come to hand, which the Minister has to guide him in the matter, it was not so. It is idle for any member to say that if he had to administer the Police Department as Colonial Secretary he would know the inner workings of the force. It is a very complicated position and you will find grievances of years' standing. I have had grievances brought before me where men have been out of the force for five or six years. They had

been dealt with by previous Ministers; but, in all branches of the service, whenever a new Government is appointed officers of whatever branch they might have belonged to and who had been got rid of, brought their grievances up afresh in order to try and strike a fresh sympathetic ear. Every member who has had the duty of administering the departments knows that as a fact. I know of these things myself, and I hope the Premier will give me an opportunity, without having to go to the department, to look at Vaughan's files; for if he is the man I think he is, I am absolutely satisfied with the position taken up by the Department. I would like to say a word or two in fairness to the Commissioner of Police. I had examples while in office of his desire to reopen a case where he had ascertained subsequently that additional evidence was available other than that upon which action was originally taken. In such cases I have known of his reinstating the officer who had been badly treated. I can speak of this with a certain knowledge and I will instance a case. I will not mention the name, but there was an officer who was dismissed from the force and had been for some time out of that position when members of Parliament came to me and asked me to go into the question of reinstating him. I went through the files and recognised that an injustice had been done to the man; but the position was an awkward one, for it would be a bad precedent to establish to reinstate him immediately. The Commissioner of Police urged me repeatedly to reinstate the man, but I did not agree to his wishes at first. [*Mr. Bath:* Who is the man you are referring to?] I will not mention the name as the officer is back in the force, he is getting on well and has done just as good work since his reinstatement as he did before his dismissal, and that is saying a good deal. I am simply mentioning this case in justice to the Commissioner, and to show when he found that a man who, on his recommendation, had been dismissed without all the facts being brought forward at the hearing, had really been treated unjustly and that there were other facts which proved this, then he expressed his

great anxiety to have that man back in the force. When I was able to see my way to have that man reinstated I did so, and in a manner that was not detrimental to the police force of the State. I am sorry the Premier opposes the resolution, for while I do not think any great advantage will be gained by the appointment of the select committee, still those members who urge the appointment seem to think that good will accrue. One has only to listen to the arguments adduced by hon. members to realise the unfortunate position policemen in subordinate positions occupy. I would like to know who the committee are going to examine in order to find out what is wrong in the department. They must examine the men in the force from the highest position to the lowest. If that be so, I do not know that a policeman is going to say too much before that committee. It is necessary for the discipline of the force that certain strictness should be observed. A policeman is different from any other public servant, for he is given great powers. The consequence is that extra difficulty is experienced in administering that force, as the officers have to ascertain and make sure that the members of the force do not abuse that extraordinary power with which they are clothed. As the member for Boulder has pointed out, it is hard for a policeman who does his duty well to get proper recognition of it. I am sure that it would be difficult to get from the policeman information which would be of value to this House. The Leader of the Opposition, however, believes that it can be done and I am, therefore, sorry that the Premier opposes the motion. Perhaps members of the House who know more of the work of the Police Department than I, may suggest a way by which the committee could collect evidence, either to prove this "seething discontent" which is alleged to exist or otherwise. As far as the police constables themselves are concerned I believe that the appointment of a committee would, in a large degree, make them feel more satisfied. There is one thing farther I would like to say, and that is that it would be very much better for the

health of the policemen if some member could devise a scheme by which so many constables need not be compelled to be on night duty for weeks at a stretch, and then only have a couple of weeks off duty previous to going on another long term of nightwork. This is the chief difficulty in connection with the force in the metropolitan area. This practice is very harmful to the constables and is against all laws of nature. You do not find in the outlying districts, where there are only one or two constables, any of this "seething discontent," although the salaries are perhaps not what they should be. There, however, there is no necessity for keeping the men up all night. If there is any "seething discontent" at all, I am sure that this nightwork is at the bottom of it. I believe that the policemen have a great objection to being forced to contribute to the police fund. This can be understood when one recognises the small gratuities they receive as constables. When they reach the position of inspector the gratuity is very much larger. I do not know whether that should be so. Hon. members must consider this point, that the Government contribute the major portion of that fund; the portion contributed by the force is only a drop in the ocean. [Mr. Collier: It is pound for pound.] The Government gave them the sum of £10,000. [Mr. Collier: They now propose that it should be pound for pound.] That is a recent proposition, but I am speaking now of the old conditions when the Government had to come to the rescue of the fund. If it is found that there is this "seething discontent" in the force then it is the duty of the Government to remove it; if the Government fail to do that the House should direct them in the right course. A select committee would be quite capable of doing that, and therefore I support the appointment of a committee.

Mr. T. WALKER (Kanowna) : I shall not take up the time of the House at any length, but I wish to say one or two words in support of the motion. I do so with considerable humility, because in all probability, if I say anything about

the Commissioner of Police, to-morrow morning he will have a long interview with the Press upbraiding members who presumed to criticise him. [Mr. Collier: He cannot do that.] I believe that half the speech of the member for Mount Margaret is due to his knowledge of Captain Hare. This might account for the half support the hon. member has given to the motion. [Mr. Taylor: I defended two positions, and I put them clearly to the House.] With regard to Vaughan's case, if I remember rightly, on one occasion there was a prosecution in the police court in which that constable was to be a witness. He was interviewed by Inspector Drewry before the case came on, and was practically told that, if he did not support the prosecuting constable, it would be the worse for him. Trouble and friction arose as the constable was determined to do his duty, and because he did it, from that time onward he was persecuted, and, not reported, but misreported to his superior officers. [The Attorney General: Whose case was that?] It was Vaughan's case; at least I believe it was his case and am almost certain of it. Anyhow the case which I have related did occur, and I emphasise it in order to show how difficult it is for the constables in the ranks to get justice from their superiors. [Mr. Taylor: Vaughan had been for years in the force in the other States.] I think the hon. member is mistaken in the man to whom he refers. I know from very many cases which have arisen that it is exceedingly difficult to get a just inquiry into grievances made by constables. I have had the painful duty of bringing one or two cases before this House, and should have had occasion to bring Tyler's case before Parliament if regrettable circumstances had not placed the constable in his present unhappy position. In his case, and in the case of others—and hon. members have had evidence supplied to them on the point—it was extremely hard to get grievances against superiors heard at all. [Mr. Taylor: I thought that when I heard Tyler's statement, and I gave him a board.] What was the constitution of the board? Let it be described, and let



all particulars with regard to it be provided. It is all very well for the hon. member to say :—"I was the Colonial Secretary, and I gave him a board" ; but who was it that nominated the board—Captain Hare.

*Mr. Taylor :* That is not right.

*Mr. WALKER :* What are the facts then ?

*Mr Taylor :* As I said just now an inspector of police was on the board, and there were others with him.

*Mr. WALKER :* Yes; the inspector of police was one of those who was concerned in the charge.

*Mr. Taylor :* He was nothing of the sort.

*Mr. WALKER :* The way in which these people have to go to their superior officers to get justice is not fair. There are very few instances where the method is a just one, and the case stated by the Premier to-night is exceptional, where additional information had been brought to hand afterwards and the Commissioner has reversed his previous verdict. That was an exceptional case.

*Mr. Bath :* Because of the pertinacity of the man.

*Mr. WALKER :* It is not every man who has luck to bring pressure to bear to get a reconsideration of his case. In this case I believe too, if I understand the hint thrown out by the Leader of the Opposition, there was the possibility of a prosecution and a possible exposure behind if justice had not been done to the man. Where are the policemen, generally speaking, who can defend themselves and take their case into court? In Tyler's instance, I submit from the statements made in the House, the man all through deserved more than compassion. The Premier declared that the state of mind in which the man was had been brought about by the rancour for years in his breast, and his state of mind was the result of the injustice he had suffered at the instance of his superior officers. Now I want to say this, if there are no other cases for inquiry how is it that the police in prosecuting at the trial did not bring in the state of that man's mind? And how is it now in the conduct of the police force and in the whole administra-

tion of justice in connection with the force that a man, a lunatic, a man deranged in intellect, is still suffering in a felon's cell when we have evidence brought forward to-night that he is not responsible. Yet at this moment this State is keeping that man in a felon's cell as if he had been guilty of a crime with malice aforethought. Where is the Commissioner of Police, the man at the head of affairs, pleading for the man who had done this wrong innocently from his belief that he had suffered an injustice in the force? There is more need for inquiry when these things can take place. If Tyler committed a crime in shooting at Mr. Hare the State is doing a worse one in keeping the man, known to be a lunatic, in a felon's cell. It is the possibility shown in the case of Tyler that deserves inquiry. These instances only mean that there are more. I believe if an inquiry were opened we should have a considerable amount of light thrown on what is misnamed the discipline of the force, but which after all is the arrogance of superior officers over subordinates. I always, I trust, will plead for the man who needs assistance. I am pleading now for the men who are robbed for the sake of supporting a fund which is given to favourites, which is beyond their possibility of paying with safety to their creditors. The other day we heard of men working at the timber mills who were offered 7s. 6d. to 7s. 9d. a day. What are we doing now? It is said there is no need for inquiry and we are reducing the police by fining them practically every month 7s. 9d., bringing their wages down to what the timber workers were asked to toil for.

*The Minister for Works :* What about their quarters?

*Mr. WALKER :* What kind of quarters are there? The member is everlastingly pleading to impoverish the people. You never hear his voice lifted in the House or elsewhere to give to the toiler one penny more for the work he does, but he is everlastingly seeking to grind the people down. He does not want men who can pay their way but slaves who grovel to their masters and bosses. He is born out of his time. He ought

to have been borne in Uncle Tom's Cabin days, then there would have been some consistency in his language. That is the position; we are fining these people to keep up a fund to be distributed amongst the superior officers. There was a question asked to-night of the Premier as to what the rewards were given for. I would like to have the answer. The answer was that the rewards were given for bravery and superior skill. There is one officer who drives a certain pair of very fine ponies. I believe they are mostly used by the Commissioner and by the friends of the Commissioner.

*Mr. Collier* : And Ministers.

*Mr. WALKER* : I suppose sometimes the Ministers have the pleasure of riding behind those ponies. Not the Premier of course. He rides behind swifter horses than those and comes to grief in consequence. But these ponies are a sort of flash, nice, social ornamentation, perquisites of the Commissioner-ship.

*Hon. F. H. Piessé* : And they came from that awful place, Katanning.

*Mr. WALKER* : Who drives these ponies? A policeman, and I see this policeman down for £3 reward. Where is his bravery? He has no police work to do. Does it not show you at once where the favouritism comes in? He has to look after the ponies and the trap of the Commissioner and he gets £3 reward for that. This is bravery and special skill, and we are told there is no need for inquiry. I think we ought to know when these moneys are forced out of the pockets of the policemen what bravery this man has been guilty of. In the unfair distribution of this fund there is reason for inquiry. Has there been a case made out? Are not there cases still surrounded with suspicion; the treatment of men who have been disrated and dismissed. Is not there sufficient evidence brought before the House in the speech of the hon. member, and in the admissions of the Premier to-night, to show that there are ample grounds for inquiry into the content or discontent of the general body of the police force? Therefore I see no reason whatever for refusing the committee of investigation. What may be done, and

perhaps the Leader of the Opposition will agree to-night in having this inquiry on two points. As to the management and distribution of the reward fund and the constitutional methods employed in investigating complaints made by policemen against their superior officers.

*Mr. Bath* : There is the question of promotion.

*Mr. WALKER* : Yes; the question of promotion. If the inquiry were confined to these points—

*Mr. Bath* : I expressed my willingness on that in moving the motion.

*Mr. WALKER* : That would not cause the terrible expense suggested by the Premier and could not help doing some good, and it might be of value to both the House and the country. There can be no harm in the inquiry limited to those questions. It could not take very long, and it would not be very expensive, and its value certainly would be more than commensurate with the trouble taken and the expense incurred. I hope the suggestion will be accepted and the inquiry limited to these special objects, and that the Premier will consent to the appointment of the committee.

At 6.15, the *Speaker* left the Chair.

At 7.30, Chair resumed.

*Mr. H. BROWN* (Perth) : It was not my intention to speak on this subject, and I would not have spoken but for the personal abuse I received from the member for Kanowna. It is clear to me that should anyone disagree with the hon. member, or at any rate with some members on the opposite side of the House, he comes in for abuse. I much regret the quantity of abuse that has been levelled in this House during the session. In reference to this motion, I intend to vote against the appointment of a select committee, because I agree to a great extent with certain remarks made by the member for Kanowna last session. I think that had these remarks of the hon. member's been explained to him last night it would at any rate have had some weight with the House. I am quite aware that the Police Department needs an inquiry, and I think it would do

good ; but I say let it come, as the member for Kanowna mentioned last session in his speech, from someone who has some knowledge of the administration of a police force. I think money would not be wasted if an official from one of the Eastern States came over here and inquired into the administration of our police force. To show how the member for Kanowna can address the House at any length and not be very consistent with regard to his facts, I will read the hon. member's comments last year on the value of a select committee. Members will recollect the abuse hurled last night at members as to their knowledge and peculiar fitness for appointments on these select committees, and to bear out what is at all events my opinion that a capable officer should be brought over, the member for Kanowna in his speech last session entirely agrees with me. In speaking on the Police Offences Bill last session, the hon. member stated :—

"The value of the report of a select committee is judged by the weight the public attach to the committee by the fitness or unfitness of those who compose it, because it will not be denied, without casting a reflection on anybody, that there are certain members in this House fitted to inquire on some subjects better than on other subjects. It is no detriment to their characters or abilities to say so. For instance, if it were a matter connected with farming, I presume we should not think of putting men on a committee of that kind who had never been on farms in their lives, and had never read books on farming and knew nothing about it. We would only expect to place on a committee of that kind men knowing something about farming. Again, if it were a question of law, somebody interested from that side of the House and from this side, if it were possible to get them, should be appointed; and so on every subject the fitness of the persons intrusted with the important task of making an inquiry is an essential element in commanding votes in this House. There are some men whose opinion and report on certain subjects would be absolutely value-

less, no matter what evidence was given because of their lack of knowledge on the subject."

*Mr. Collier:* What is the point there?

*Mr. H. BROWN:* I am showing that the experience of the member for Kanowna is that only men knowing the subject inquired into should go on a select committee. I say there is no one in this House who has had the knowledge of police work to be able to give an opinion on the working of a police force.

*Mr. Bath:* But we have some knowledge of administration.

*Mr. H. BROWN:* Very little. Again the hon member said :—

"The member for Mt. Margaret moved that certain Bills be referred to select committees. Did any good come of them? Has not the mistake been discovered, and do we wonder that to-night the member for Mt. Margaret is dead against the proposal when he has seen the result of his experiment?"

Then the other night we heard the member for Kanowna lauding up members of the police force. I quite admit they are a very good lot of men ; but last session it was quite a different matter and it is well that the police force should know what is said. He is posing here to-night as their champion, because apparently it suits him ; but last session he was calling them the most ignorant lot of men on the face of the earth. He said :—

"The way our citizens have been treated by ignorant police and ignorant justices in the police courts—by ignorant police I repeat in spite of Commissioner Hare—in this State and in other States, because we in this State are not peculiar in that respect, has been murderous."

That was the opinion of the police force held by the member for Kanowna last session. I quite agree, as the member for Kanowna agreed last session, that there was some necessity for inquiry, because he said, in reference to the public :

"We are attacking them, putting them under surveillance, under the control of a body of men who sometimes need regulating, and we should not go behind the back of the people to do it."

I quite agree with that, and if it were not for the agitators, if the esplanade orators, as I may call them, would leave the men alone, it would be far better for the State. The men would be contented with their lot if it were not for these agitators that go in among them and strive to raise up discord. I am quite aware that if I am to study my electorate, I should champion the police as far as I possibly can, and I intend doing it so far as justice will warrant me, but I would point out that the police force are not the underpaid body of men that the member for Kanowna would lead the House to expect, and his remark that I would grind any man down to the lot of a timber hewer at the rate of 7s. 3d. a day is as uncalled for as it is unfair. I would like to remind him and also hon. members that I believe the lowest pay for any member of the police force is 7s. 6d. a day, and I would like also to remind members that they are paid for seven days a week.

*Mr. Collier :* But you cannot base a wage on the seven days' week.

*Mr. H. BROWN :* Well, take Sunday out ; say they get 7s. 6d. a day ; I would also point out that they are in receipt of free medical attendance and medicine. The single members of the force are in possession, I suppose, of the best quarters free that we have in the city at the present time, and I believe every comfort and provision is made for them in these quarters. I also believe and am informed that those who are not in quarters receive in addition to the 7s. 6d. a day a lodging allowance of £20 a year, in addition to which they are also allowed to earn something by attending theatres. Uniforms are also provided for the members of the police force here. I admit that inquiry is necessary, and I am prepared to say that I know something at all events on the subject of police work. I have had four years' experience of a semi-military police, and I can tell hon. members that during my four years as a trooper my pay was 5s. a day. I am only showing this as an instance. Out of that 5s. a day we purchased our horses, saddlery and accoutrements.

We have heard a lot of abuse to-night about the extra subscription to this assurance or annuity fund. I think the Government have done a wise thing in bringing in the Actuary, as they have done, to report on this particular fund. There would have been a much greater outcry in a few years to come assuming that this fund should be exhausted and there was not the wherewithal to pay the remaining members of the force. I had an experience in Africa, not of subscribing to a fund for an annuity, but out of our pay half-a-crown was stopped each month for an assurance fund for our horses, should one be shot or die. Our horses cost us £25 and we got £12 10s. each ; and as the mortality among the horses was very great, in a few years that fund was exhausted. I say it is far better to put this fund on a proper basis, though it possibly may be hard on the members of the force at present, but they will only see that they are acting in the interests of the men in seeing that proper provision is made in years to come to continue these pensions. We have heard also abuse of the senior officers of the force.

*Mr. Collier :* Who abused them ?

*Mr. H. BROWN :* I am not privileged to read the debates. I can assure members that some officers of the force have just as much the welfare of the men at heart and of the force to which they belong as members of this honourable House. I can assure members—and I am speaking for one officer of the force that I know, and I defy anyone to contradict me—that only last year or the year before that officer obtained six months' leave of absence, and in order to make himself more acquainted with the work of the police forces of the Eastern States, absolutely mortgaged his property for £300 to raise funds wherewith to go to the Eastern States and gain knowledge there that he could impart to the force here on his return. That trip did not cost the Government one single penny. I am prepared, as I said in the earlier part of my speech, to import an official from the Eastern States to inquire into our force and re-

port ; but for the same reasons as the member for Kanowna expressed last session I do not consider that there are any members of this House competent at all events to go in and report on the administration of a police force.

Mr. BATH (in reply as mover) : The Premier, in opposing the motion for the appointment of this committee has, as in other similar motions, referred to the expense in connection with the gathering of evidence and the business connected with investigation before select committees. I wish to point out that, so far as I am personally concerned, if members will look up the records of the House they will find it is very rarely that I move either for the production of papers or for the appointment of a select committee. I do not remember one occasion last session when I asked for the production of papers, and I have not many instances to my credit in connection with the appointment of select committees. [*The Minister for Works* : But you get others to move for them.] It is only necessary to point out that asking for the appointment of select committees involves the mover being the chairman of the committee and results in a considerable amount of work devolving upon him. My duties are sufficiently arduous without taking on that work, unless I am of opinion that there is an absolute necessity for it. As to the interjection of the Minister for Works, that is an example of his usual schoolboy tactics. Members take the course of moving for the appointment of select committees for themselves, and we are not like the Minister who can run round and whisper in the ears of members of his side of the House as to what they should ask or move for. [*The Minister for Works* : Have you never called for papers through another member?] No. If I want any papers I will move for them myself without asking any other member to act for me. It is the Minister for Works who resorts to such tactics, and there are other members who follow his miserable example. I moved for the committee because the circumstances and the matters brought under my notice made me believe it was necessary, and

that I was doing the right thing. The arguments used in regard to the manning of the force with commissioned and non-commissioned officers, and which were outlined in my speech, were justified by the report of the Public Service Commission, which dealt with the department a year or two ago. From that report, which I have looked up since I moved the motion, it will be seen that the position absolutely bears out my contention. On that occasion they referred to the proportion of policemen in this State to the population as compared with the other States, and they said :—

“This table shows clearly that the proportion in this State is largely in excess of that of the other States. The States in which the conditions are somewhat analogous to those existing in Western Australia are Queensland, New South Wales, and South Australia. In the two former one policeman serves one and a half persons to every one person in Western Australia, and in South Australia one constable serves two and a half persons to every one in Western Australia.”

Then they go on to deal with the reasons advanced for this disparity and combat the arguments. They say farther on : “There should be a reduction both in the number of constables and in the number of inspectors and sub-inspectors.” It was without having knowledge of this report that I moved the motion, but it was the comparisons I made with the other States and the disparity that existed that urged me to table the motion now before the House. The Premier has stated that I was incorrect in giving the percentage of commissioned officers. I took the Estimates for the year ended June, 1907, and I found there was one commissioner, one superintendent, eight inspectors, five sub-inspectors, and 15 commissioned officers to 436 of the rank and file. I excluded the non-commissioned officers, but I did the same in connection with all the other States, so that the comparisons would still stand good. If the Premier will work it out he will find that it is one officer to between 27 and 28 of the rank and file. If the information which he

has given us has been supplied to him, it is incorrect, as I took the figures from last year's Estimates. The Premier has referred to the fact that the Commissioner of Police has been able to cut down the expenditure from 12s. 6d. per head to just under 10s. But we have to bear in mind that, although as he says there is a bigger percentage of adults now in Western Australia than in the other States, that percentage was much higher some years ago, and if there had been a reduction in the cost per head of population, it has not been due to economies effected in the department, but owing to the fact that the number of children in the population is so much larger. The increase of the children has not necessitated an increase in the police force to keep pace with it. The reduction of the expenditure is owing to the fact that we are getting to a more normal condition of population than some years ago. So far as our present position is concerned, if by the tendency to reach that normal condition we reach the stage of the other States, our police staff in Western Australia would even then show a much greater cost per head of population than the Eastern States, and especially in States like South Australia and Queensland where they have conditions, as pointed out by the Public Service Commission, analogous to ours. When I moved for this select committee I did so because there were three points upon which there was need for inquiry. (1.) The question of giving an opportunity to constables in the force to have their grievances remedied. (2.) On the question of the administration of the Police Benefit Fund. (3.) On the question of promotions. The Premier has dealt with the first two, but entirely ignored the question of promotions. So far as the question of securing redress of grievances is concerned, it is true that, in the case of Tyler, an inspector of police was brought from outside, but that was an exceptional method of dealing with a case. If the Premier will cause inquiries to be made he will find it is the general rule for the superior officer, against whom a complaint has been made, to be placed on the board of inquiry. I have only to

refer to a case that recently occurred in Coolgardie where the decision of the board was arrived at by an adjournment to the club, and when the board came back from the club the decision was given. The mere fact that on the board is the superior officer, whose report in the first place to the Commissioner caused action to be taken and an unfavourable mark to be placed on the record of the constable, provides a means by which injustice is done to these men. So far as I am concerned I have not gone to the Esplanade, or anywhere else, to ascertain the grievances of constables. And it is just as well to say that agitation goes on in all stations of life. The member for Perth may have access to better places to carry on his agitations, such as the Bungalow, or the places which the National Political League can afford to hire in order to have those grievances aired. The reason people have to agitate on the Esplanade is because their means will only permit them to go there; but they carry on no more agitation than those in more exclusive stations. If they have just grievances it is as well that they should ventilate them on the Esplanade as anywhere else. My information has been secured in some instances owing to my connection with the honorary magistracy of the State. Men against whom there is not a blemish or one ground of suspicion have told me that there are injustices and grievances in the department which have not been remedied. I have sifted these cases and have told the men, before I would listen to what they had to say, to give me every justification for their opinion, and if necessary to provide me with a statutory declaration. It is because I have tried to sift out the genuine cases from those which are not genuine that I know that real grievances do exist and need inquiring into. I do not want to make an attack on the Commissioner of Police or anyone else, but upon the methods of administration in the department which made it possible that a constable may have grievances but will not have an opportunity of getting them redressed. The mere fact that when, after persistent work and agitation men have been able to get an inquiry, the man

against whom they complain is on the board, prevents them from securing redress. I will refer to one case mentioned by the Premier, where a man had the money, energy and persistency to prosecute the matter, and even went so far as to threaten legal action. The result was that he was reinstated in the force. If he had not had the means and those opportunities the probability is that he would not have had his grievance redressed. If the other constable I mentioned, Constable Vaughan, bore the character which the member for Mount Margaret wishes to make out why was there any move at all in the direction of giving him any farther work. If he was a man who thoroughly deserved to be dismissed from the force, and was not qualified to hold a position therein, there were no grounds for his case being taken into consideration and for his eventually being given a job. He has been given a job, and I believe one of a most unpleasant nature, having to clean out cess-pits, etcetera. This is a peculiar sort of way of trying to give redress on the one hand, while on the other they make it so unpleasant that the man will soon throw up the job and relieve them of farther cause to trouble about him. As to the Police Benefit Fund, I am glad to hear from the Premier that he is going to consider, and favourably consider, the advisability of giving to members of the force the right to nominate someone to represent them in the administration of the fund. There is not the slightest doubt that there have been grave reasons for dissatisfaction in regard to the administration in the past. I will quote the case of Constable Gollan, of Northam. I do not know about his record, but the fact remains that he had been engaged in the service for a very considerable time, closely approaching the 12 years when he would be eligible to draw his gratuity and retire from the service. As the time approached when he would be entitled to this benefit from the fund, matters were made so unpleasant for him that he had to leave and thus practically revoke all the rights he possessed to secure a gratuity from the Police Benefit Fund. And there are similar cases. If a man is

good enough to be in the force for ten or eleven years, it looks very suspicious when he is practically hounded out at the end of that time in order that he may be denied the advantages of the Police Benefit Fund. Then again, as to the benefits paid to those promoted to inspectorships, there may be some special features in the rules governing those who administer the fund, something enabling inspectors to draw these large allowances; but it seems to me this is one of the reasons why the fund is not in a sound actuarial position. But, after the State has practically made a contract with these police constables by which, in return for the payment of so much per month, they are to draw a gratuity on retiring after twelve years' service, there can be no reason whatever why the State should withhold from them a considerable portion of the gratuity. That is really in its essence a breach of contract. The authorities say the gratuity is dependent on absolute good conduct, and that any record of "indifferent conduct" will deprive the constable either of the whole amount of the gratuity, as it is called, or of a considerable proportion. I have seen some of the charges in consequence of which the gratuity has been withheld; and I say a police constable would have to be an angel from heaven to fulfil the requirements so that he might not run the risk of losing his gratuity. I should like to know if any man in this House, I do not care how virtuous, would not in the course of twelve years' service do something which might be placed on his record as a bad mark. I do not know one member of the House who would not be guilty of something which might be called "indifferent conduct." The fact that a constable has entered a public house to have a drink is marked against him. But is the same rule applied in the case of the superior officers? No; decidedly not, unless the case is very glaring; because I have personally seen those officers in the very act. They go either to a hotel or to the club to have a drink; and if that indulgence is not denied to the superior officer, why should it be a black mark against a member of the rank-and-file, if it is only an

occasional occurrence, and a black mark which has the effect of depriving him of the gratuity which he is entitled to draw from the Police Benefit Fund after he has done good service to the State, and after he has paid so much every month to entitle him to the gratuity? It may be necessary to increase the amount to be paid by constables, so that the fund may be put on a strict actuarial basis; but I certainly think that a contribution of £4 13s. per year should entitle a constable, after twelve years' or perhaps a much longer service, to a fairly considerable gratuity, and yet keep the fund in a perfectly solvent condition. The question of promotion is one in respect of which there are many but just grievances; and I may inform the Premier and other members that the very fact of my making this motion has had a good effect, because men who had been battling for years to get the promotion to which they are entitled, have, since this motion was tabled, secured redress at the hands of the department. There is more than one instance of this. There was a rule introduced in the department during Sir John Forrest's time to the effect that persons may be appointed to positions in the police force from outside the service—"such person as the Commissioner may think fit, without examination or probation, though not previously engaged in the police force." Two instances of this have been brought under my notice. One man thus brought in, who had good connections, had to resign the day after he was attested, because he was arrested on a warrant; and after the court proceedings he was again brought into the police force under a different number, as a probationer. In the first instance he was brought in as a second-class constable, being told subsequently that he would be sent to the North-West and would have an early chance of promotion. On the day after he was attested he was arrested on a warrant, and was again brought in, as a probationer. This rule is unjust to the members of the force; for none will deny that we have in our police force good men, well de-

serving of promotion; men of such a character that it is not necessary to appoint others from outside the force. Another man who was appointed drank himself out of the force in a fortnight after he entered under this clause, notwithstanding that efforts were made to screen him. There are other cases of men who have done good service but whose claims have been passed over, while those whose records are not so good have been promoted. This naturally excites discontent; and as policemen have to discharge important duties, and are invested with great responsibility for preserving law and order, they above all others should not be filled with discontent because of their treatment by the authorities. And it is on these three points that I ask for an inquiry. As to the ability of a select committee of this House to investigate the question, I fail to see the relevancy of the arguments of the member for Perth (Mr. H. Brown). He quotes the remarks of the member for Kanowna (Mr. Walker), but they have absolutely no bearing on this case. Here is a request for a select committee to inquire into three specific causes of complaint—the question of the redress of grievances, the administration of the Police Benefit Fund, and promotion. And if it be said that any hon. member is not qualified, after investigation, to give an intelligent decision on these points, then he has no right at all to be in this House. Those three matters do not need what may be termed technical experience of the police force; and if a committee is appointed, in the first place no great expense will be involved, in the second place its members will be thoroughly competent to deal with the question, and in the third place I consider from what the member for Perth has said, who favours inquiry, from what other members have said, and from what the Premier has said as to the redress which has been granted members of the police force who have had the means and the pertinacity to voice their grievances, there is need for inquiry; and the House should therefore grant a select committee to inquire into those questions.



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

Ayes	..	..	..	17
Noes	..	..	..	19
				—
Majority against	..			2

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Angwin	Mr. Barnett
Mr. Bath	Mr. Brebber
Mr. Butcher	Mr. H. Brown
Mr. Collier	Mr. Cowcher
Mr. Daglish	Mr. Eddy
Mr. Dawes	Mr. Foulkes
Mr. Hicks	Mr. Gregory
Mr. Holman	Mr. Gull
Mr. Horan	Mr. Hayward
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Keenan
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Layman
Mr. Smith	Mr. McLarty
Mr. Stuart	Mr. Male
Mr. Underwood	Mr. N. J. Moore
Mr. Walker	Mr. S. F. Moore
Mr. Ware	Mr. Price
Mr. Taylor (Teller).	Mr. A. J. Wilson
	Mr. F. Wilson
	Mr. Gordon (Teller).

Motion thus negatived.

## BILL—PORT HEDLAND-MARBLE BAR RAILWAY.

### Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 8th August.

The TREASURER (Hon. Frank Wilson): In rising to support the second reading of this measure, I think I shall be pardoned for saying this work has been for many years under consideration by Parliament; the proposal has been debated in the House time after time, and the question of developing our vast mineral resources in the North-West has received attention at the hands of many Governments. Unfortunately, to my way of thinking, it is only at the present time that any definite action has been taken to develop that district. Notwithstanding the fact that the previous Administration was strongly in favour of a railway being built in order to open up that district, and notwithstanding the fact that it was suggested that private enterprise should construct the line, nothing was done and the district languished for want of these facilities. It has devolved on the Moore Administration to come down with a practical measure for the construction of the line; and although exception has been taken by some members—and I may say to my surprise by

members representing electors and electorates on the North-West part of the coast—although it has been argued that the line must of necessity cross some 60 or 70 miles of sandy country before it reaches the auriferous belt; yet I venture to think that members will agree that it is a work of necessity and a work that is amply justified. It seems to me that the very fact of building a railway to bridge over some distance—and that has been the object of all railway construction in Western Australia, that you want to get back into the interior, that you want to open up a certain territory that is worth opening up—and to state that because this railway has to pass over some sandy country between the coast and the mineral belt it should not be constructed, is to my mind a very erroneous argument. I think it proves the necessity for the railway. The very fact of the difficulties of transit, that you cannot carry loads by camels or teams, goes to prove the necessity for the railway in order that the interior may be tapped. This is the case with all new countries. It was the experience in Western Australia when we started the scheme of opening up the country with railways. When the line was projected from Northam to Southern Cross there was nothing in between, and yet the Government and the Parliament of that day were fully justified in authorising the construction of that line in order to tap the Southern Cross district.

Mr. A. J. Wilson: Much of a gamble all the same.

The TREASURER: Possibly so. That railway was extended from centre to centre; and the same object was in view, in order to get beyond, not taking into consideration so much what was between the two given points, Southern Cross and Coolgardie. There was nothing in between worth mention; but the Coolgardie district promised to give sufficient evidence of mineral wealth and to give sufficient promise of big development to warrant the Government of the day continuing the line over the 116 miles to Coolgardie; and so on right through.

*Dr. Hicks:* How much better for the line if there were.

The TREASURER: I admit that. We have the same position to-day. We have the project to couple the Black Range district with Mount Magnet; and I venture to say no member would take into consideration anything that lies between Mount Magnet and Black Range. We know, at any rate, some portion of it promises to give a fair supply of mining timber, and we know at the present juncture of one abandoned centre between Black Range and Mount Magnet, Paynesville. That is going to justify us throwing aside the project to couple Black Range with Mount Magnet, because there is no centre to tap on the road. What we have to consider, I think, is whether the back country which it is proposed to tap from the coast in this instance warrants the construction of a railway for that purpose. And I say unhesitatingly that, in my opinion—and it is an opinion I have held for many years, as members know well from statements I have made from time to time in the House—it is just about time we gave railway facilities to the North-West to open up the Pilbarra Goldfields. No matter how much argument may be brought that there is some portion of the country some 100 miles to the south of the district which warrants railway construction, I do not think members and the Government would be justified in refusing to tap the great centres lying round and about Marble Bar because some other district also perhaps is entitled to favourable consideration in that direction. Let me here state again that I cannot quite understand the attitude taken up by the member for Roebourne. I can to some extent understand the attitude taken up by the member for Gascoyne in this important matter. But the member for Roebourne, a gentleman who, to my own knowledge, has always supported railway facilities for the North-West, who on previous occasions has been one of the warmest supporters of a work of this description, now tells us practically that the country is no good, that the mines have all petered out, that there is

a little copper development and that that may peter out also—he does not know, he says—that therefore the railway ought not be constructed, or if constructed it should be from another point. At any rate, that is the conclusion I got from listening to his speech and from reading it. The conclusion I got was that we would not be justified in building the railway from another point; but if we were inclined for a gamble, build it from Roebourne or Balla Balla. That was the essence of the hon. member's remarks. I am sorry to think that perhaps these remarks, coming from a member representing an electorate in the North-West, will carry greater weight than they ought; and I am inclined to think they will carry weight with members of the House. But I prefer not to take the attitude adopted by that member to-day as against that which he took some years ago when this question of railway construction to Marble Bar and Nullagine was projected. [*Mr. A. J. Wilson interjected.*] I am sorry I cannot accommodate my namesake; but I am making the speech, and he will have an opportunity of giving us his views later on. I want to combat the arguments and the pessimistic utterances of the member for Roebourne, which are likely to have, on the outside public, some weight; I want to counteract the effect his remarks may have on some members of the House. The hon. member, when speaking in 1903, on this project—some four years ago—followed the then member for Coolgardie, Mr. Morgans, who had made one of his very telling speeches, optimistic speeches, with regard to the Pilbarra Goldfields. Mr. Morgans dilated on the great mineral wealth of that district; he made the mouths of members water by anticipations of the immense fortunes to be gained.

*Mr. Gull:* That he was going to make.

The TREASURER: And that hon. members might make through investing in mineral ventures in that portion of our State. And he concluded his remarks with these very significant words:—

"I will state it as my opinion only, though the opinion has been supported in private by men whose mining experience extends over many years. The opinion is that, outside of the Golden

Mile of Kalgoorlie, there is no mining district in Western Australia which can in any way compare either as a gold or a mineral producer with the Pilbarra Goldfield district."

And immediately the member for Roebourne got on his feet and said—

"I fully endorse all the statements of the member for Coolgardie as to the necessity for a railway to open up the resources of the North-West."

That was four years ago.

*Dr. Hicks:* What was Mr. Morgans' experience?

The TREASURER: Mr. Morgans' experience is well known to the House. His experience is that there is undoubtedly mineral wealth lying there to be developed and won; but the enormous cost of transit has checkmated endeavours and most of the mines have spent their capital and are unable to work and make operations payable in consequence. That is his experience.

*Mr. Taylor:* That is not the case put by the Minister for Mines.

The TREASURER: It is the case put by anyone who has spoken with authority on this question. Let us inquire into this. It is quite fair for me to point out to the House that the member for Roebourne has changed his opinion within the last four years.

*Dr. Hicks:* He must have had justification for it.

The TREASURER: But he has not given us the justification for it; that is the fault I am finding.

*Mr. Collier:* The mines have petered out.

The TREASURER: That is not the only occasion on which the hon. member addressed himself to the question of railway communication for the Pilbarra Goldfields. Other remarks I could quote in which the hon. member has warmly advocated railway construction. In 1905 he made a speech in which he supported the construction of the railway, and strongly advocated the railway starting from Roebourne.

*Mr. Collier:* That was before the reconstruction.

The TREASURER: There was then no question in his mind that the railway was

not justifiable; and he strongly supported it, no longer ago than two years.

*Mr. Taylor:* Members change their minds; you were once a strong opponent of a land tax.

The TREASURER: I understand the hon. member does change his mind; I have known instances in which he has changed his mind. Will the member tell me the aspect of the Pilbarra Goldfields has changed within the last three or four years? I venture to state that the Pilbarra Goldfields to-day is more prosperous than it has been at any time during the last four, five, or six years. Not only has it been proved that there are gold deposits there worth working, if they can be worked cheaply, but there are metals which have been discovered which tend to show that railway facilities will enable us to open up an enormously wealthy district in the Pilbarra Goldfields. Then we have this position: are we going the right way about developing the country if it is worth developing? I say unhesitatingly that we should give this enormous territory a chance; we should give it the same opportunity that we have given other portions of our territory of extending and improving themselves. There has not been anything like the justification in other portions of the country where we have given railway facilities, not anything like justification so far as giving railway facilities in this district. And I think members, at any rate a majority, will bear me out in this, that it is no use quibbling as to whether the line should start 100 miles farther south. If you are going to develop or open up a district which has been proved—that is the district within a radius of 50, 70, or 80 miles of Marble Bar, and that is the district we propose to open up and tap with this line—then you must take it from the nearest point on the coast which has harbour accommodation. It is idle to suggest that you are going to do a wise thing to commence that railway one hundred miles farther south on the coast line. What would be the benefit of starting a line from Balla Balla or Point Sampson? We have this position, that we have to traverse say from Point Sampson the coast line for

a considerable distance for 50, 60 or 70 miles. If we go to Whim Creek we would be 50 miles from Point Sampson. [*Mr. Butcher* : Not so far as that.] I am dealing with Point Sampson first. If we go to traverse the route which the hon. member suggests from Point Sampson, we run parallel with the coast line for a considerable distance, approximately 60 miles, to give railway facilities for mines, at any rate a mineral belt, which is within reasonable distance of the coast for camel and other teams. In no case would we be more than 15 or 20 miles from the coast line, and there is nothing that warrants railway construction between Point Sampson and Whim Creek. There are good mines I believe in the neighbourhood of Roebourne, but all these mines are so close to the coast and the tramway facilities that already exist as far as Roebourne 12 miles inland, that they do not require railway construction. So we come to this position, that if we build a railway from Point Sampson to Whim Creek, we are wasting some 50 miles, because we are passing through country that does not need railway facilities. Then take Balla Balla. The hon. member has spent a considerable time in advocating that a railway should be constructed from Balla Balla or Depuch Island. [*Mr. Butcher* : Not me.] I am speaking of the member for Roebourne at present. The hon. member suggested that this line should be constructed from Balla Balla. If I remember right he used a strong argument that the Whim Creek mine was the only mine worthy of mention in the district—I think he said the whole of the North-West. Presuming that is true, we have this position : The Whim Creek mine is only 12 miles from the coast ; it is within cooe of the landing place at Balla Balla ; and the company themselves at present are constructing their own tram line from the mine down to a site where they propose to erect smelting works, and from there to couple up with the jetty in order that they can ship their matte or ore, as the case may be. So Whim Creek has no claims for railway construction. And so we go past right on to Wodgina. I admit that all these

different centres are centres that are worthy of attention which will, I hope, in the very near future develop so enormously that they must receive that attention at the hands of the Government and Parliament. But at the present time I am trying to prove this point, that it is useless to hang up the development programme of the Government in regard to the Marble Bar district because we have a district some hundred miles farther south which may probably, and I think will, warrant railway facilities in the near future. The Wodgina field is a very promising field from all accounts, but from there on we have nothing of any moment until we get to the Marble Bar district. There are different small centres, but not one of them would warrant a railway construction on its own account.

*Mr. Johnson* : Can you get direct from Wodgina to Marble Bar ?

The TREASURER : The Minister for Mines informs me that you cannot get direct; you would have to go north or south a number of miles to get round the hilly country in order to get to Marble Bar. So there is a difficulty in front of us on that account. We come to this position, that to couple with one of these south ports we would have not only a harbour problem in front of us, more than there is at Port Hedland, but we would have to construct a railway perhaps 80 or 100 miles farther than the railway we are asking the House to endorse from Port Hedland to Marble Bar. With reference to the harbour at Balla Balla, remarks have been made in connection with the jetty question and the construction of this tramway. Let me point out that it would be a scandal indeed, not the scandal such as was interjected by one member, the granting of a permission to put down a tramline would be, but it would be a scandal if we as a Government were to stand in the way of the progress and prosperity of a company that is doing good work in that district.

*Dr. Hicks* : Are you not going to bring in legislation to authorise this tramline?

The TREASURER : Most certainly not. This line is being constructed the same

as scores of other tramlines on the Eastern Goldfields. The hon. member must be well aware that in the Lawlers district these tramways have been constructed for a considerable distance to bring in the ore to the central treatment plant, and we have tramways constructed for other purposes. Those are constructed under the Mining Act for mining purposes; but we have tramways also which are put down under the Land Act for bringing in firewood. There are numbers of them. Members must be aware of it. I say it would be a scandal indeed if this Government were to stand in the way of a company conveying their ore from the mine to the port or to their smelting works on the coast, or conveying back to the mine the material they were importing or bringing from the South. It would be a scandal indeed if the Government did not grant them all the mining facilities that other mining companies have on the Eastern Goldfields.

*Mr. Angwin:* Would it be almost equal to a private railway?

The TREASURER: Decidedly not.

*Mr. Taylor:* What is the gauge? It all depends upon the gauge.

The TREASURER: I do not know. I am not particular what it is. If they like to make it 3ft. 6in. or 4ft. 8½in., it does not matter to me.

*Mr. Johnson:* You could sell some of your old stock.

The TREASURER: I would be very glad to sell them some of the old stock at Midland Junction.

*Mr. Bath:* They took all the high ground at the water side.

*The Minister for Mines:* No.

*Mr. Bath:* So I am informed.

The TREASURER: These people have no concession. There is nothing in the nature of a concession granted to this company that other people have not the right to get. The company are operating 12 miles from the coast, and they have asked permission to make a tramway under the Mining Act.

*Mr. Johnson:* But you have given them the monopoly of the jetty.

The TREASURER: Let me deal with the tramway first; we will come to the jetty afterwards. They have no more

concession than any other persons would get from the Government for works of this description. The member for Roebourne found fault with the Government for having granted this permission, and wanted to know why we did not build the tramline ourselves. It would be a business-like procedure, would it, to build a tramline 12 miles in length for a mine that might close down or may run on, to be used exclusively for one company's work? I think we would be open to the censure of this House had we suggested such a thing for a moment. Members would say at once we were "greasing the fatted sow." Supposing that we had built this tramline, and supposing eventually a railway is constructed from Depuch Island (it is the only point from which it can be constructed on that part of the coast to the back country), and not from a creek which I believe at low tide has a sand bar of some two or three miles in extent, that is, it goes dry from the anchorage to where the goods are landed; if we have eventually to give railway communication as I hope we will eventually have to do some day, what good would our tramline be? It would be at once *non est*, and would not be worth old railway material. The railway would start from Depuch Island, and any goods shipped there would be carried from Depuch Island to the mine, and would not touch Balla Balla at all. I think that deals pretty fully with the Balla Balla question. But let me speak with regard to the jetty. The position as far as the jetty is concerned is that tenders were called in February of the present year for letting the jetties in the North-West for 12 months. [*Mr. Johnson:* Does that include Port Hedland?] I think Port Hedland was the only jetty cut out. Only two offers were made for this Balla Balla jetty, and both of the tenderers specified that they should have the jetty for three years. One offer was for £150 per annum, and the other was for £300 per annum. It was pretty evident that the £300 man was getting a move on at any rate to get hold of this jetty knowing that the company must utilise it, and that possibly he would be able to make something out of it. How-

ever, acceptance of the tender was deferred pending the visit of a Minister for Mines to the North-West, which visit was then projected. In the meantime, the man who had offered to pay £300 for the jetty and had not put in any deposit, so that we had very little hold on him, withdrew his offer, and we were in the position that we had only one offer, namely from the company for £150 per annum. The previous lessee who had the jetty was paying £35 per annum, so it can be seen at once the Government were doing a good business deal when they got £150 per annum for a jetty, for which up to that time they could only get £35.

*Hon. H. F. Piessie :* That agreement does not give the right to the lessee to preclude other persons from trading over the jetty. It is only to farm the dues.

The TREASURER: Any person can land goods at the jetty, but the lessee collects the dues at the ordinary rates. There is a condition in the agreement that if the company or their manager do not give proper attention to other people in the ordinary transaction of shipping business over the jetty, the Government have the option to cancel the lease at a month's notice. This tender was not accepted as members were led to suppose, without inquiry, but the Chief Harbour Master recommended it; it was on his recommendation. It was considered a good offer; for if the Government kept the jetty in their own hands they would have had the difficulty of labour to contend with in that respect. The shipping is intermittent, very intermittent, and it depends almost entirely at the present time upon this company. If you have an intermittent work you must get a certain supply of labour on hand to deal with that work, when it comes along. The result is that you have to put men on fixed salaries which have to be paid whether you want the labour or not. [*Mr. Taylor :* How will the company get labour then?] They will, I presume, send men from the mine when the shipping comes in. They have, I believe, 100 men on their pay-sheets, although there is some little trouble there at the present time which I hope soon will be overcome. When they have ship-

ments coming along, or other people have them, then the lessees will send their labour down from the mine to work it. [*Mr. Johnson :* If they do not pay the labour on the wharf a fair wage, will you cancel the lease?] The lessee has the right to lay heavy rails over the jetty. That is a right which it was thought reasonable to grant the company in order that they might carry heavy traffic over it. Thirty pound rails are to be laid there at the lessee's expense and these will become the property of the Government on the expiration of the term of the lease, without any compensation being granted. The term of the lease is two years and nine months, for three months had elapsed between return of the tenders and the time when the tender was finally accepted. There is nothing which anyone can cavil at with regard to the arrangements, which are in the best interests, not only of the people who are endeavouring to develop an industry there, but also of the Government and the State, for we are getting a businesslike and a good return for the money which has been expended. To return to the question of the goldfields, tin fields, and copper fields which we hope to tap and bring into practical being by this railway. I find on looking at the records that this field is not what the hon. member for Roebourne depicts it, a petered-out field, such as he has described the whole of the North-West country, for there are very good mines there which need only a cheap cost of production to become equal, according to Mr. Morgans, to the Golden Mile at Kalgoorlie. A railway running to Marble Bar will, as I have said, serve a very large area of country, which includes such mines as already exist in the Bamboo Creek District where it has been stated the gold mines have petered out for good and all. This place flourished from 1893 to 1897, but the work was carried on there at very heavy cost, something like £18 to £20 per ton having to be paid to bring materials from the ship to the mine. When hon. members remember that firewood in this district costs from £3 to £4 10s. per cord, they will understand at once how impossible it was to continue mining of that

description unless there was very rich ore in very large quantities. The Bulletin mine in the same district has a main shaft down some 130 feet vertical, and 80 feet underlay. I am given to understand on the best authority that tributers are now working on that lease on good gold, and that the average value of the ore body is two ounces a ton. Surely if tributers who are taking out the best of the ore can make a good thing from the mine, if the property were worked systematically with fairly reasonably cheap fuel and transit, it will develop considerably and be a very profitable venture for those who put their money into it. Adjoining this property is the Bulletin Deep. A considerable amount of capital has been spent on that mine, and there is a vertical shaft put down 430 feet. It was intended by the owners of the mine to cross-cut at the 500 feet level, and to intercept the vein which I have referred to as existing in the Bulletin. The shaft is 10 by 4 and well timbered with sawn jarrah, but the cross-cut in order to get the vein that runs into the property has not been made, and the show had to be abandoned because the capital of the company was expended and there was no more money to go on with. They could not make a payable proposition of it for the money had run short, and without reasonable railway facilities the shareholders would put no more capital into the company. There are also such mines as the Bamboo Queen, Bonnie Doon, Perseverance and Prophecy, all of which have money spent on them and have shafts put down from 80 to 150 feet in depth, and are well timbered. [Mr. Taylor: Are they working now?] No. All the money has been spent because of the heavy cost of cartage and the enormous cost of timber from the coast, the latter amounting to some £20 a ton. [Mr. A. J. Wilson: What is the working cost of the mine which is turning out two ounces per ton?] That was mentioned in the speeches made some years ago in the House; I have not got the particulars myself. The reason these mines were all closed down temporarily is well known. It was because of the great scarcity of fuel and the heavy cost

of cartage. At Marble Bar we find that this fuel question a very pressing one, so acute in fact that the tributers and others who are endeavouring to eke out an existence there have actually gone to the trouble of taking the timber from the workings of the mines and the sleepers from the tramlines in order to get wood for use as fuel. A district to be served by the railway, if constructed, is Warrawoona. This was discovered in 1898. There are several mines there including the Klondyke Queen, the Boulder, and the Gauntlet. The last-named was a very promising show indeed and at a depth of 150 feet three-ounce ore was being raised by tributers. Nullagine has been proved for many years, dating back as it does to 1896. The shallow water level proved a great obstacle in the way of working the mines there, for it meant that a large expenditure had to be incurred in pumping plants. Then freights were found to be prohibitive and the workings in a good many instances, I believe, have collapsed through not being timbered. The Barton has been worked for years and the lowest point reached there is 160 feet. There are large ore bodies there going about 18 dwts. Members can see at once in this case also that it would be impossible to make 18 dwts. pay unless there was cheap means of getting supplies from the coast. Sandy Creek has been proved in the past and large quantities of gold have been got from there, rich chutes having been discovered. Here again it has been found impossible to work the mines on the large and extensive scale they should be in order to make them of value to their owners and the country because of the heavy cost of production. At Mosquito Creek there are the Galtee More, Parnell, the Last Surprise, and other mines all going to a depth of over 100 feet. At Lalla Rookh one property has been developed to 140 feet on two lodes. The northern lode has been driven on at the 90ft. level for 200 or 300 feet. [Dr. Hicks: How long since it has been worked?] Twelve or 18 months, I cannot say from memory. At the 140ft. level the lode has been driven on 70 feet and there is a favourable ore body there

about three feet wide and the values are about 30 dwts. Lalla Rookh is about 70 miles from the coast, and although I believe the projected line does not go to that place, it will serve it, as it is within measurable distance of Marble Bar. [Mr. Taylor: What is the distance from the line?] About 20 miles. This is quite close enough to cheapen the cost of production considerably in the way of cartage. There are plenty of other good prospecting shows, but the water trouble has been a very serious one, and working expenses and cartage have prevented that proper development which will follow the construction of the railway. All these mines to which I have referred and all the different centres which go from Lalla Rookh, 70 miles from the coast, to Nullagine, about 200 miles from the coast, can be served and served to a very great extent by the construction of this railway. It is true that the nearer mines will receive the most direct benefit. That is to be expected; but if we bridge over this 70 miles of sandy country, which has been found to be so expensive and destructive to the successful working of the district in the past, you come to propositions within 20, 30, or 40 miles of the line which previously had to cart materials 150 miles. [Mr. Taylor: The member for North Fremantle says that that 70 miles of sandy waste is good pastoral country, some of the best in Australia.] I am very pleased to hear that, for if the country is good pastoral country probably somebody will be induced to take it up and develop it. My argument to-night is that if it be the veriest desert in the world all the more reason why we should hasten to construct a railway to bridge it over, so that we can reach the mineral district at the back of it and cause it to be developed. [Mr. Butcher: You are considering only one portion of the district.] The railway will be the cause of developing the main portion of the country. Let the hon. member not forget this, that within 12 miles of Marble Bar there is Moolyella, where 500 men are working and getting a good living from the alluvial tin. [Mr. Butcher:

that is not gold.] I do not care what mineral it is so long as we have mining in the district, and it can be helped forward and developed by the construction of the railway. I want to impress on the House that not only are these men making a good living there on alluvial tin, but that lode tin has been discovered as well. It is idle for the hon. member to contend otherwise. Lode tin has been discovered there and the Minister for Mines has informed the House of the fact. When we cast our minds back to the history of the Greenbushes tinfield in the South-West district of the State we will remember that that field, which I believe was discovered 17 years ago, has had its ups and downs. At one time it was prosperous and at other times not so prosperous, but to-day it is in a better condition than ever it was before. There are now 1,500 people supported by that field, and surely to goodness we can hope with some justification that this enormous tinfield of Moolyella will be equally as successful and profitable to the State. And I am reminded, it is not confined to only a few miles around Moolyella, but the extent of this tin-bearing country is about 900 square miles, so that its possibilities are enormous. I for one am prepared to take the risk, and consider that constructing this railway is a fair business venture. The Minister for Mines reminds me that I may be permitted to refer to the Cooglegong tinfield, which, he says, from his own knowledge, promises to be as big as Moolyella. The Cooglegong field is some 30 miles distant from the proposed railway. Still, the field will be served, and the development of the district enhanced by the line. I come to the question of the port; and I regret to hear so many pessimistic utterances regarding Port Hedland. It seems to me members who have opposed Port Hedland as the starting-point of the railway have gone out of their way to utterly damn it. [Mr. Butcher: Nature did that.] Nature has not done that. In the early portion of this year I had the advantage of visiting this port, and I venture to say, as one with some little experience of



harbours not only in Australia but in the old country, that for a tidal harbour Port Hedland is excellent. It has its disabilities and its difficulties; but the difficulties are not insurmountable, and at a very small cost Port Hedland can be made a harbour such as we have not on the coast anywhere between Hedland and Fremantle. That is conclusively proved by the fact that for the year ending the 30th June last 90 steamers entered that port and went to the jetty. [*Mr. Butcher*: Different steamers?] I do not say they were different steamers. What does that matter? Ninety steamers went to the jetty, and 58 small sailing vessels. A tonnage of 118,430 entered the port, and no accident occurred; and there has never been an accident in Port Hedland, nor has any serious injury been caused to a vessel therein. Although it is a tidal port, yet at low water during spring tides we have 19 feet of water on the outer bar, and at neap tides, the lowest, there are 12 feet of water on the outer bar; while at any time, at neap tide, vessels drawing 16 feet 6 inches can cross the outer bar. [*Mr. Butcher*: What about the inner bar?] And during the greater portion of the month vessels drawing from 20 to 21 feet can cross the bar at high tide. What more does the hon. member want? [*Mr. Butcher*: What is the rise and fall of tide?] About 19 feet in the springs and about 12 feet, I suppose, at neaps; so what the hon. member stated is incorrect. He said the harbour could be used for only some 12 days in the month. [*Mr. Butcher*: That is so.] I am pointing out that is not so; that the harbour can be utilised on any day of the month by vessels drawing 16 feet 6 inches, during the greater number of days in the month by vessels drawing as much as 20 and 21 feet. After crossing the outer bar a vessel can, and most steamers I presume do, go up the deep-water channel, which can be used to avoid the inner bar; and some six additional beacons are now being erected; so I am informed on the best authority there is no difficulty whatever in negotiating the entrance to that harbour. Alongside the jetty there is 16 feet at low water

during neap tides, and at spring tides any amount of water. Ships drawing up to 20 feet can lie there at low tides. Moreover, there are no undue delays. In some ports of the world, notably in the old country, there is great difficulty in getting into or away from tidal harbours. There are two tides in the 24 hours; and if a vessel comes along at dead low water, she has naturally to wait, at Port Hedland as at other tidal harbours, some five or six hours, if she draws from 12 to 21 feet, before she can enter the harbour. To my knowledge that disability exists in hundreds of harbours all over the world; and to condemn a harbour because of some slight delay between the time of arrival and the time of crossing the bar safely is absurd and unreasonable.

*Mr. Taylor*: Do you think no additional expenditure on the harbour will be needed when the railway is built?

The TREASURER: I do not say so for a moment. I say from my knowledge of harbours, Port Hedland is a natural harbour which requires the expenditure of only a few thousand pounds to make it for all time perfectly safe and a most useful port. Even at the present time it has proved a safe and useful harbour; and we should be foolish indeed to condemn it and go elsewhere. I have spoken briefly of the Balla Balla jetty. Let me remind the House that steamers there have to lie off some five miles from the jetty, which is practically dry at low water. It is only a boat jetty on the creek. There is only 10 to 11 feet of water at high spring tides at that jetty, and the shoal I have referred to, dry at every tide, extends from two and a-half to three miles. Who in his sober senses would recommend that the Government should expend a large sum of money at such a place as Balla Balla in preference to Port Hedland? To connect Depuch Island with the mainland is another proposal; but though there has been no fully detailed estimate of the cost, this has been stated by one engineer at something like £200,000. *Mr. Babington*, I think, made that estimate. Without a detailed survey, but from his experience, he concluded that this sum would be needed; and it is reasonable to suppose it would,

and that the £50,000 mentioned by the member for Roebourne (Dr. Hicks) is a product of the hon. member's imagination, arrived at by a wrong diagnosis of the case. I think I have proved my contention that the district is well worth surveying; that the proper course to take in order to give the district a chance of substantiating what has been said about it and what we anticipate from it is to provide it with railway communication from the nearest port. I think members will agree with me I have proved that Port Hedland is a harbour which at very small expense can be made almost second to none on our coast, and a harbour well worthy of our attention. I think also I may maintain I have proved that the immediate district to be served by the railway affords prospect of great prosperity, holding out the hope of great avenues of employment for the labour of our settlers, resulting in large profits to investors of capital. The mineral belt which can be tapped by the railway, even though it be constructed in the first instance no farther than Marble Bar, will be enormous. The length of the Lalla Rookh belt, which has not yet been absolutely defined, cannot, according to the Government Geologist, be less than 30 or 40 miles. The North Pole, the Talga Talga and the Bamboo belt is at least 50 miles. The Marble Bar, Warrawoona, the Cooglegong and the Mount Elsie belt has been proved to extend over about 80 miles; while the Nulagine, Middle Creek and Sandy Creek zone is known to extend at least 40 miles; and there are strong geological reasons for the belief that it continues much farther to the east, and may possibly cross the upper reaches of the Oakover River. With all this information before us, with the report of the State Mining Engineer, Mr. Montgomery, which was read by the Premier when he introduced this measure—Mr. Montgomery, who has his reputation at stake and is not likely to give wrong advice, being strongly of opinion that in the best interests of the country the railway should be built on the route already surveyed from Port Hedland to Marble Bar, and that it will become a profitable venture soon after construction—I think the House will be ill

advised indeed if it rejects a measure which means so much to the country.

Mr. E. C. BARNETT (Albany) : I listened with great interest to the speeches of the members for Roebourne (Dr. Hicks) and Gascoyne (Mr. Butcher) on the proposed railway from Port Hedland to the Pilbarra mineral fields, and decided that if the pessimistic view they took of the prospects of the success of the venture was justified by inquiries I intended to make, no course would be open to me but to oppose the project. Since the member for Roebourne spoke I have spent the greater part of my spare time in reading reports and interviewing practical men who have spent a considerable time in the district, and who I believe are qualified to give me an honest opinion as to the probable success or probable failure of the Pilbarra mineral fields; and I am pleased to say, after gathering all available information, I can give to the Government proposal a whole-hearted support. The member for Gascoyne made a great feature of his suggestion that the railway should start from Point Sampson. A great feeder will be found at Whim Creek, and he also pointed out that the first 70 miles of the line from Port Hedland would practically go through barren country.

Mr. Butcher : That was the Minister's statement in moving the second reading of the Bill.

The Minister for Works : It is a true statement all the same.

Mr. BARNETT : The hon. member supported the construction of the railway from Point Sampson, 50 or 60 miles of the railway running a reasonable distance from the coast, and any mineral discoveries along the line from Point Sampson to Whim Creek could easily be helped by the construction of short tramways to the nearest natural ports, or concessions similar to those granted to the proprietors of the Whim Creek Mine. Between 50 and 60 miles of the line from Point Sampson to Whim Creek would be as useless as the first 70 miles of the proposed railway from Port Hedland to Marble Bar, with this difference, that when the 70 miles from Port Hedland

had been constructed the line would be within a distance of 45 miles from Marble Bar; and when 50 or 60 miles of the railway to Whim Creek was constructed the line would be considerably over 100 miles from Marble Bar. In reference to the advocacy of the member for Roebourne to make Balla Balla the starting point; from inquiries I have made I think it would be a mistake if such an idea were entertained for a moment. The distance from Depueh Island to the mainland is 5 miles, and the only way to connect Depueh Island with the mainland would be by a causeway averaging any height up to 50 feet, and this would be at a tremendous cost. Balla Balla could only be used as a port by lightering the cargo from the steamers. When making inquiries I asked a gentleman who had had a large practical mining experience on the Pilbarra fields, the correctness of the statement made by the member for Roebourne as to the mines petering out; this gentleman informed me that in the majority of instances the mines had stopped working; they had gone down as far as they could go without timbering, and in the majority of instances good gold was obtained. If timber could be secured at a reasonable price there was every possibility, after the construction of the railway, of hundreds of mines proving profitable. I also asked, the proposal of the Ministry being generally to make Nullagine the objective of any railway, would it be advisable in the first place to construct the line to Marble Bar; and would that point open up a sufficient mineral area to justify the construction of the line? and the answer to this inquiry was decidedly favourable. This gentleman also drew my attention to the reports by Mr. Gibb Maitland by which members will see the numbers of mines in which shafts have been sunk and have fallen in. [*Mr. Taylor*: Anybody in them when they fell in?] No. The information given by Mr. Gibb Maitland in his report is that the ground is not good enough to stand without timbering. The owners have worked the mines as far as they possibly can without timbering, but the mines have become too unsafe to go farther. In the opinion of

Mr. Maitland the majority of the mines if the railway were constructed and timber were used, would open up again. In reference to the remarks that this line, if it were extended to Nullagine, would leave a large portion of the field unsupplied with railway communication, and would only serve a portion of the field, the opinion has been expressed to me that the construction of this railway would prove the success of the field to such an extent that it would warrant the construction of feeders to open up different portions of the field. I may mention that this information has not been supplied by a Government official; I have made use of Mr. Gibb Maitland's report; but other information I have obtained from independent outside sources; and after having obtained this information I shall support the Government proposal.

*Mr. G. TAYLOR* (Mount Margaret): I am in the unfortunate position of having listened to many debates in this House for the last seven years in favour of this line. I well remember the optimistic speech delivered by the then member for Coolgardie, Mr. Morgans, which has been quoted to-night by the Treasurer.

*Mr. Angwin*: He has delivered a good many in this country.

*Mr. TAYLOR*: I admit that; and no doubt they are optimistic speeches.

*The Minister for Works*: Do not you like a cheerful man?

*Mr. TAYLOR*: I would never select the Minister for Works as a cheerful man. It was one of Mr. Morgans' characteristics that he was a most able man in after-dinner speeches in the way of making optimistic remarks. It was generally accepted that these speeches were invariably sent to the shareholders in England. That was one of the characteristics deeply marked in the then member for Coolgardie, Mr. A. E. Morgans. I have heard that gentleman say that the then Government were standing in the way of that portion of the State by not building a line, were acting on the dog-in-the-manger principle and not allowing private enterprise to build the railway. We were told repeatedly that if the Government would only admit of private enterprise

building that line, private enterprise would build it and the country would warrant it. That opportunity was given to private enterprise, but what did private enterprise do? They would not touch it. Mr. Morgans said that there was ample money forthcoming, but it was not there when it was wanted.

*The Premier* : It was there so long as we gave them a guarantee of four per cent. interest.

*Mr. TAYLOR* : We find the same speeches are made in favour of this railway now. I am not going to oppose the construction of the line, but I believe there has been no case made out for its construction. The only case made out for the line—of course it will not be a criticism—was that by the Treasurer to-night; and when you put the Treasurer's speech side by side with the speech of the Minister for Mines who is just warm from that district, just fresh from those fields, we find that the Minister pointed out the position of the places described by the Treasurer. The Treasurer described those places in the most glowing terms; but what did the Minister for Mines who preceded him say? The Minister for Mines has been on the spot and the Treasurer has never been there. I believe the Treasurer got somewhere near the outer fringe of the country on his way to Japan, and he knows the harbour; but I say the harbour is not going to be put in order for a few thousand pounds.

*The Treasurer* : Have you been there?

*Mr. TAYLOR* : No, but I have met hundreds of men who have been there, and I have known these people in other parts of Australia, and they have given their opinion of the country 12 years ago. [Interjection by Mr. Underwood.] There have been men there long before the hon. member was there. At Lalla Rookh Mr. Gregory said 6,200 tons of ore were crushed for 7,400 ounces of gold, covering a period of something like four or five years. He also said, when I interjected and asked what was being done there now, that there was nothing there whatever. This is one of the places the Treasurer painted in glowing terms to-night.

*The Treasurer* : What did he mean?

*Mr. TAYLOR* : I can only take the literal meaning of the statement. There has been a certain amount of work done there, and a certain amount of gold obtained from a certain amount of stone, but there is no work being done there now.

*Mr. Gordon* : They cannot work under the circumstances.

*Mr. TAYLOR* : We have an answer from the intellectual giant from Canning. We find the Minister for Mines saying that Marble Bar was almost abandoned, so far as mining propositions were concerned. There is the case for the railway. There have been 10,700 tons crushed for 24,000 ozs. of gold. Then we come to Bamboo Creek, the place the Treasurer spoke so highly of. The Minister for Mines said there were 10,000 tons crushed for 17,000 ozs., and that there were not 20 men employed there. I trust the opinion of the Minister for Mines, fresh from the spot, with all help to enable him to probe into the matter. He had the State Mining Engineer and a representative of the Press with him; and if they could not get at the exact condition of affairs, I do not think the Treasurer could on a flying trip along the coast to Japan. Then there is the Warawoona district where, according to the Minister for Mines, they crushed 5,700 tons for 17,000 ozs., but there were not 20 men employed. Next we come to the only place where there was any number of men working; and that was not on gold, it was on tin. I speak of Moolyella where, according to the Minister for Mines, there were between 500 and 550 men working. It is the only place where there are any men working now. But that place was not in existence when I heard very optimistic speeches in connection with this railway five or six years ago. Let us get down to bedrock. What is this railway going to serve? At the very utmost, 1,200 inhabitants. The Minister for Mines found about 700 on his trip; I believe that at the very outside there are 1,200. There must be some justification to spend a quarter of a million on a railway proposition to serve 1,200 people.

*Mr. Gordon:* You are not opposing the railway?

*Mr. TAYLOR:* I am not opposing the railway; but I want some case made out for it. The Government have not made out any case. I am pointing out the necessity for a case to be made out before this railway is built. It has been mooted that a select committee should go into this matter. I hope it will; because there has been no case made out so far. I say that the optimism of the Treasurer does not justify us spending a quarter of a million to serve 1,200 people. I am not going to accept statements from men of the "flying squadron" sent there last. Some of them came to this House and said they passed through the best pastoral country from Port Hedland to Marble Bar; but we have had evidence from people who have seen the district that there is not a blade of grass growing for 74 miles from Port Hedland.

*Mr. Underwood:* Is the hon. member in order in making a deliberately incorrect statement?

*Mr. SPEAKER:* I am not prepared to say that the hon. member is out of order. The member for Mt. Margaret has made one statement, and the member for Pilbarra has made another.

*Mr. Underwood:* The hon. member said that was the statement of people who had seen the country. I have seen it and say there is a blade of grass growing within that distance from Port Hedland.

*Mr. TAYLOR:* I was not aware that the hon. member was one of the "flying squadron." There is spinifex for a long way. I have only to turn up *Hansard* and read the speeches of the late member for Pilbarra, Mr. Isdell, who said to the Government, "Whatever you do, it is highly necessary that you should construct portion of this line, for at least 40 or 50 miles, to get over the spinifex and enable carriers to take the loading from there to the various centres where the country is better grassed." [*Mr. Gordon:* Is spinifex bad country?] That is in *Hansard*. Members know well that we have the report of the member for Yilgarn (Mr. Horan), when he returned, about how many blades of spin-

ifex a sheep had to live on. I have not been there, and I cannot say; but when I hear members like the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Butcher)—and no member will question his knowledge of pastoral areas—[*Mr. Gordon:* The Brands Bill you brought in together was a guarantee of that]—when we have it on the authority of that hon. member that this area is spinifex—

*The Treasurer:* Has he been there?

*Mr. Butcher:* Yes.

*Mr. TAYLOR:* The hon. member does not speak without full knowledge; he has never been accused in this House—and he has been in this House a long time—of making statements about country he has not been in. I accept the statement of the hon. member that it is spinifex, [*Mr. Gordon:* If it is spinifex; is it bad country?] The hon. member is not going to make me say anything. I know just as much about spinifex country as the member for Canning does. We know well that if it is buck spinifex, as it has been described—[*Mr. Gordon:* Who described it as buck spinifex?] I do not think the hon. member is capable of describing what is spinifex. [*Mr. Gordon:* Do you know any other kind of spinifex?] The hon. member is trying to be funny; but it is no time to be funny when we are spending a quarter of a million with nothing before us but optimistic speeches. I want facts. [*Mr. Gordon:* Well, you have "spini-facts."] There is no doubt about the country described by those who have been there. For 74 miles from Port Hedland, or at least 50 miles according to the late member, it is spinifex. And that is the reason why carriage is so dear, and that is largely the reason why camels have to be introduced into that country. That is the truth. There is a great difficulty in getting over that sandy country for 70 miles. That being so, and we are going to serve only 1,200 people, I am afraid this railway line will have to make the lodes larger and make them carry gold. My experience, in Western Australia especially, has proved beyond doubt that when goldfields in this State were considerably farther away from railway and seaport communication than the fields on

the Pilbarra district are to-day, they were being worked and machinery was being put on them, because there was something to work on; they were not abandoned after the first crushings; they were not abandoned at 80ft. or 100ft. After all these years the Pilbarra field has been going the deepest shaft is only 400ft., and there is nothing too flash at the bottom of it, according to the member for Roebourne, and according to the Minister for Mines himself. The Minister has not in any way said there was much there. All the Minister showed was the ore raised and crushed, and the gold gone and the people vanished. He believes this railway will make the place flourish. I hope it does. If it does not, the State will suffer, for, according to the member for Gascoyne, we must solely depend on the mineral areas, as this line will not serve any of the pastoral areas.

*Mr. Underwood:* I do not think the member for Gascoyne made that statement.

*Mr. Butcher:* I said a very small portion.

*Mr. TAYLOR:* Yes; the hon. member gave the number of sheep and cattle the other line would serve, but not this. In New South Wales they depend largely for their back loading on wool. We know that railways in Australia are rarely used for stock; they travel stock; but we know that in Queensland they have made their lines a success on account of the wool that they carry—thousands of tons annually, unless they have a drought, and even if they have a drought the country grows up again in a few years. I would like the Government to have brought down something more earnest, something more than mere optimistic statements as to what the line was going to serve. No doubt there is wealth up there. I know men who believe in the country; on the other hand I know hundreds of men who have left the district. I know men who have gone there from the Eastern Goldfields and returned, saying the place was no good; on the other hand I know men who have come down from there to the Eastern Goldfields and returned. The copper is improving the condition of the country. If it were not for the copper

lodes and the tin that is being worked there, how many men would be employed? How many men are there on gold to-day? The Minister for Mines says that there are practically none, and I am told by way of interjection by members on the Government side that there are practically none working there. We are told the line is being built to bring fuel and mining timber to the mines. The railway line will not do anything in the way of making timber grow for fuel or mining timber purposes. What the Government should consider is the cheapening of transit from Fremantle to Port Hedland. If the Government could land stuff at Port Hedland cheaply, they could take it by camels and teams. The camels could bridge the sandy desert spoken of, and the teams could carry the goods on. What kills the people up there is the heavy freight from Fremantle to Port Hedland. There is no doubt about that. The Government should consider that question, and also it would be wise on the part of the Government, in addition to cheapening the freights to Port Hedland, to do something by way of proving the mineral belts up there, by voting say £25,000 or £50,000 to locate the ore bodies at a depth, thus giving people some guarantee of the stability of the ore bodies in that country, instead of going to the expense right off-hand of spending a quarter of a million on one project; and I am not sure that something near that sum will not have to be spent on harbours. I have no desire to oppose the line, but I want to place on record my position in regard to it.

*Mr. Underwood:* A yes-no position.

*Mr. TAYLOR:* It is not a yes-no position. The hon. member thinks that unless the railway goes there he will not last much longer in this House. That is not my position. I want to place on record what I believe to be true.

*Mr. Johnson:* Then you must vote against the line.

*Mr. TAYLOR:* No. I say the statements we have had are conflicting. We have had statements in this House in regard to the railway for the last five or six years; but it is necessary to have some evidence. The Government have

ample time to give it, because three Ministers have spoken, and they have contradicted each other. The Treasurer contradicted the statement of the Minister for Mines in so far as he referred to such places as Bamboo Creek, where the Minister found practically no one working. [Mr. Gordon : Put the railway there and you will see thousands of people.] There are about 1,200 people in the whole district the railway will serve. I would move for the appointment of a select committee, but at the present time I am unable to take up the work of chairman. I hope that the Government will give an opportunity to members to have this matter dealt with, and so place the House in possession of the full facts. Anyone who reads the speeches which have been made with regard to this line from the very commencement of the project 7 or 8 years ago, will realise how very conflicting they are. The position of the country is worse now, if you take away the copper and tin, than it ever was before. The gold is apparently gone and there is no one following that industry, but the tin and copper industries are now being dealt with. It would be a proper attitude for the Government to allow a select committee to go into this matter instead of plunging into it in the way that is the case. Most of the supporters of the Government have recognised this really is a plunge or gamble. The member for East Perth, who was one of the flying squadron, said it was a big plunge, a big gamble, but added "Let the Government gamble if they choose." This was after he had gone through the district with all his wonderful powers of penetration, a man who could almost see miles into the bowels of the earth ; but he comes back and says it is a great gamble and plunge. [Mr. Gordon : What did the member for North Fremantle say ?] He spoke in the most glowing terms of the spinifex being the most glorious pastoral country he had ever seen. Even the member for East Perth was not so far gone as that, but recognised the spinifex. I hope some hon. member who is in a position to take up the position of chairman of a select committee will move for one. It would

only delay the passage of the measure for 3 weeks or a month, and would give members an opportunity of going into the matter more thoroughly, and have something more tangible to go on before they are called upon to vote for the measure.

Mr. P. COLLIER (Boulder) : If the member for Mount Margaret is a supporter of the Bill, I cannot imagine what sort of a speech an opponent of the measure would make. I find myself in a similar difficulty to other members in coming to a decision on the Bill. It relates to a part of the country which not more than 8 or 9 members have ever seen, and we are compelled to rely upon whatever information we can gather, and the knowledge of other persons who have seen the country. [Mr. Johnson : And they differ.] They may have differed ; but at all events a great majority support the construction of the line. Personally I am prepared to take the views of those hon. members who have visited the country, and other members who have a knowledge of it. I do not think that the members who comprised the party that visited the North-West—the member for Canning, the member for North Fremantle, and others—have any interest whatever in coming here and picturing glowing prospects for that part of the country if they are not warranted. Furthermore I am prepared to accept much of the information supplied by the Minister for Mines, who also visited the country. The member for Mount Margaret says that not one of the three Ministers who have spoken has made out a case, or has given any information as to the possibilities of the line. I can hardly imagine what other information they could give. We have the reports of the mining authorities, all the reports concerning the mineral possibilities of that part of the country, and what else is there to be obtained? It has been stated—and we all agree in it—that there is an element of risk in connection with the construction of the line, but we all know there is an element of risk in the construction of any railway into a goldfields country. It must be so; you cannot wait until the mines

have been thoroughly proved to a depth before you construct a railway; if you do you will never have mines to construct a railway to. We took that risk in the construction of the Cue and the Eastern goldfields railways. [Mr. Taylor: The population at Cue was greater before the line was built than it has ever been since]. The mineral development of that part of the country gave little more guarantee than appears in connection with the present proposal. The population does not count. The question is as to what has been proved in the lodes and in the mineral resources of the district. With regard to the North-West goldfields, you have to remember that most of the mines which the member said were abandoned, have been abandoned for some eight or ten years. The member for Pilbarra assures me of that. They were abandoned at a time there was extravagant management of the whole of the mines in the State, and if the mines on the Golden Mile were managed on the same lines as those at Pilbarra were eight years ago, there would not be one of them existing to-day. [Mr. Taylor: Do you say the Lalla Rookh was abandoned from eight to ten years ago?] Many of the shows referred to by the member for Roebourne as having been closed because, he says, they had pinched out, have been abandoned for eight or ten years. Moreover, it is not proved that the lodes have pinched out. I have been assured by those who have visited that part of the country, that in most of them water was struck at between 80 and 100 feet, and because of the dangerous and treacherous nature of the country, and owing to the high cost of timber the owners had been compelled to abandon them. The cost for the carriage of timber alone to Marble Bar is £20 per ton. When we take that into consideration we realise that it would take a very rich mine indeed to carry on with such a price for the cartage of timber. I do not wish to say much as to the line, for I do not pose as an authority. I am not in the possession of sufficient information to allow me to refer to the possibilities of this part of

the State, but it is a reasonable business proposition and I think there are sufficient possibilities for this part of the country to warrant us in taking the risk of spending so much money on the line. The member for Mount Margaret says that if we take away the tin and copper, there is nothing left. Are we justified in taking away the possibilities of the tin and copper industries in considering this question? We are justified, I contend, in taking these facts into consideration for they form important considerations in justifying us in constructing the line. The fact that the tin-mining industry employs 500 men under the present conditions, and that the tin-bearing country embraces an area of 90 square miles, almost warrants us in constructing the railway for that alone. On the information, the facts and the figures supplied, I will support the construction of the railway, believing as I do that subsequent events will fully warrant our attitude.

Mr. T. H. BATH (Brown Hill): In view of the difference of opinions of members on this side of the House, I think we will have to go to the Attorney General and his colleagues to learn those rigorous rules of caucus by which they control the members of the Ministerial party. So far as the proposal to construct this line is concerned, hon. members who have not had the opportunity of visiting that portion of the State, are in precisely the position I am in. They have to a large extent to rely upon information supplied to them by those members who have had that opportunity, and also by the remarks of officers of the Mines and other departments who have visited the district, and have submitted their reports to the Government. The fact is that the Ministers who introduced this measure have to take a very large share of responsibility. They are in control of the officers of the department on whose reports the introduction of this Bill is based, and members of the House, whether upon the Ministerial or Opposition benches, have to rely largely upon the reports of those officers and the disinterestedness of Ministers in



securing them and placing them before the House. I have not had an opportunity of visiting the North-West of this State, although I certainly wish I had had a chance to pay a visit there before today. My attitude on the Bill before the House is this: As one who has not been there I recognise that we have a new district, one which is remote from the seat of Government; we have men engaged there chiefly in the mining industry but also in other industries, who are battling in the efforts to develop the district. If we were to adopt a dog-in-the-manger policy, if through the remoteness of those districts we were to disregard their interests saying, "Because we are not in a position to visit you therefore we shall not support this Bill," we would be giving to them the greatest possible discouragement they could get. I recognise that on the evidence given by the Premier in his introductory speech, and in the speeches of his colleagues who supported him, we cannot say the case for the railway has been absolutely proved. After all, the position is that the country is one of promise, that there are mineral developments which in the opinion of the departmental officers who have been there will with railway facilities make the district prosperous. Of course, with a promising district we cannot do as we can with a person—call upon him to honour his promise to pay. If the Pilbarra fields do not turn out well, there will be a loss to the country. But there is strong presumptive evidence of the existence in these mineral fields of tin, of copper, of gold, spreading over a large stretch of country that with facilities, with cheap transit for mining supplies and particularly for mining timber, which is a highly important matter, there will be greater opportunities of developing the mines at a much cheaper rate; and it is only with these facilities that we can hope to have the fields developed. It is from the point of view that we have there people who are trying to develop the country, that they are remote from us and have not an opportunity of bringing their wants prominently before us, that I am willing to support this expenditure so that the Government may assist them to justify the

faith they have shown in the district by venturing practically their all in trying to open it up. And it is on that score—not because there has been an absolutely conclusive case made on behalf of the measure, but because there is a claim to our consideration—that I will support the Bill for constructing the railway. It is true some doubt has been raised in my mind by the speeches of the members for Gascoyne (Mr. Butcher) and Roebourne (Dr. Hicks), as to whether the best route has been selected. But in view of the reports of the officers, on which reports we have to rely, being the reports of men who are paid to report impartially on such projects, I have come to the conclusion that we must accept their advice and therefore construct the railway from Port Hedland.

*Mr. Butcher:* Accept the Government Geologist's report, which I read to the House.

*Mr. Underwood:* You did not read it all.

*Mr. Butcher:* I read what it said on those points.

*Mr. BATH:* The Government Geologist does not support the contention of the hon. member as against the Premier's proposal for constructing the railway from Port Hedland.

*Mr. Butcher:* No; he does not.

*Mr. BATH:* And the State Mining Engineer reports in favour of starting from Port Hedland.

*Mr. Butcher:* He was there for about a week.

*Mr. BATH:* All the members of the House who made a trip there also say that Port Hedland should be the starting point. I say that the speech of the member for Gascoyne has raised considerable doubt in my mind as to whether we are selecting the best starting-point; but after the promises made that this railway should be constructed I believe it would only delay the matter to consider his objection, and therefore we should accept the official reports and construct the railway from Port Hedland. It is a duty we owe to the people of that district, and I will therefore support the Premier's proposal.

Mr. J. B. HOLMAN (Murchison): Knowing as I do the disabilities of those engaged in out-back mining, in my humble opinion the line to the Pilbarra field should be pushed forward with all possible speed. Never having been in any part of that district I am not in a position to say which is the best route. The responsibility for selecting such routes should be placed on the shoulders of the officers who have at great expense to the State visited the district to make inquiries. Had I been through the country I might have been able to speak with some authority on the question of the mines; but as every member who has visited the district has spoken hopefully of the prospects of its mineral areas, I maintain that the present or any Government are in duty bound to push forward as speedily as they can a work of this importance. When we consider the freights that have to be paid for carting mining machinery, timber, and other goods from the port to the fields, it is wonderful that the mines have continued struggling so long. Even where the cost of cartage is only £7 or £8 per ton it is almost impossible to work a mine with any great success. When we see that in the past some hundreds of thousands of ounces of gold have been obtained in that district, I am of opinion that the gold will not cut out within a few feet of the surface. I have heard from those who were in Bendigo in 1872, and I have read also, that even Bendigo itself was practically abandoned in that year because it was said the mines were worked out. A poor zone had been met with at a depth of 300 or 400 feet; but since that time the Bendigo mines have gone to considerably over 3,000 feet, and they are paying well now. I have faith enough in the goldfields of Western Australia to believe that our gold will go down to a greater depth than from 80 to 400 feet, which is said to be the deepest level hitherto reached in the North-West. I have no direct knowledge of the country, but I have every sympathy with those working out back, who have to pay such high freights and work under such great disadvantages. Without delaying the matter farther I will give the measure my hearty support, though I

disclaim any personal responsibility for the route, because I do not know one route from the other.

Mr. C. A. HUDSON (Dundas): I also, not having visited the district, cannot speak of it from personal knowledge; but I regard the proposed railway as one for the development of the mining resources of the State, and I think, if we take as an indication the similar railways already constructed by the Government, we may safely give this proposal favourable consideration. The line proposed last year to Norseman was said by some Government supporters to be one that would go to a deserted mining camp. Since its construction was commenced a fresh impetus has been given to mining in that locality, the population is increasing; and as an indication of advance in the mining industry I may say an additional thirty head of stamps is to be erected during the current year. As to the railway constructed for the development of our mineral resources between Hopetoun and Ravensthorpe, that district also is rapidly going ahead, and in one mining centre three small batteries will be erected during the current year, while business on the coast is hung up on account of its congestion. I was favourably disposed to this Port Hedland railway from the beginning, though I, like other members was somewhat concerned when I heard the speeches of the members for Gascoyne and Roebourne; but the tone of their remarks led me to believe that with them it was a battle of the routes, and not a question of the justification or lack of justification for the construction of the railway. If I remember rightly the member for Gascoyne said if the line were built from the right place it would be justifiable. Now the right place in his opinion was from Point Sampson.

Mr. Butcher: Sampson or Balla Balla.

Mr. HUDSON: I think the member referred particularly to Point Sampson. I remember he mentioned that place in his speech. The line from there to Marble Bar would mean the construction of 199 miles of railway, and that will involve a very large expenditure. The

first section of the line, about 30 miles, would be practically useless, there would be no trade on it. That would take us to Whim Creek. At Whim Creek, where there is a large mine held on freehold tenure, the position of which is uncertain, the traffic would not go on the Government line, but would be taken to the port of Balla Balla by the tramline which has been authorised. Then it is a question of a line from Balla Balla to Wodgina, that is a distance of 70 miles according to the map, and that would serve Wodgina only. It must stop at Wodgina or else become a line of 200 miles in length to serve any district. I have the geological map before me and I say the line must stop at Wodgina if it starts from Balla Balla. What is the position in regard to the line from Port Hedland; it will not only serve the district mentioned but it will also serve Wodgina, because the first 30 miles is over sand and the cartage will be materially decreased by the railway and the people of Wodgina will be able to reach the main line by a distance of 40 or 50 miles, which over good country would not be any great trouble. A great deal has been said about this being barren country, and that there is no feed from Port Hedland to Marble Bar. From Port Hedland to Wodgina there is good feed, and the proof of that is this; there the carriers and coaches do not have to cart fodder for the horses, the feed is on the road. The horses are let go and they feed, there must be something to eat; there is the spinifex and I believe there is grass. The fact that there is feed along the route is an indication of good country. Having good country that will feed teams between Wodgina and the proposed route of this line, I say the Wodgina tinfield will be served by the Port Hedland line. The member for Gascoyne said the Nullagine district would not be served by this railway. He might just as well say that the line to Cue was no benefit to Cue, and that the line to Nannine was no benefit to the places beyond. Is it just as absurd to say that as anything else. The cost of cartage to the field is one of the difficulties that commends the line to the House.

I was informed that the cost of cartage from Port Hedland to Mosquito Creek is between £20 to £25 a ton, making mining practically impossible. I know some of the difficulties miners have to contend with in outback places, 100 to 120 miles from a railway line, and I say miners at one time had to contend with £20 a ton cartage, which was gradually reduced to £10 a ton, and at £10 a ton mines that could not possibly be worked are now being taken up, capital is being put into them, and they are being worked at a profit. The fact that men have to pay as much as 35s. a ton for crushing in the Marble Bar district shows clearly that it will take a rich gold mine to be worked profitably on those costs. In fact the report of the Government Geologist in summing up says, and this is not the portion read by the member for Gascoyne—

"The reefs, however, give every indication of being permanent, whilst the average returns from the mines up to the close of 1905, have been, so far as may be judged by the figures furnished to the Mines Department, high, viz. 1.71 ounces per ton of ore milled."

If the reefs have every indication of being permanent, and the average product from the ore being milled in the district is a yield of nearly two ounces a ton, and that cannot be made to pay, the people out there deserve to be encouraged. There is a good outlook for gold and the men working out in that district, who had been working there for years, deserve consideration at our hands. The question of the harbour must be left to the responsibility of the Government. I take it that there is no other port that could be taken because of the extreme length of the line that would have to be built from any other place to serve such an area as would be served by the line from Port Hedland to Marble Bar. A good deal has been said about the line being built for the assistance of a small band of 1,200 people; I think they deserve consideration, and there seems to be every prospect of an increase in the population and therefore development in mining, and from what I saw on the departure of a boat for that district the

other day, to my mind a great deal of interest is being taken in the field now with the prospect of the building of the railway. I intend to give the Bill my support.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. J. Price) : I think the most damaging speech in this debate was made by the member for Roebourne. In view of the extracts which the Treasurer read from the speech of Mr. Morgan, delivered four years ago, and endorsed by the member for Roebourne, that member's attitude at the present time is incomprehensible. I sometimes wonder what it is that influences these tremendous changes of opinion, for it is very evident that four years ago that gentleman was strongly in favour of this particular railway.

Mr. Bath : Be careful ; you must not throw stones about changes of opinion.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : I do not change my opinion so quickly as that. I say that changes of opinion are desirable at times, because when a man never changes his opinion it seems as if he does not think much. The Treasurer's speech supplied most of the figures and facts in connection with this railway, but there are one or two points that remain untouched, which I may throw some farther light upon. First of all there is the suitability of Port Hedland as a harbour, which has been spoken strongly about in the debate. Those who make inquiries amongst shipping men will find that Port Hedland is one of the best of the North-West ports. The works which the Public Works Department are carrying out there—beacons and moorings—will enable the deep water channel to be followed into the harbour and accommodation to be provided for four or five more vessels ; some £2,000 will be spent in the extension of the harbour works there ; but at all events until the trade materially increases there is no particular reason why a heavy expenditure should be incurred. On the other hand if we look at Balla Balla we have it in evidence in the documentary reports of the Works Department that in the opinion of one of our most able engineers

a sum of perhaps £200,000 will be required to make a suitable port there for shipping. There can be no doubt that a railway from Balla Balla would traverse more mineral country than a line from Port Hedland, but the question of harbour accommodation is one of material interest in considering this matter. At present anyone who has a knowledge of shipping at all cannot help noticing the tremendous expansion that has gone on in connection with our North-West ports. The type of vessel has improved, and the quantity of cargo is monthly increasing. Only a month ago a ship left Fremantle with the largest cargo yet taken for the North-West, and Port Hedland is receiving its fair share of this expansion. At the present time we know from the shipping returns that the trade the railway would have to deal with would be about 7,000 tons a year. We know that on our goldfields for every head of stamps going, about 100 tons of goods are required and are carried over our railways ; or putting it another way, for each miner on the goldfields an extra two tons of freight is provided for the railways. Now we come to this point : What is the reason that gold mining in particular has practically ceased on the Pilbarra goldfield ? If we look at the mining returns we find that for every ton of ore milled in this locality some 1.71 ounces of gold have been returned ; or to put it into shillings, about 129 shillings represents the return for every ton of ore milled. If we compare that with the returns for the years 1905 and 1906 for the whole State, we find that for 1905 for every ton of ore milled the return was 58.51 shillings ; while for 1906 the return was 50.54 shillings for every ton of ore milled. If a return of 50 shillings for each ton of ore milled has paid the whole State, how is that mining has practically ceased in this district with a return of 129 shillings per ton for each ton of ore treated ? The reason is not far to seek ; the extremely heavy charges in the way of freights and so on have made profitable gold mining at all events an utter impossibility. I have friends interested in many shows that have ceased working when the returns

have been at least an ounce and a half to the ton. If we have a district like this capable of expansion in the direction of gold mining, with very profitable and important fields opened up for tin, and a district employing some 600 men, surely any Government would be wanting in that sense of responsibility which is due from it so far as every attempt at development of this country is concerned, in refusing to tackle this question, or to approach it? [Mr. Johnson: We will pass the Bill for you if you give us a chance.] I hope you will. I do not want to weary this House in speaking, because I feel in a way that I am almost whipping a dead horse. Members have suggested they should have a select committee. Good heavens! We already sent five or six men there to report on this particular project. How many more select committees are we to have? They are proposed on every possible occasion. [Mr. Daglish: That party took no evidence and brought back no report.] I believe at all events they made a report which probably the member for Subiaco has read, and I trust with a considerable amount of profit. Doubtless this report to some extent will influence his judgment in connection with this Bill; but it seems a favourite practice whatever comes before this House to suggest a select committee. So far as the Government are concerned they are game to take responsibilities in this matter. We believe that in this particular country there is a fair field for development by railway extension; for that reason the Bill has been brought in; and now everyone must admit it is a particularly opportune time to make an attempt to develop the country by means of a railway. We are seeking an outlet for a considerable amount of labour; and if, as I honestly believe, this railway develops the mining resources of the North-West, it will do something at all events to provide employment for a considerable number of men who at present need it. [Mr. Angwin: You admit there is a number of men out of employment?] I never knew a time when there were not men out of employment; there are always unfortunate men, and I admit that so far as the big cities

are concerned perhaps there are more men unemployed than is usual. Perhaps if these people were more energetic and did not stick to the town so much most of them could find employment. I trust that if this line is built and the country opened up they will find employment there. No doubt the railway will be the means of creating a demand for labour, and men will step in and fill the gap. I have much pleasure in supporting this Bill.

Mr. H. DAGLISH (Subiaco): I desire to add only one word in connection with this measure, and that is, that in my opinion the same argument can be used against it as applied in regard to other measures that have been submitted, that the House has not been favoured with sufficient authoritative information, and that we are asked to vote public funds without being enabled, by the supply of sufficient data, to judge the result of the expenditure. I have urged this in regard to other railway propositions before this House, that we need something somewhat on the lines of the committees that have been adopted in the Eastern States, in two of them at all events, to report on all important public undertakings before they are embarked on, committees that take evidence before they submit a report. I do not allege that this railway may not prove a paying proposition. It may prove a paying proposition, it may be the best route, it may, if passed, lead to the greatest development of the North-West country; but the evidence before us is not sufficient to prove that it will do so; and until that evidence is supplied, the House should not be asked to commit the country to the expenditure. For that reason, I at the present moment think that insufficient evidence has been brought forward to justify the House accepting the route, or indeed accepting the measure at all; and I would again take the opportunity of appealing to the Government to do something in the direction of establishing either a standing committee or an advisory board for the purpose of reporting on all these enterprises to enable the House to pass a judgment which shall not be based, as some members ad-

vocating this measure advise us, on what they regard, after seeing the country, as being a gamble that is likely to turn out successfully. [*The Minister for Works*: There was only one member said that.] Two members alleged that other railway gambles had proved prosperous, had led to great development of our mining resources, therefore this new gamble should be adopted. I contend that argument should not be submitted to this House, and in any case we should have an inquiry before any of these railways are agreed to. I am not urging it more in regard to this than in regard to other railways that follow it. Just as I am urging it now I urged it last year in regard to the agricultural railways. This country is launching out very heavily in railway expenditure without having the best guarantee that we shall obtain that return in the way of development we have a right to expect from the heavy expenditure of loan funds involved.

Question passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Marriage Act Amendment; 2, Police Force Consolidation; received from the Legislative Council.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10.33 o'clock until the next Tuesday.

## Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 20th August, 1907.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4.30 o'clock p.m.

Prayers.

#### ELECTION RETURN, EAST PROVINCE.

The PRESIDENT announced the return of writ for the election of a member for the East Province in the place of the Hon. C. E. Dempster, deceased; showing that the Hon. George Throssell had been duly elected.

The *Hon. G. Throssell* took the oath and subscribed the roll.

#### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the *Colonial Secretary*: Fremantle Harbour Trust, Annual Report to 30th June, 1907.

#### MOTION—AGRICULTURAL RAILWAYS, COMMISSION TO INQUIRE.

Debate resumed from the 14th August, on the motion by the *Hon. J. W. Wright* for a Royal Commission to inquire into the construction of the Goomalling-Dowerin, Wagin-Dumbleyung, and Katanning-Kojonup Railways.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (*Hon. J. D. Connolly*): While the Government are always desirous of offering every facility for inquiring into any public works by Royal Commission or otherwise, I think the House will readily agree with me that Mr. Wright has not put up a sufficient case in this instance to justify our agreeing to the appointment of a Royal Commission. The only contention of the hon. member was that these railways could have been constructed cheaper by the contract system than by the de-