

they had shown in the division a few minutes ago.

MR. A. FORREST: The hon. member did not wish that.

MR. MONGER: It was only right he should ask hon. members and the Ministers to be consistent.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member was not quite in order, because his remarks did not seem to apply to Clause 3 or to the new clause proposed.

MR. MONGER: With regard to the resolution passed in another place—

THE CHAIRMAN: That could not now be discussed.

MR. MONGER concluded by moving the amendment already stated, requiring that a commission of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on the gross proceeds passed through the totalisator be paid to the Colonial Treasurer.

MR. WOOD: Make it 5 per cent.

MR. QUINLAN supported the amendment. Why should there be a distinction between totalisators and "sweeps," or between such forms of betting and land and share gambling? Many pretended moralists who denounced ordinary gambling should, if consistent, not speculate in any way. Surely a man was guilty of no great immorality who bought a ticket in a sweep or totalisator.

MR. WOOD supported the amendment. The position taken to-night by the Committee was deplorable. For five years gambling had raged unchecked in the colony, and yet an attempt to regulate it had been thrown out.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: The existing Act was sufficient.

MR. WOOD: But it had not been enforced.

MR. ILLINGWORTH: Nor would this Bill, if passed.

MR. WOOD: The existing Act was too severe, and consequently had gone by the board. Totalisators made immense profits, else why did proprietary bodies like the Canning Park Turf Club prohibit bookmakers on their racecourses?

MR. HIGHAM: The Totalisator Act, passed some years ago, affirmed the principle that betting should be regulated, and that this could best be done by the totalisator. The betting evil could not be eradicated by legislation; therefore let the worst forms of betting, such as touting by bookmakers and "totes" in tobaccoists' shops, be put down.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member was not confining himself to the amendment.

MR. HIGHAM: The Committee should pause before throwing out the Bill. He opposed the amendment, as the percentage proposed was too high. He moved that progress be reported to give an opportunity for further consideration.

Motion put and passed.

Progress reported, and leave given to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 10.56 p.m. until the next day.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 12th December, 1899.

Question: Crossing Goats with Sheep—Question: Bunbury Harbour Works, Resident Engineer—Question: Engineers without Certificates—Peppermint Grove, etc., Water Supply Bill (private), first reading—Fisheries Bill, third reading—Shute and Dredging for Gold Bill, third reading—Fremantle Harbour Works Railway Bill, third reading—Loan Bill, £750,000, second reading—Beer Duty Amendment Bill, first reading—Pearl Dealers Licensing Bill, first time—Motion: Supreme Court-house Site, Joint Committee Constitution Acts Amendment Bill, in Committee, resumed, reported—Standing Orders Suspension, third reading—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.

QUESTION—CROSSING GOATS WITH SHEEP.

HON. A. P. MATHESON (North-East): I beg to ask the Hon. J. W. Hackett, as President of the Acclimatisation Committee, the questions standing on the Notice Paper in my name.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Will the hon. gentleman read the questions to me. I have not a Notice Paper.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I will hand the hon. member my Notice Paper containing the questions.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: I wish the hon. member to put the questions to me, and I think I am within my right, Mr. President, in asking that such be done.

THE PRESIDENT: The hon. member is within his right.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Then I ask Mr. Hackett: 1, Whether he can give the House any further information as to the experiment of crossing goats with sheep, with a view of establishing a fertile race of hybrids, beyond that which is contained in the report of the Acclimatisation Committee, 1899, Paper No. 50. 2, Whether he is aware, in his official capacity, that the period of gestation for sheep averages 150 days, and that for goats 112 days.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: I invite the House to bear witness that I have given every opportunity to the hon. gentleman to escape playing the fool. I will now reply to the question.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Is the hon. member in order in saying that I am "playing the fool"?

HON. J. W. HACKETT: I said that I gave the hon. member every opportunity to escape playing the fool.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Is the hon. member in order in making that remark?

THE PRESIDENT: I think the hon. member is going rather far.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Whether the hon. gentleman has escaped or not, I will reply as follows: Unusual as it is to address a private member in this fashion, I am anxious to give what information I can to one who takes the interest that the hon. member does in these delicate questions. The Acclimatisation Committee work to some extent in the same field but not on the same principles as does the hon. member. While the Committee desire to obtain from their stock fertile increase, it is reported that the stock in the establishments controlled by the hon. gentleman in Kalgoorlie are not intended to be bred from. This branch of the business, however lucrative, the Committee do not propose to cultivate. I may inform my hon. questioner that a goat's period of gestation is not, as he erroneously asserts, 112 days, but according to reputable authorities extends from

140 to 160 days, 149 being the average. I must add that I fear that, after these mistakes, I can hardly hope that the Committee will avail themselves of the hon. gentleman's experience, despite so many experiments in certain cases of farming in connection with English, French, and other foreign varieties, and particularly as regards fertile and non-fertile habits. I hope the reply is satisfactory to the hon. gentleman.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I would like to say, in explanation, that the period of 112 days is that quoted to me as the result of experiments by a certain Mr. Golding, who for a long time has bred goats in this colony.

QUESTION—BUNBURY HARBOUR WORKS, RESIDENT ENGINEER.

HON. H. BRIGGS (for Hon. F. Whitcombe) asked the Colonial Secretary, If it is a fact that the Government has not yet provided the Resident Engineer of the Bunbury harbour works with the domestic service necessary to his personal comfort in residing near the site of his work.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: The Government has not provided the Resident Engineer of the Bunbury harbour works with a domestic service for his personal comfort. The Public Works Department does not usually provide even residences for its officers, and, although there are some exceptions to this rule, it is considered that there should be as few of them as possible. The Resident Engineer at Bunbury has been permitted to occupy certain spare rooms in the Public Works Office there for his personal use, at a small rental.

QUESTION—ENGINEERS WITHOUT CERTIFICATES.

HON. H. BRIGGS (for Hon. F. Whitcombe) asked, If it is a fact that officers are holding positions under the Government as "engineers" who do not hold certificates of any recognised society as engineers, or have had no special training as a civil engineer.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: The Government does not concern itself with the certificates of engineering societies, but always (as is usual with all employers) endeavours to make sure

that officers in responsible charge of works are sufficiently experienced and qualified for the positions in which they are placed, and should they prove to be unsatisfactory, they are removed.

PEPPERMINT GROVE, ETC., WATER
SUPPLY BILL (PRIVATE).

On motion by HON. H. BRIGGS, Bill read a first time.

FISHERIES BILL.

Read a third time, and returned to the Legislative Assembly with amendments.

SLUICING AND DREDGING FOR GOLD
BILL.

Read a third time, and returned to the Legislative Assembly with amendments.

FREMANTLE HARBOUR WORKS RAIL-
WAY BILL.

Read a third time, and *passed*.

LOAN BILL, £750,000.

SECOND READING.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. G. Randell), in moving the second reading, said: I fear I shall have to ask for the forbearance of hon. members, while I endeavour to say a few words with regard to this Bill. Owing to the progress of the colony within the last few years and the development which has taken place, it is absolutely necessary that certain provisions shall be made for a continuance of that prosperity and the extension of that development. We may divide the Bill practically into two parts, though in the schedule it is divided into four; the first in the schedule having reference to harbour works, jetties, bridges, etcetera, the second to railways, the third to development of goldfields and mineral resources, whilst the fourth is "departmental." The greater part of the items relate to the first two divisions. It is scarcely to be expected there will be unanimity of opinion on questions of this sort. It is generally conceded that we have borrowed to a somewhat considerable extent, taking into account the population of the colony; but when we also remember the development which has taken place in almost every department of industry and in the resources of this colony, there is no reason why we should have any

doubt about the future. When we cast our eyes back to 1890, and mark the difference between our present position with regard to exports and development as compared with that which existed then, no one can deny that a wonderful advance has taken place; doubtless brought about, in the first instance, by what was then termed a spirited public-works policy. I think some members in this House to-day were a little timid at that time, and afraid perhaps (from our limited experience in the direction of development) that the colony would be landed in too great a burden for it to bear. However, things have progressed from that time to the present, and no great difficulty has been experienced in meeting our engagements, carrying on the works initiated, and obtaining money necessary for the purpose. We have still less reason to entertain such fears to-day, although there has been, as in many other countries that one reads about, a period of depression. I have been recently reading a work which shows that these periods of depression are almost continuous in some countries. Australia as a whole, especially Western Australia, has to congratulate herself upon the very few periods of depression which have occurred here, especially when we consider the population we have. I cannot help thinking sometimes that Australians must make up their minds sooner or later, in accordance with what prevails in almost every part of the world, to live on a lower scale than at present; and that not only applies to the higher classes but to the working classes, and indeed all classes. In my opinion it cannot be doubted for a moment that Australians have very happy times of it. Wages are high, whilst provisions in almost all places are fairly cheap, even in this colony, in relation to which it has been said living is dear, but I believe that such assertion is a mistake. At any rate living is not dear in Western Australia at the present moment. The people who made that assertion were the people who derived benefit from the high price of living, and it is notorious that when the rents were raised in Perth they were raised by people who came from the Eastern colonies, and not by the older inhabitants of Western Australia. However, that is by the way, and is only a sort of introduction in

placing this Bill before hon. members. There can be no question in the mind of any hon. member that the first part of this schedule, which is the gist of the Bill, is absolutely necessary, and I think it will not be denied that some other portions are also needed. I believe there will be a unanimity of opinion upon those different items in the schedule. There may possibly be some hon. members, but I hope not many, who will question the further development of our railway system in any way. At the present moment we owe ten and a half millions of money, that is to say, ten and a half millions have been borrowed.

HON. W. T. LORON: Is that up to 30th June?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes.

HON. W. T. LORON: Has any been borrowed since then?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Half a million, I think, but I am not sure about that—some has been borrowed. Of the ten and a half millions borrowed, six and a half millions have been spent in the construction of railways, and those railways are paying their way; therefore no additional taxation has been imposed on the inhabitants of the colony with regard to them. As a matter of fact, it is well known that taxation has been reduced. I think it has been reduced to the extent of £200,000, but I am speaking from memory. I distinctly remember a reduction of £100,000 as a result of one alteration of the tariff, and I believe there has been a reduction of another £100,000 in the taxation of the colony.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: It has been increased in other ways.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Two millions have been provided for the Coolgardie water scheme and the sinking fund, and, as you well know, not only the Premier, but others, have strongly anticipated that this undertaking will pay its way. If 3s. 6d. per thousand gallons is not sufficient to make the undertaking pay, I suppose another 6d. a thousand gallons can be charged, and even then the goldfields will reap an immense benefit. Hon. members know perhaps better than I do what people on the goldfields at the present moment pay for fresh water. They pay a heavy sum in all the goldfields districts; higher in some than in others, I think. I believe that to have

the luxury of a bath costs either 1s. 6d. or 2s. 6d.—I forget now which. This sort of thing will be altered. I understand that after you have experienced a Kalgoorlie dust-storm—I will not name Coolgardie in this connection, because I think Coolgardie is a much more enjoyable place to live in than Kalgoorlie—you pay 2s. 6d. for the luxury of a bath. As I say, two millions have been appropriated to the Coolgardie water scheme and sinking fund, and that enterprise will pay. The estimate of the cost is two and a half millions, but two millions at the present moment have been devoted to the undertaking. One million is devoted to the Fremantle harbour works, and there is no doubt that if those works do not pay directly they will pay indirectly, and in my opinion the creation of that magnificent work at Fremantle, which I have already spoken of in this House, is a work of which we as a Legislature and as a people may well be proud. There can be no doubt of the immense benefits which must accrue to the colony from the construction of a safe and great harbour inside the river. It is well known that already the harbour is being largely availed of by some of the biggest ships in the world. I think the German steamers and others are able to come in and go out at any time without difficulty, or almost at any time, and that when the additional length has been added to the end of the mole there will never be any difficulty. The items I have referred to leave, out of the moneys that have been raised, one million expended on works which are not on the face of them reproductive and for which the taxpayer is asked to pay. The trade of the colony at the present time is at the rate of ten millions a year, and the exports from Western Australia are greater by far than the imports. The gold production this year is or will be, I believe, of the value of over £6,000,000, whilst the total value of the production of the goldfields since they have been exploited is over 16 millions. That is a magnificent record. The output for the month of October was 205,000 ounces, exceeding by 50,000 ounces, or something like it, the united output of Queensland and Victoria. This is a most satisfactory state of things, and there is no reason to think there will be any diminution of the

output, so far as I can gather from those who are capable of giving an opinion on the subject; but there are strong reasons for believing that in the Mount Margaret district we are now developing another magnificent goldfield. The production is increasing from time to time, and I believe that at the present moment gold of the value of something like £400,000, or nearly half a million, has been obtained from the development of that field. I know from the experience of my own office that development is taking place there continually, as I am asked for post offices, telegraphs, and schools. I am pleased to say that the last item is coming more and more into demand. I had before me to-day a reference to a little place called Kookynie, in the neighbourhood of Niagara. Niagara has been before the minds of hon. members in connection with a certain reservoir or dam which has been erected there. That dam was at one time thought to be of faulty construction, but I believe the defect has now been remedied, and the dam is capable of holding any water which comes into it. I understand there is a magnificent watershed there, and that probably it will be utilised to a very large extent, if hon. members will consent to the building of railways to go from Menzies northward. I think I need hardly refer to Laverton, Mount Morgan, and Mount Margaret. Developments are taking place there at a very satisfactory rate, and also I believe in the Erlstoun mine. Perhaps Mr. Matheson will correct me if I am wrong. About 60 miles to the north or north-east of Laverton is also a prosperous mine, and the whole district seems to be more or less auriferous. The revenue for the five months and eleven days of this financial year exceeds that of the same period last year by £152,000, in round figures. That is a most satisfactory statement to make. The deficit, which in January last or December stood, I think, at £341,000, has been so reduced that at the end of November it was only £145,000. So that is a happy state of things, although it will be a good day when we are delivered from the deficit, and when the revenue can be expended for the benefit of the country. While the deficit is being paid off, the people in trade and business are experiencing a little depression, although a depression cannot be

satisfactorily explained. It may be caused by a number of things upon which we cannot place our fingers. These things come and go just like summer and winter, and I think the Government cannot be held responsible for the depression. Sometimes depression arises from over-trading, and sometimes from other causes, but I hope the period of depression is passing away. We see the progress the country is making, the prosperity which is attending the goldfields, and the dividends which are being paid by many mines which will offer inducements to other companies to embark in the same enterprise, and increase the output of gold in this colony. There is the progress in agricultural development which is following hand in hand with the gold industry. The timber industry is also largely developing, although at the present time there is a cloud over this industry owing to causes which I think were within the control of the timber companies themselves, to a large extent. This cloud, no doubt, will disappear directly. I may mention in passing, the annual interest on the loan of £750,000 will be £30,000. But against that we have the dividend tax, which is expected to produce, from the gold-mining companies £100,000, so that the Government have made provision in that respect to meet the interest on the money required for the execution of these works. I may point out that the railways, as has been the case in the past, will carry the produce of the farmers to the markets. All parts of the colony will more or less benefit by the new lines, especially leading to the goldfields. Produce will be sent to the goldfields, and the farmers in the southern districts will have the markets of Perth and Fremantle and other populous places to themselves. In moving the second reading of this Bill, the Premier was able to say that he had visited the different districts. Several members in this House have also done so, and are favourably impressed with the capabilities of the districts, and are of opinion that the railway to Leonora should be constructed. As regards the Norseman line, I may mention that there are some goldfields existing on the route, and some very good auriferous country. At ten miles from Coolgardie there are

the Burbanks and the Birthday Gift mines.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: They are only a few miles from Coolgardie.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: These mines are in full working order, turning out a considerable amount of gold. Widgemoltha is another mining district about half-way to Norseman, but about 15 miles west of the line. The whole of the 102 miles between Coolgardie and Norseman, I am informed, is, generally speaking, auriferous country. On the route there are threetanks, each capable of holding 3,000,000 gallons of water. The output of gold at Norseman is 40,000 ounces per annum. The output may be a little in excess of that amount just now, as the development is increasing steadily, I believe. The railway line will be the means of connecting Norseman with Coolgardie, which I believe is the proper place for the connection, although I believe an effort or proposal was made that the line should go to Kalgoorlie, but Kalgoorlie at the present time is quite capable of taking care of itself with its magnificent mines. At both Boulder and Kalgoorlie there are 24 leading mines which are worth 46 millions of money. In an English paper recently, the value was set down at 46 million pounds, which was an increase of 13 millions within the last six months, or from May last. These are the general views which I may be pardoned for expressing with regard to the railway proposals. With regard to the items on the first schedule, I think not one of them can possibly be spared, at the present time. My friend on the right (Hon. S. J. Haynes) comes in for a small share. I do not profess to think that Albany will be satisfied with £10,000, but it will be a wise expenditure, and help the development of the town of Albany, for we shall all rejoice in seeing that port developed and made a magnificent harbour, and become a flourishing part of the colony. Although the population of Albany does not increase very much, it is one of the most well-to-do parts of the colony. Ever since I have heard of Albany, I have always heard it spoken of as a place where people do well, and the people do not have to exert themselves very much to make a good living.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: They work quietly.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I believe those who work quietly get on the best. I have heard it said, and the House will pardon me for saying this, that those who are well-to-do always express themselves as being poor. I have not visited Bunbury for the last few months, but there is no doubt that we must make an effort to make a good harbour at Bunbury as far as possible by the completion of the breakwater there. The conditions of Bunbury are quite different from those of Fremantle, although I am not able to speak of what should be done at Bunbury, or of what will eventually be the success of the breakwater there. There is no doubt that up to the present time the breakwater has afforded considerable shelter to ships, and there is a large export of timber from that port. It is hoped that in a few years there will be a large export trade in coal to the northern portion of this colony. I think it is incumbent on the House to give every possible support to a scheme of this sort, which will create a safe harbour to a certain extent, where before it was almost the worst harbour on the coast. There are small items for Busselton and Carnarvon, £4,000 and £5,000 respectively, but I need not refer to them. Then there is £70,000 for Fremantle, for improving wharf sheds etcetera, an amount absolutely necessary. The harbour must be completed, there is no doubt about that, and the money must be obtained from somewhere.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Is that to carry on the breakwater?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It has to do with the breakwater.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: That must be completed.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The breakwater must be completed for the purpose of inducing the mail steamers to visit Fremantle, and I think there are no two opinions about the money being provided for works of that description. Although it may not be apparent that this work is in the interests of all parts of the country, yet it must be borne in mind that the development of any part of the colony must have an effect, and a very beneficial effect, on other parts of the colony. It does not require any great insight into business, or a knowledge of

public affairs, to know that. Then there is an item for the improvement of harbours and rivers generally, and for lighthouses at the end of the Mole and other places along the coast: the amount is £20,000. These works should be rightly and properly provided for out of loan moneys. If the Government could provide for these works out of revenue, all the better; but considering the large number of works which are provided for on the Estimates this year, we cannot entrench on the revenue for any of these works. The first item in the second part of the schedule is "additions and improvements to opened lines (construction) £65,000." Some considerable correspondence has taken place as to the convenience and facilities of our lines. They require to be improved in various parts of the colony. Rails have to be taken up on certain sections of the goldfields line and re-laid with heavier rails, and the sooner that is done the better for the running of the trains and the safety of the public. Then there is the Boulder duplication, and I may inform hon. members that the Boulder railway is one of the most profitable portions of our railway system at the present time. The duplication of this line has become an actual necessity, as it is not able to carry the traffic at present. I believe the Kalgoorlie yards have to be reorganised, and great facilities given there for the more convenient and proper working of the railway traffic. There is an item of rails and fastenings, £100,000. A portion of this amount is intended for the new railways, but a portion of the amount is to be expended on the present lines. Although only £20,000 is set down for the railway workshops, which have been hanging fire for a considerable time, I am personally very glad to welcome that instalment towards the construction of new workshops. There can be no doubt that the workshops at Fremantle are very badly placed, and are unable to cope with the work. Mr. Loton and myself I believe are the only two members in the House who sat upon the Commission that was appointed—

HON. D. K. CONGDON: I was on it too.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The hon. member did not agree with us on that occasion.

HON. D. K. CONGDON: Quite right.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: I hope the hon. member has since seen the error of his ways. In the interests of the economical working of the railways, and the proper discharge of the duties of the Locomotive Engineer and the employees under him, the sooner the workshops are removed to a larger place, and the sooner larger machinery is erected and more room given to deal with the work, the better for the country at large. Then there is the item, "rolling-stock, £165,000." This is absolutely necessary, and I believe, trusting to the good faith of this House, indents have been sent forward for a portion of this rolling-stock which has become so absolutely necessary to deal with the existing traffic. Time has to be taken by the forelock, and some responsibility incurred, trusting to the sound sense and business capacity of members of the House. The public batteries are to some extent paying, and are expected to pay in the future, while, at any rate, they are assisting the poor man to develop his property; so that although in some cases they may not be satisfactory financially, no great surprise need be felt on that account, because in work of this kind you cannot compel success. I believe that on the whole these batteries are giving satisfaction, and in many instances I have heard of the intense satisfaction felt by those who have benefited by their construction.

A MEMBER: Do they pay?

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Not at present. They give a little return, and it is expected that they will pay in future. Even if they do not pay directly, I think the hon. member, who knows more about the goldfields than I do, will say the step taken is in the right direction, and that this kind of thing should be encouraged to some extent. Another item is that of £20,000 for development generally, this being for the erection of telegraphs where needed, digging wells, clearing the roads, and in some cases making the roads for the purpose of developing the mines in any individual locality. As far as I understand, the sum of money previously granted has been used economically and judiciously, and it may be expected that such economy and discretion will also be displayed in the future. The item "departmental," includes, I

take it, the railways to which I have referred, and the sum set down is £26,000. I have not said anything with regard to the Coolgardie-Bonnie Vale railway, for I would rather leave that question to the consideration of the House. Hon. members here know the circumstances better than I do, and I can only speak second-hand in regard to this. The item is not a very large one, and possibly the work proposed is something we owe to the town of Coolgardie, which has suffered somewhat of an eclipse from the greater development of Kalgoorlie; but I believe there are mines in that locality awaiting development. I understand that at the present moment they are not working to the fullest extent. I do not know the circumstances connected with the case, but I presume that some hon. members in the House do, and in all probability they will give the other members the information which they possess, and will enable them to give an intelligent and proper vote on this question. I am sure hon. members will approach the consideration of this Bill with a deep sense of the importance of it, from the point of view of the further development of this country. I do not think they will readily fall in with the view that we have reached the end of our development and progress, but will be of opinion that we shall probably have before us for many years to come the obligation to extend into the interior of this country our lines of communication, giving assistance to those who are going out into the wilds, and the heat and dust of the goldfields districts, not only for the purpose of providing themselves with a living, and perhaps of making a fortune, but also for the general benefit of the whole community. I trust that will be the spirit in which hon. members will approach this phase of the history of the country, which this very important Bill places before them. I may be able to afford information, especially if I receive notice of what is required, when we get into Committee. I now beg to move the second reading.

HON. F. M. STONE: I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

SEVERAL MEMBERS: No.

HON. F. M. STONE: I do so for this purpose and these reasons. Here we are brought into this terrible heat and are

obliged to sit in this wretched barn, and it seems to me the only way to force the Government to provide us with proper accommodation for the conduct of the business of the colony is to move the adjournment of the debate when they are asking for money. Time after time we have objected, and tried our best to get the Government, when they were in funds, to provide us with a proper building.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: I rise to a point of order, as this may form a precedent. Is the hon. member to make a speech? I understand that he only wishes to enter a protest.

THE PRESIDENT: If he is going to move the adjournment of the debate he must do so without discussion. I presume he is doing this to bring forward a grievance.

HON. F. M. STONE: I would like your ruling according to the Standing Orders.

THE CHAIRMAN: Rule 122 deals with it.

HON. F. M. STONE: "A motion 'that the Council do now divide,' 'that the Council do now adjourn,' 'that this debate be now adjourned,' shall always be in order if made so as not to interrupt a member speaking; and on being moved and seconded, without discussion." I say that rule means that the mover of such motion is entitled to show his reasons why he moves either the adjournment of the House or the adjournment of the debate, and that then, after it has been moved, it is passed without discussion in the House. Is there any discussion in the mover giving his reasons for moving the adjournment? We know that in the practice of both Houses a member often moves the adjournment of the House so that he can state reasons or objections in relation to certain principles. It is often done.

A. MEMBER: It is never done.

HON. F. M. STONE: I repeat that the intention of the rule is that the mover, in moving either the adjournment of the House or the adjournment of the debate, can give his reasons for so doing. It would be absurd to ask the House to adjourn simply by a motion, without any reasons being given by the mover of that motion.

THE PRESIDENT: The question is met by Rule 122, which says that a motion "that this debate be now adjourned" must be put without discussion.

HON. F. M. STONE: Then do you rule that I am out of order in giving my reasons for moving the adjournment of the debate?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, certainly; you are under Rule 122.

HON. W. T. LOTON: The hon. member has given his reasons now.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: The hon. member has got what he wanted.

HON. W. T. LOTON: I second the motion.

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

Ayes	...	...	...	7
Noes	...	...	...	12

Majority against ... 5

AYES.	NOES.
Hon. W. T. Loton	Hon. H. Briggs
Hon. A. P. Matheson	Hon. R. G. Burges
Hon. J. E. Richardson	Hon. D. K. Congdon
Hon. H. J. Saunders	Hon. C. E. Dempster
Hon. F. M. Stone	Hon. J. W. Hackett
Hon. F. Whitcombe	Hon. A. G. Jenkins
Hon. S. J. Haynes (Teller).	Hon. H. Lukin
	Hon. D. McKay
	Hon. C. A. Piesse
	Hon. G. Randell
	Hon. W. Spencer
	Hon. E. McLarty (Teller).

Motion thus negatived, and the debate continued.

HON. W. T. LOTON (Central): I had no intention of addressing the House on the subject this afternoon, but as no other member appears inclined to rise—

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: They are all waiting.

HON. W. T. LOTON: I do not desire to see this Bill read a second time without speaking on it. In the first place, I wish to call the attention of hon. members to the fact that although we have a Loan Bill before us to the extent of £750,000 only, the amount really asked for under this Loan Bill is about an extra half-million.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: More than that, is it not?

HON. W. T. LOTON: At least; and that is in connection with new railways. The amounts we are asked to vote for these lines are: Coolgardie to Bonnie Vale, £10,000; Coolgardie to Norseman, £60,000; Menzies to Leonora, £60,000; Northam towards Goomalling, £20,000.

The amount set down in the Bill is £150,000, but the estimate for these railways is £527,000; therefore, these works will commit us to a sum of nearly £400,000, in addition to the amount set down in the Bill. There is one important fact I wish to draw the attention of hon. members to, that the estimates for these particular railways do not include rolling-stock. And if members look at the estimate for each line, they will see that the engineering surveyor has been very careful to note that the estimates are exclusive of the rolling-stock. We have a nice little item in this Bill itself for extra rolling-stock for our open lines.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: It is not half enough: we cannot do without it.

HON. W. T. LOTON: Every time a railway has been constructed, or that a Bill has been brought forward to build a new railway, we have been told that the amounts estimated would complete the line. Some years ago, when we started to build railways, the estimate was £2,000 a mile. The amount per mile has now reached the very moderate sum of between £4,000 and £5,000 per mile. The amount has to be added to additions and improvements and extra rolling-stock, which has been one of the largest items.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: A sign of our progress.

HON. W. T. LOTON: The lines which have been constructed have never been properly equipped. We have been constructing railways under a disguise all along, practically under false pretences, believing that these lines would cost a certain sum of money when they were not fully equipped. Fortunately, the Government have been able, from time to time, to supply the requirements of these railways. Practically I may say the amount will have to be doubled to complete the railways which it is proposed to construct at the present time: instead of three-quarters of a million, a million and a half will have to be supplied. Members should bear these facts in mind when voting on the question. They shall not vote in the dark as far as far as I am concerned, and if I am not correct in my statements the leader of the House will have an opportunity of correcting me when replying. The Colonial Secretary told the House, in the course of his speech, that we had bor-

rowed, up to 30th June last, ten and a half millions; that was our indebtedness. If we deduct the amount set apart for the sinking fund, practically the indebtedness would be a little over ten millions, but ten and a half millions have been raised in some way or other. Nine millions of the amount, I am right in saying, have been raised by loan; and a million and a half by Treasury bills: that is up to the 30th June last. The authorisations by loan amount to twelve million pounds, in round numbers, ten and a half millions of which have been raised, leaving one and a half millions to be raised. I asked the Colonial Secretary in the course of his speech to tell the House how much had been raised since the 30th of June last, and I am under the impression that another million has been raised by Treasury bills since that time. I think it was obtained at four per cent. interest. The amount obtained was at 98 instead of 100, so that we are paying for that million which has been raised since the 30th June, five per cent., the interest and expenses of raising being in addition, which would perhaps make it another quarter per cent. I have pointed out that twelve millions are about the sum authorised. That leaves, if one million has been raised since the 30th June, about half a million pounds to be raised, before we get to the end of our authorisations. What has been done with a considerable portion of the money raised? We know perfectly well the Coolgardie water supply scheme was to cost two and a half millions: that was the amount of money authorised to be raised, but a portion of the money has been reappropriated. I believe over one million pounds have been reappropriated from certain works, and if these works are to be completed—and I only point to one, the Coolgardie water scheme—a further sum of money will have to be borrowed for the completion of this work, so that we are already committed to a further loan, even without passing this Loan Bill which is now before us. We are committed to a further loan from the Acts of previous sessions, and it seems to me the course the Government intend to pursue is this. Twelve million pounds have been authorised to be raised by loan; they have been authorised to raise a certain amount on Treasury bills, and so soon as the Govern-

ment can they will replace a certain amount of money raised by Treasury bills by loan. We are committed to about a million, or a million and a-half, in addition to the twelve millions. The amount of indebtedness to the end of June was £60 per head of the population of the colony; and when the other sum has been raised, bringing the total up to twelve million pounds, the indebtedness, unless the population increases fairly considerably, will be close on £70 per head of the population. These figures are getting pretty high, it seems to me. At the commencement of responsible government the Premier of this colony, on various occasions, told the Parliament and the people of the country that he intended to carry out public works by borrowing public money, but that he would not increase the indebtedness of the population. The indebtedness in 1890, when we entered upon responsible government, was under £30 per head. Now it is a little over £60; so that hon. members will see, during nine years the indebtedness has been about doubled, and is likely to increase. I am making these remarks to show hon. members briefly what is the financial position in which we are at the present time with regard to the loans. I want to say a few words now about the Bill, and I may say at once that there are several works enumerated in it which it is absolutely necessary must be carried out. It seems to me the only way to carry them on is by borrowing a certain amount of money. With the exception of the works that are in hand, unless there is something of extraordinary necessity or urgency, I say that the other works should be left over until we are in a better position to cope with them. If there are works in existence partly carried out, it would be false economy and in some instances almost impracticable to stop these works; therefore we must face the difficulty that is forced on us. When we have done that we must seriously consider before we vote another penny for new works. I do not propose to go further into the items, and I do not intend to oppose the second reading, or at the present moment to deal with the items in the schedule. I have intimated briefly the view I think hon. members should take if they hold strong views on this question, and when we get to the

schedule, hon. members should take a strong stand and vote according to the views they hold in regard to this matter. Hon. members are aware that we cannot strike items out; we can only make suggestions, but it is possible to deal with the Bill in a firm manner, so that our recommendations will meet with the consideration and attention which this House desire.

HON. D. MCKAY (North): I do not intend to oppose the second reading of this Bill, but I propose to reduce the number of items considerably in Committee. The policy of borrowing money which the Government have adopted should be stopped, or in the end it may lead to the ruination of the country.

HON. S. J. HAYNES (South-East): I intend to support the second reading of the Bill. There is no doubt that certain moneys are required, and must be obtained for works which are in hand. I agree with every word which Mr. Loton has said as to the financial position of the country. His remarks show that we are too heavily in debt at the present time with £60 per head of the population. It is far too much, and, to my mind, anything but a satisfactory state of affairs. In the short space of nine years, when the debt per head was £30, we have doubled that amount.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: How have our assets gone up?

HON. S. J. HAYNES: No doubt our assets have gone up. I do not think the population has gone up correspondingly, and our power of paying interest has been much weakened.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: We have four times the population we had when we first had responsible government.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: I have always opposed what seemed to be a weakness on the part of the present Government: I refer to their excessive borrowing. I think from the time the Government entered office they have evinced a desire to go ahead too quickly. I have just as much confidence in the country as the Government have, but I say we should go ahead slowly, safely, and surely, rather than plunge into debt in the way we have been doing. Some time ago this House passed, almost unanimously, a resolution that we would not agree to any further loan bills until the present authorisations

were exhausted. We have not arrived at that stage yet.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: It was too early in the session to commit the House in that way.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: That was the resolution carried.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Not unanimously.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: Almost; it was very strongly supported at the time. I do not think the hon. member can contradict that. This excessive borrowing—excessive in my opinion—has a detrimental effect on the colony; for we find that only recently the Government borrowed one million pounds on Treasury bonds, and to finance with Treasury bonds is an extreme course for any Government to adopt. All Governments do it, but only in emergencies; at least that is the conclusion I have come to. It is detrimental for the general public to know that this colony at the present time is paying what is equal to about 5½ per cent. The hon. member said about 5¼, but I believe it is about 5½. That is to say the interest the colony is paying on Treasury bonds is 4 per cent. per £100 for which they get £98, 2 per cent. below par, and then there is the expense of floating these loans. At the very time, or almost at the very time, the Government were paying 5 per cent. on Treasury bonds in London, where money is cheaper than in these colonies, an incident occurred in Victoria in which a private individual went to the money market and borrowed £3,000 on mortgage at 4 per cent. When the Government have to do that to which I refer, it shows the financial position of the colony is not as satisfactory as it should be in the minds of people to whom we go to borrow money.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: Nobody said it was in this colony.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: We hear about the colony being prosperous, but it does not seem to be prosperous, with a load of debt like this. Attention has been drawn to the fact that our gold output is extremely satisfactory, and the output, which is astonishing, is a subject for congratulation; but I do not think we ought to be carried away by that, because a large amount of the money goes out of the country. I understand that the bulk of the dividends go away from Western Australia.

I do not see how a large number of the members of this House can consistently support the new railways in this Bill, in the face of the resolution previously passed, unless they can give good reasons for changing their minds on the subject. I shall support the second reading of the Bill, but when in Committee I shall use my best endeavours to have some of the items struck out. I will at present mention one or two very briefly. The first mentioned is Albany, £10,000, and I understand it is for the continuation of the improvements of the works which have already been taken in hand in relation to the harbour. A slight amount of dredging has been done, and I say, without fear of contradiction, that the small sum of money provided in this Bill for these works will be exceedingly well spent.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: It ought to be twice the amount.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: As the hon. member says, it ought to be twice the amount.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: Take the whole mentioned in the Loan Bill.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: As a matter of fact, the harbour down there has practically been starved, and I am sure I only voice the sentiments of the bulk of the people in saying they feel that the Government of this colony look upon Albany as practically a foreign port, and treat the people accordingly.

A MEMBER: No.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: I say that is the feeling. Time after time a promise has been made to spend money in dredging and in making the harbour, at a very small cost, one of the finest in the world; yet practically nothing has been spent.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: You are no worse off than other ports.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: A dredge was there for a very short time, but, before it had accomplished the work it should have done, it was removed to Fremantle; therefore we were without a dredge.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: It came on to Geraldton, and never got further.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: The Geraldton port ought to have a fair amount spent upon it, as ought all the other ports, but I wish to show how disgracefully the district of Albany has been treated. I do not desire to speak parochially at all, but I cannot keep silent regarding the

facts I see and hear of, and the complaints that are so rife down there. Complaints have been made in another place by the member for the town (Mr. Leake). Here is one item. Some time ago a light-house was promised for Breaksea Island, one of the most important sites on the southern coast. I believe the material has been lying in the custom-house at Albany for the past two years. I heard a rumour that it was being taken from there and was recently intended to be carted up to another position. I do not know whether there is any truth in that statement, but the fact remains that the material has been lying in the customs shed for two years. This shows that Albany has not been treated with the fairness that ought to be shown towards it. The second item relates to Bunbury, and really ought to be struck out. When the Bunbury works were started they were to cost £100,000, but now goodness knows what amount that is going to develop into. The "little Bethel" gets far more spent upon it than other places, in proportion.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: They want another £400,000.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: That amount may be exaggerated, but I understand the works are likely to cost £200,000.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: £400,000.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: £200,000 is the amount named to me. If the amount named will be required, this House has been misled, because, as I have already stated, it was represented that these improvements were likely to cost about £100,000. I also hear that a good deal of the money already provided seems to have been wasted.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Chucked into the sea.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: No doubt hon. members will give the House the benefit of what they have seen. The improvement desired has not been accomplished, very little having been effected in the port. I may be wrong about that, but that is what I have been told by a gentleman who visited the place. I do not know anything about the northern ports, but I have no doubt they require the reasonable sum set down for them, to make the harbours reasonably safe, the amount is small. The Fremantle harbour works have been started and must apparently be

proceeded with. Although I have been twitted time after time, I am not jealous of Fremantle, but have a broader feeling than that, and I hope the Fremantle harbour will be one of the finest in the world. I certainly do not want to see the money frittered away and wasted, in the face of what has been already expended, but I was surprised to notice some little while back that in reply to a question in another place the Premier said the harbour was going to cost at least £200,000; and I think it is quite time the country knew how much this great scheme is likely to cost. The chief items in the second part of the schedule are rails and fastenings and rolling-stock, and as I believe that money is required I shall support those items, but in the face of our present indebtedness and of the probability of very much more money being required for rolling-stock than this schedule portends, I intend to oppose the new railways, and I hope hon. members will support me in that view.

HON. D. MCKAY: Not the Boulder?

HON. S. J. HAYNES: It seems to me, so far as the Boulder is concerned, that the money will really be for work in relation to a portion of the present railway, and the work is necessary by reason of the increase in traffic. That is not a new work, and I include it in the works that have really been commenced; but as to all the new railways I cannot do otherwise than vote against them.

A MEMBER: Leonora too?

HON. S. J. HAYNES: Leonora too. I do not oppose those lines on the ground that they are not wanted, perhaps, in consequence of the development which has taken place, but I assert that we are not warranted in going on the London market and borrowing. We are not in a position to borrow, and the House will be acting inconsistently in regard to the resolution previously passed, if they vote for several items in this schedule. Let us go slowly and exhaust our present authorisations instead of going in for fresh loans.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Supposing the railway will earn the interest on the amount expended?

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: I suppose the hon. member will guarantee that.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: Our present authorisations are not exhausted, and we

should not go in for fresh works until they are, and our population increases. As I said before, there are several of these items which I think would warrant our borrowing the money, if we were in a better position than at the present time; and the line that presents itself to my mind as the best paying is the Menzies to Leonora line. As to the Northam-Goomalling line, in my opinion that is one of those foolish agricultural lines which will never pay, and of which we have had one experience.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: Ornamental lines.

HON. S. J. HAYNES: They are not even ornamental. We have had one experience of those lines, and it has been a disastrous failure.

A MEMBER: Which one is that?

HON. S. J. HAYNES: You will find statements that were made in reference to all these lines to show how well they would pay, and what a great convenience they would be; but when we come to practical results we shall not look to the Greenhills line, and I am afraid this will be a similar undertaking. I have had a little experience in the other colonies, and have been one to agitate for agricultural lines, knowing the inconvenience pioneers have suffered and that they were worthy of all the praise and assistance we could give them. But, at the same time, it is no use going in for speculations that will turn out to be disastrous. In regard to the Gippsland line, the spur lines have been a failure from start to finish. The land was exceedingly good, though certainly the clearing was difficult, but even there, with good land, good climate, and plenty of water, those lines have been a rank failure; and with poorer land and no regular rainfall the result must be considerably worse.

HON. D. MCKAY: Had the Victorian railways to be shut up?

HON. S. J. HAYNES: Yes; the Dunkeld-Penshurst line had to be closed, although it ran through some of the richest land in the world, and I think the rails had to be taken up. I shall support the second reading of the Bill, but, as I have pointed out, there are items to which I intend to object in Committee.

HON. J. H. SAUNDERS (Metropolitan): I would like to say a few words

on the Bill, especially as I had the honour of moving the Address-in-reply to the Governor's Speech on the occasion referred to by hon. members. At that time I thought that before any railway scheme would be brought forward this session the House would require to know where the money was to come from, and I think I am borne out in that to-night. If hon. members carefully look into the Loan Bill which has been sent to us, they will see that Mr. Loton is correct in what he has said. We are not only pledged for the amount that is set down in the Bill, but for the amount of money which will be required to complete the works. Next year the Government may have to ask for another £750,000 to complete works which are scheduled in this Bill. Without detaining the House, I would like to set before hon. members a few facts. First, we start with the Boulder railway duplication, and I know this work is absolutely necessary if we want to keep the mines going and to make the lines pay. By duplicating this line, we shall be increasing the revenue of the railways and saving a considerable sum for the country. For the Coolgardie to Bonnie Vale line, £10,000 is placed on the schedule; but if hon. members will look through the report of the inspector of engineering surveys, they will find that the total cost of the line is estimated at £20,000; which means that £10,000 will be required more than we are now asked to vote. Therefore, we are pledging ourselves to £20,000 instead of to £10,000. As to the Coolgardie-Norseman railway, a first instalment of £60,000 is asked for. The total cost of that line is to be £290,000.

HON. W. T. LOTON: Without rolling-stock.

HON. H. J. SAUNDERS: I am only referring to the report of the inspector of engineering surveys, and I shall come to the question of rolling-stock. To the £290,000, estimated for this work, a few thousand pounds more will have to be added before the line is completed and open for traffic. If the House pass these two items, we shall be committing the country, for the two lines I have mentioned, to a quarter of a million of money more than is asked for. As to the Menzies-Leonora railway, personally I am very much in favour of it. I know

the country well, and I am sure the line will pay if properly worked, and the line is wanted badly. The question for the House to consider is whether we are justified in voting the money when we are asked for only £60,000 out of a total estimate of £165,000.

HON. D. K. CONGDON: If the line will pay we are justified in constructing it.

HON. H. J. SAUNDERS: If we can get the money. I do not say that the line is not justified. If any line is justified this one is. I know it will pay, but I shall not say at present whether I shall vote for the line or not. We may be justified in passing this railway, from what I know of the country, but the estimate of the cost is rather low. If members will refer to the report of the Engineer-in-Chief they will see that the line is called the Menzies to Leonora railway. And if hon. members look at the plan they will see that a line is proposed to go to Malcolm, with an extension to Leonora, and another to Laverton. If we pass this line we should authorise the construction of the railway from Menzies to Mount Malcolm. Leonora is some 10 or 12 miles to the west, and Laverton 60 miles to the north-east. I think it would be better to alter this line to run to Malcolm. As to the public batteries, I interrupted the Colonial Secretary when speaking and asked him whether the public batteries were paying. I did that for a purpose. I thought it would give the Colonial Secretary an opportunity of remarking that if the batteries were not paying directly they paid indirectly. I speak from my knowledge, and I say that the public batteries do pay the country indirectly. There are a great many mines in the country which do not pay capitalists to work, but they pay working men to work them if there is a battery near. That is no reason why the Government should run batteries at a loss. The Government ought to charge working men a price that will pay for working the stone, and yet leave a small profit to the owner of the stone. If a working miner chooses to take stone, which will not pay to crush, to the battery, we cannot expect the Government to run the batteries at a profit. I shall certainly support the second reading of the Bill, but in Committee I think several of the

items should be struck out for the present session at any rate.

HON. J. E. RICHARDSON (North): I do not intend to oppose the second reading, but there are a number of items I certainly object to, and would like to see struck out. I think after the warning note which has been sounded by Mr. Loton, it behoves members to be very careful as to what they are doing in voting for the items.

HON. C. A. PIESSE (South-East): I desire to state that I intend to support the second reading of the Bill, and, as far as possible, most of the items contained in the schedule. I have heard the same croaking and the same dismal forebodings in reference to lines proposed in the past that we have heard to-day.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Name the lines.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: These expressions of opinion are what I might term looking on the dark side of things; and if we put aside the little miserable Greenhills railway, can any hon. member name one railway which has been constructed which we could do without to-day?

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Newcastle.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: That is going back long years ago, but if we did away with the Newcastle line there would be an outcry for it to-morrow. We built the Newcastle line when we were a small community. We have always had faith in our country, and have constructed lines whenever we could. I have supported the goldfields lines when I thought they were needed. Members to-day have said if the lines will pay, show us where the money is coming from? Why are we not borrowing on as easy terms to-day as we have done in the past? Because members have been crying "stinking fish." What man in a private business, who wanted to borrow money, would spread the report that he was not sound? Do hon. members think that such a man would get the money? Yet hon. members, who profess to be doing this colony a good turn, and who represent it, say the colony is not safe to lend money to.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: They say it is undesirable to do it.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: We have heard the same remarks made in reference to lines in the past, yet those lines are paying to-day. It has been pointed out

that our indebtedness is something like £60 per head of the population. Why did not the gentlemen go further and state what the assets of the colony were per head? The national assets are possibly four or five times what they were when our indebtedness was £30 per head of the population. If members want to be fair to the country, and to do it a good turn, they should go further and not stop half way, making statements which are injurious when they have the knowledge that there is something advantageous which could be told. I am sorry that I have not at my fingers' ends the increased value of the assets, but it must be something like four times what it was when our indebtedness was £30 per head. We are justified in constructing works that are necessary, and in borrowing money to carry out those works. It has been argued to-day that this House committed itself to a resolution to the effect that no more money should be borrowed until our present authorisations had been expended. Did any business man or any man with a fraction of common sense ever take up such a line of argument in his own business?

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: Yes.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: Then he was no business man. I never in my life heard such a line of argument in connection with a man's business, and hon. members have no right to treat the colony in a way they would not treat their own business. It seems a childish resolution, looking at it now, and I did hope we should not hear of it again. I am sorry it has been brought up again, because I thought every member had become ashamed of it. It is said that no matter how necessary a work may be, because we have not expended the present authorisations, more money should not be borrowed. I hope this matter has been ended, and we shall hear no more about the resolution. It has been pointed out in reference to the Northam-Goomalling line that it will cost £20,000, and one hon. member spoke of that line in a most contemptible manner as being a second edition of the unfortunate Greenhills railway. Agricultural railways must be built; and with the millions of acres of agricultural land which we have to settle in one portion of the country, I say the Bridgetown to Albany line will have

to be constructed soon. Should we wait until we are in a position to say that that line will pay before it will be authorised? We have good land all along that line, and if the railway is not to be built until it is proved that it will pay, we may have to wait five or six years for it.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Where is the line to go from?

HON. C. A. PIESSE: From Bridge-town to Albany. Because a line will not pay from the jump, we may have to wait many years, perhaps 20 years, in getting a line which we ought to have at once. Thanks are due to Mr. Loton for his explanation of the financial position. I am sorry the Government do not face the proposals to the full extent. It seems that the Menzies-Leonora railway is absolutely necessary, but why not put the full amount down on the schedule at once. Hon. members have been crying out that we are not in a fit state to borrow.

HON. D. MCKAY: The money market says so.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: The money market says what hon. members say. If hon. members were to take the national assets of the colony, they would find that we were in a good position. We are paying the interest on the debt and we shall continue to pay it. There is a deficit, but that will soon be cleared off. Hon. members have said this evening that works should be constructed out of revenue. We tried our hands at that, and created the deficit. Now we are told to take the amount from revenue; but it is simply folly to attempt to touch public works from revenue, unless you have a very good surplus. There are sundry items I do not approve of, but as to the bulk of the Bill, I shall have much pleasure in supporting it.

HON. D. K. CONGDON (West): It is my intention to support the second reading of the Bill, because when the Address-in-Reply was before the Council for consideration, I had the honour to second that reply, and I said that if we found money would have to be borrowed for works, it should be for reproductive works. I maintain distinctly that our railways have been reproductive, having paid sinking fund and interest, and enabled the department to hand money over to the general revenue of the colony. With

regard to other general works mentioned in the schedule, I cannot say anything about them. I am not particularly well versed in these things, but I take it the Government would not have brought the items before Parliament if they had not believed in them, and I say we are perfectly justified in borrowing money to carry out those public works, as well as to carry out railways. I intend to vote for most of these items in the schedule when we get into Committee.

HON. H. LUKIN (East): Although I do not intend to oppose the second reading of the Bill, I think there are many items in the schedule which require careful consideration. My hon. friend (Mr. Piesse) has been to some trouble to say hon. members should be careful about the credit of the colony. One of the things we should be careful about, if we want to uphold the credit of the colony, is to refrain from straining that credit; and we have every reason to believe that if we go into the money market at the present time, we shall have to give the same rate as we paid for the last money we raised, that being 5 per cent.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: That is on short-dated bills.

HON. H. LUKIN: I think no one will say this country can afford the construction of railways from moneys on which we have to pay 5 per cent. We must get the money cheaper than that before we can carry out the work. I think Mr. Loton put the case very fairly, and I wish he had gone further and dealt with the schedule in detail, pointing out to the House what items we had better concede and what items we had better reject, because that is exercising the minds of most of us. We have to take into consideration that the year is almost half gone, and it would be as well to let most of these items go over to next year. There are certain items in this schedule that we must pass, which we cannot possibly do without. Rolling-stock is required for the railways, and we cannot possibly carry on with the amount we have at present. There are one or two other items in relation to which I would like to hear the opinions of other hon. members before I give mine. There are two other items which I think we should pass, but so far as the railways are concerned, this House would only be doing

its duty to the country in the present state of affairs by throwing them all out. There are two items in the schedule besides rolling-stock which I should be prepared to support, but I should prefer to see all the rest struck out.

At 6-20 the PRESIDENT left the Chair.

At 7-30, Chair resumed.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE (Central): I should like, if I could possibly see my way to do it, to refuse the second reading of this Loan Bill, because I think the principle on which we are asked to authorise this loan is not a satisfactory one for the colony to adopt. Although it is proposed to spend a certain amount of money, something like £150,000, in the extension and further completion of harbour works, I do not like that portion of the Bill which asks us to vote moneys for the building of further railways at the present time. It is a well-known fact, as Mr. S. J. Haynes has pointed out, that we, as a deliberative body, committed ourselves to the position that we would not authorise any further loans until the present authorisations were disposed of; and, until that is done, I think hon. members cannot contradict the vote already passed in this House more than once. It is not as if the colony was in such a flourishing condition that we could commit ourselves to further liabilities. It is not even shown to us that it is intended to enter on the construction of the railways proposed by this Bill at once. In spite of the resolutions of this House on previous occasions with reference to two or more of the railways mentioned in the Bill; in spite of the refusal to allow authorisations to go forward, and in spite of the declaration that we would not permit these works to be carried out for another year at least, the Government have taken upon themselves to complete surveys and estimates for the construction of the lines. Now the Government come to us and say, "We want you to authorise loans to cover work which we did without authority: we have taken work in hand which we were not authorised to do, and we want you to indorse the mistakes, or rather improper actions, previously carried out." When we once allow that

to go through as a principle, it means that this House is giving away the control that it has, and ought certainly to maintain, over the actions of the Government and the spending department of the service. If we carry this Bill and pass the authorisation, we thereby indorse the illegal procedure of the Government in the past, and in future we shall be stopped in coming forward and saying, "We will prevent you from doing what you like hereafter." It seems to me the present Government have assumed that they have absolute control of the colony, to commit the colony to public works and railways which one branch of the Legislature at least considers necessary, and to do everything just as they please, then to come to this House and ask us to indorse the action they have taken. Once we allow the Government to do that, we shall be giving away our right to criticise the actions of the Government in the future. The Council ought not to allow such a position to be established. I cannot see that I shall be doing my duty without entering my most emphatic protest against the system, and doing all I can to maintain that control over the actions of the Government which we certainly were intended to have by the establishment of this Council. The policy which the Government are following is to commit us to a large expenditure for the construction of further railways, to construct railways the expenditure on which we have no authority yet for saying are warranted, and to neglect to a large extent the development of the coast and the coastal traffic.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: What?

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: Neglect the development of the coast and the coastal traffic. I allude more particularly to light-houses and harbour works. I have recently been in the southern portion of the colony, and from information I gleaned there I have come to the conclusion that it would be far better to have money spent in lighting the south coast than to construct lines the returns from which would be problematical. I should have liked to see a proposal to erect the lighthouses which have been asked for—one at Breaksea, one which must certainly be erected at Cape Naturaliste and another at the Abrolhos Islands, to complete the lighting system

of the coast, and make the coast-line safe for traffic.

HON. J. E. RICHARDSON: One on North-West Cape.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: I do not know enough of the traffic, or whether the Government would be warranted in erecting a light at North-West Cape. If money is to be spent at the rate it has been spent in the past in making Bunbury a harbour and developing the trade there, certainly further expenditure should be made in the erection of a light at Cape Naturaliste, to ensure navigation and the safe approach to the harbour on which the Government are spending so much money. If the Government intend to spend such a large amount of money at Bunbury, they should erect such lights as will make the coast safe and sure for navigation. I would far sooner see the Government take up a position to secure the door of the colony than in developing the interior by railway lines which, if they will have no other effect, must entail continuous support to the Government which the Government should not have. Last year I opposed as far as I could the extension of the railway system, on the ground that in the financial position of the colony we could not afford to build further lines. Since then the money market has been shown to be so much against us that in the last loan we had to pay 5 per cent. for the money. Any member having proper regard for the value of money cannot considerably support the proposal to borrow money at 5 per cent. or more with the object of building railways. No commercial proposition could be supported in that way. Unless money can be borrowed at less than 5 per cent., we are not justified in giving the slightest assistance in constructing the proposals in the Bill. At present the lines which have been constructed by the Government are not paying. As a whole the railway system is a tax on the revenue of the colony. Our lines have not reached paying point owing to the difficulties of the service and the absence of sufficient traffic. I am not in a position to say that I think the Government have gone too far in constructing railways, but at present we are not justified in accepting the proposals to build more railways. We have been told by hon. members in this House, and in another place,

that some of the proposed lines will be self-supporting. We were told that before. Parliament was told that when the Cue line was proposed, but it has never been shown that the Cue line has paid. We were also told the same with regard to some of the other lines, and notably the agricultural lines. I think I am safe in saying the Menzies-Coolgardie line has not been self-supporting.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Where did you get that from?

HON. C. A. PIESSE: What about the £60,000 profit?

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: The account of the Menzies extension does not show that the line is self-supporting.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: How about the whole of the lines?

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: One or two may be shown to be self-supporting.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: The whole of the lines together show a profit.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: The whole of the railways do not. Reference has been made to a profit of £60,000, but £165,000 out of the loan moneys is to be utilised for replacing rolling-stock, so there is a loss of £100,000. We have had a statement from the Minister of Railways that he requires £450,000 to fully equip the railways with rolling-stock to efficiently conduct the business on the lines. If that money was wanted two years ago, why did not the Government ask for it straight out? They say they want £450,000, and they come forward with a proposal for £165,000. It would have been better if the Government, instead of asking us to borrow money to build railways in different parts of the colony, had asked us to authorise a larger amount than that now named for the purpose of equipping the railways. We should thoroughly equip the railways we have, and put them into such a condition that they will be satisfactory to the people using them, before we go further and commit ourselves to liabilities of which we cannot see the end.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: What about the revenue last month?

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: There was a debit of £247,000 at the close of the financial year. We want the money to pay our debts, and not to carry on extension works. I think the policy proposed is bad, and, if I saw the slightest hope of

success, I would oppose the second reading of the Bill, and if possible send it back to the Government for consideration in another House. The unfortunate part is that we have been committed to a large extent, because in the Bill are included moneys for the continuance of works now in hand which cannot be carried out unless certain moneys are voted; therefore we cannot throw out the whole of the Bill unless we are prepared to stop the continuance of those works. It is a pity in one way that the Government have not brought down a separate Bill, a special railway loans Bill, enabling us to deal with the railways absolutely on their merits; but as the items are mixed up together, the Bill relating to harbour works, railway works, and rolling-stock, we are forced into the position that we must vote for the second reading, because it is admitted on all hands that we have to raise money for the further instalment of rolling-stock to make the lines pay better or more self-supporting than at present. It is a policy of "trick," whereby we are to be compelled to substantially support the policy of the Government which we do not approve of. I do not know how the Government can ask us now to authorise this Menzies to Leonora railway unless they are prepared to bring in the Railway Bills before we are asked to pass the loan. I think the House should refuse in every instance to pass an authorisation to borrow for a work which in itself is not actually authorised by Parliament. The proper course of the Government last year, if they desired to go on with the surveys, was to ask for a vote out of which the funds for those proposed surveys could be provided, and then at the commencement of this session, or during the session, ask us to authorise the construction of the railways, and having got us to do so, ask us to authorise a loan for the purpose. The Premier says he does not want to use the money till next year. He has assured one or more members of this House that if Parliament will pass the Loan Bill he will undertake not to introduce the Railway Bills till next session. If he does not require to bring in the Railway Bills till next session, why does he ask us to authorise the loan now? It is no use to ask us to authorise now the construction of railways, if those railways

are not to be built till next year, unless he wants to use the money for some other purpose and to ask us to authorise the expenditure after he has misappropriated the money. We have been told on authority which we do not dispute, that of Mr. Loton, that there are already authorised loans not yet raised, for specific purposes. That does not seem to matter. The Government want us to authorise them to raise more money, which money they may divert to purposes of their own without the authority of Parliament, and then having spent the money, they will come to us and say, "What is the use of interfering now? You must vote the money and allow us to pay the accounts." That seems to me a most dangerous policy, and one which this House should never think of supporting. If it were possible to take out the items relating to rolling-stock, workshops, lighthouses, and the completion of works already in hand for which there are not sufficient funds available in the public treasury, and make one measure of them, we should be justified in doing that and in throwing out this Bill on the second reading, refusing to take it into Committee at all. Seeing the strength of the Government, as shown in relation to this very Bill when brought forward a few weeks ago, there being a vote of two to one in their favour, they should not adopt such a policy as this. They should have the courage to bring down their policy Bills, and tell us exactly what they want and how much they want. They should not bring the matter forward in this way, committing us to building the first section of lines and to incurring expenditure in carrying railways on to the non-paying point, so that we may be compelled at a later period to take them a stage further. This policy ought not to be countenanced by the House. I am surprised that the Government, with the strength they have behind them in the House which has the control of the expenditure of the colony, should adopt these means of gaining their point, throwing dust, so to speak, in the eyes of members of this Chamber, with a view to committing them to the policy of the Government which they cannot conscientiously approve of. I do not suppose there is any hon. member here, unless it be the

Colonial Secretary, who can indorse the policy shown in this Bill. By the inclusion of certain necessary items in a Bill of this kind we are to be compelled to practically indorse a policy which we do not and cannot indorse. I am afraid that owing to the inclusion of the items to which I refer, we cannot throw out the Bill on the second reading. We can only throw out the items in Committee, and I certainly trust this House will assert its rights in that respect, and will refuse to countenance, further than constitutionally obliged to do, the policy or action of the Government brought before us in this particular Bill. There may just as well be no Legislative Council in the colony, so far as I can see, if the Government are to be allowed to deal with responsible measures of this kind in such a way. Some of the items of the Bill are themselves objectionable. When the Bill gets into Committee I shall make a proposition in regard to a certain point, and shall ask members to indorse my action. I shall ask them to agree to a principle which has been adopted by other legislative bodies. When we have an Agent General representing our colony in London, where we are floating loans, transactions ought to be carried out by him; for we ought not to pay him a salary and also pay a commission, reward, or fee to somebody else to act for us.

A MEMBER: We should be out in the cold.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: An hon. member says we should be out in the cold; but when the time comes I shall refer to the transactions carried out by the New Zealand Parliament five years ago. South Australia has also done the same thing. The New Zealand Parliament five years ago asserted that they would not pay commission, and if the Agent General was unable to float the loan himself the commission would have to be paid out of his salary. Why should we pay two persons to do one man's work? Of course I do not anticipate a very large amount of support in this matter, but I think the subject is one which can very well be ventilated and considered, and if it can be shown that other colonies, perhaps in a sounder financial position than we are at the

present time, have been able to do this, and to save commission on flotations of loans, I do not see why we should not follow their lead and save what money we can. Why should we pay more for raising money than is absolutely necessary? We are told everything is impossible when it is first projected. I may refer those hon. members who seem to laugh at this suggestion as being chimerical, to what took place in the New Zealand Assembly and the South Australian Assembly, both of which adopted this principle, and since then both of those colonies have floated loans through the Agent General, and have done so successfully in every instance.

A MEMBER: What was the bank rate then?

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: That does not affect the principle of a loan being floated through the Agent General instead of a financial agent. I do not see that the bank rate would interfere to any extent with that principle. If we were to go to the London market for a loan, we should not get it any cheaper from the underwriter or investor, whether we carried out the transaction through the Agent General or a financial agent. We should have to pay the rate of interest ruling in the market, no matter by whom the loan was floated. The principle I have suggested should commend itself to the attention of hon. members; and the question is not whether the principle can be carried out in this Bill, but whether it can be sufficiently established as a rule for the colony in the future. It is not as if we were only going to borrow £750,000, because in the future we will, I suppose, be ambitious enough to ask for millions; and I cannot see why, because we want a lot of money, we should spend more than is absolutely necessary in obtaining it. When the Bill is in Committee we shall, I hope, have from the Colonial Secretary some detailed information as to the different items, such as new lighthouses, public batteries, and development generally; because I do not suppose the Colonial Secretary will have the assurance to ask us to vote, for instance, £20,000 for "developments generally" without giving us some idea of the direction in which the money is to be laid out.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It will be very general information I can give.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: I do not suppose the Colonial Secretary will ask us to vote £26,000 for departmental purposes, without giving us some idea of the direction of the expenditure.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: That has already been shown to us.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: I was not present when the Colonial Secretary moved the second reading, but judging from the time taken in the explanation, I am afraid there cannot have been very much detail shown.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: It had all been shown before.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: I am sorry my perceptive faculties are not sufficient to enable me to pick out the information so quickly as Mr. Burgess appears to have done; and I shall certainly ask hon. members to vote against all railway construction for which Bills have not been sent to us, and particularly against all railway construction the first sections only of which we are now asked to authorise. That principle of sectional authorisation which gives us no idea of the complete cost is bad in itself, and ought not to be adopted, because our experience shows that in the past the cost of all railways has exceeded the original estimates. The Engineer-in-Chief has shown in estimates that lines, without rolling-stock, would cost so much, and yet, in the Bridgetown railway for instance, the estimate was exceeded by £2,000 a mile, owing to claims brought forward by the contractor for work authorised in every instance by the department, as necessary alterations after the contract had been signed and taken in hand. Although we may vote £60,000 for the first instalment of the Coolgardie-Norseman line, we have no guarantee that claims by the contractor for extras may not amount to another £120,000. If we commit ourselves to the vote of £60,000, we commit ourselves to pay contractor's extras for alterations in the scheme; because never yet have the departmental specifications for the construction of a railway been adhered to in this colony.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: Or in any other colony.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: I prefer not to refer to other colonies, because we are only bound by the specifications drawn out by our Engineer-in-Chief and his

staff. It is his work we have to criticise; and if we commit ourselves to £60,000 for this railway, we shall find ourselves paying three times as much as we now intend to pay. If we were asked to vote £120,000 or £180,000 as a first instalment for the Coolgardie-Norseman railway, I do not suppose the House would consent. We might approve of the railway as a railway, and be of opinion that the extension of the system to Norseman was warranted, but we would not be prepared to pay the price, if we knew it would cost £180,000 for the first section. Since the present Engineer-in-Chief assumed charge, the cost of railway construction in this colony has been from 50 per cent. to 100 per cent. more than the estimates in the original specifications, and more than was anticipated by Parliament.

HON. E. MCLEARY: What about the Fremantle harbour works?

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: I am referring particularly to railways authorised by Parliament, and carried out by contract; and in every instance disputes have arisen between the contractor and the Engineer-in-Chief, as to the amount of the extras authorised by the Engineer or the officers under him. It would not be safe to commit ourselves to the sectional construction of the proposed railways, unless we have some idea of what the ultimate cost will be; and we are justified in asking some sort of guarantee that the estimates will be nearly adhered to, before we authorise the construction of railways on the specifications of the present Engineer-in-Chief. It speaks well for Parliament that this sort of thing has been tolerated so long; but the time has come now when we should put down our collective foot, and insist on further information as to the probable cost, and on some guarantee that the estimates will be adhered to, before we commit the country to this practically unknown and unknowable liability. The Fremantle harbour works are not being carried out by contract, but I suppose the final accounts will show that the cost has been exceeded.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: The cost has always been under the estimate.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: But the final accounts are not made up yet, and it is not likely these accounts will come

before members in such a form that the actual cost can be found out by hon. members. I am only reasoning by comparison; and if the Engineer-in-Chief, or whoever is responsible, is so far wrong in railway estimates, I am afraid I cannot hope he will be nearly correct in regard to the harbour works. This is a serious matter, and if we have to commit the colony to the commencement of these railway extensions, we ought to know within some reasonable figure what the ultimate cost will be. We are not in such a financial position as to be able to go blindly into these works and trust to luck for raising the money. We have come through a hard time during the past few years, and our finances are not in the most satisfactory condition, although I do not say they are bad, because they are hopeful, and no reasonable doubt can be entertained as to the colony coming round to a sound financial position before very long. But that is no reason for committing ourselves to unknown and unknowable liability; and in the light of past transactions of the department, I shall ask hon. members to resolutely refuse to have anything to do with the items in the second schedule, and, having passed motions to that effect, to adjourn the consideration in Committee until our decision has been made known to the Legislative Assembly, and the members there have been asked to acquiesce in our action. I feel confident the House will not commit the colony to the expenditure proposed, and if another place will not accept our suggestions, I shall ask hon. members to exercise their rights and throw out the Bill. It would be better for us to sustain the odium that will attach to us from such an action, than to allow ourselves to become parties to committing the colony to so great a liability as is contained in the proposals. I recognise that we cannot throw out the Bill at this stage.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: That is utterly impossible.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: But I do urge on hon. members to consider the position. We do not know yet what will be the attitude of the colony in regard to federation; and we may yet be compelled to enter the Commonwealth, and to throw away our revenue or, at any rate, part with a great portion of it, and to enter into a scheme of direct taxation in order

to meet ordinary expenditure. Until we know whether or not these events will happen, we ought not to commit the colony to the liability proposed, seeing that we have no idea where the money is coming from with which to pay interest on the loans.

A MEMBER: The old cry.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: We cannot get away from the fact that there is a doubt as to where the money is coming from for the interest. If the Government had acted in the constitutional way, and kept their pledges on the question of federation, we should, before next March, have known our position; but I am told the Government will not go to the country, and so the matter will be hung up for 18 months.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Federation will have "fizzled out" before then.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: I shall certainly do my best to keep the question of federation within our control, but we do not know that we may not be compelled to submit the question to the vote of the people, and we cannot with any amount of certainty say at the present time how that vote will go, or whether we will be committed to losing a great amount of revenue. Yet we are asked to commit the colony to these proposed railway lines, the construction of which will mean—though of course this is only an estimate, and I suppose I am no better than the Engineer-in-Chief at estimates—an expenditure of one million of money or more.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: One million and a-half.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: If the Government were in a safe and sound financial position, some of the proposed lines might be constructed; but considering the railway facilities given by the present Government to the goldfields, which have been brought, in the case of Leonora, within a reasonable distance of the coast, I do not think we are called on to authorise any further railway construction just yet, or at any rate until there has been some specific proof that the districts to be served are sound. We have heard from some hon. members, who have been in those districts, that the railways are justified; but unfortunately while we do not doubt these opinions are expressed in good faith, we must not lose

sight of the fact that they are expressed by people who are financially interested in the proposed railways, and who, if the railways are constructed, may anticipate saving losses, not to mention making profits. I do not think the Leonora district would suffer any material injury by waiting another 12 months, and certainly so far as Goomalling is concerned, that place can get along for another year or two without a railway.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: No.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: The people have done very well in the past in that district.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: No.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: They do very well even when they have to cart their products to the terminus of the railway, and no doubt they will continue to do well, with the increased prices they are getting.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: What increased prices?

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: They are now getting good prices for produce.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: The hon. member does not know what he is talking about.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: That probably is the reason I have spoken so long, because I invariably take up time in discussing subjects of which I know nothing. The people in the Goomalling district are very prosperous, and all seem very fat and in good condition.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Has the hon. member ever been there?

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: I hope I shall never go there. If all the people who live there are as consistent in their complaints as the hon. members who represent the province, I do not think it would be a good place to go to. I shall close by asking hon. members, when the time comes, to assist me in rejecting the railway proposals as embodied in the Bill, and to express a definite opinion that we are not at the present time justified in committing the colony to these liabilities.

HON. E. McLARTY (South-West): When the Colonial Secretary moved the second reading of the Bill, there seemed considerable diffidence on the part of hon. members to address themselves to the subject at all; but the question seems to have "caught on," because practically every hon. member has now spoken.

I intend to support the second reading of the Bill, if for no other reason than to enable the Government to carry on works which are now in progress. The revenue of the colony is not in such a condition as to carry on harbour works and other important public works which have already been started, and if for no other reason than that I shall support the second reading. At the same time I reserve to myself the right, when the items are being considered in Committee, to use my discretion as to what I shall support. I do not happen to be one of the members who last year supported the motion that the Government should not borrow any more money until the present loan authorisations have been completed. I look upon that motion as one which never should have been brought before the House, and certainly never carried; therefore I am not in any way bound by that resolution.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Nor any other member.

HON. E. McLARTY: I believe the extension of some of the railways is absolutely necessary, and those lines will receive my support. I cannot understand why the Government, in bringing in a Bill of this sort, ask for a sum of money which will not construct half of the work. It would be much better to place the whole of the amount on the Loan Bill. We were told by the Colonial Secretary that the interest on the whole of this loan of £750,000 would be £30,000, but we must take into consideration that not only will £750,000 be required for these works, but we shall be required to pay another £30,000 in interest before the money is obtained to complete the whole of the works mentioned in the schedule.

HON. D. K. CONNOR: We can get that out of the dividend tax.

HON. E. McLARTY: There are plenty of ways of spending that money. At first sight it did not appear to me to be such a large amount to carry out the works which are enumerated in this Bill, and I believe if these works could be completed for an amount of money which would only entail £30,000 interest per annum, members would be inclined to support the whole of the works. But when we consider that the interest on the capital required to carry out the works will be

nearer £70,000 or £80,000, the matter is placed in a different light. We must consider whether the country at the present time is in a position to bear the increased liability. There are many works enumerated in this schedule to which I agree. The question has been raised as to whether the public batteries pay; but I cannot look at batteries in that light, because the public batteries are quite an experiment, and I think the facts go to prove that, up to the present time, the batteries have been a great success, and the expenditure on them has been fully justified. If the batteries do not pay directly, they will have a very good effect in opening up new goldfields, and helping working men who have no other facilities for getting their ore crushed. Rolling-stock is another item which we are bound to pass. We hear constant complaints of want of rolling-stock on the railway lines, and I am sure hon. members will support that item. I hope when there is sufficient rolling-stock there will be better management than exists at the present time. There certainly is gross mismanagement in some of the railway branches. At present people are crying out bitterly about the goods traffic, but I believe the passenger traffic is satisfactory. I travel a good deal on the railways, and I may say that I have no reason to complain of the passenger traffic. I have always been treated with the greatest attention by every officer of the department, but as to the goods traffic, there is some reason to complain. I have brought the matter under the notice of the General Traffic Manager on several occasions, and I have written lengthy letters to that officer, and have given him proof of my statements, but so far I have received little satisfaction. I intend to pursue this course, and see if a better service cannot be brought about. I hope that with more rolling-stock we shall have better management. I shall not detain the House longer, except to say that I shall support the second reading of the Bill, reserving to myself the right to support what items I think necessary when in Committee.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER (East): I agree with Mr. Loton as to the borrowing of money at the present time. It strikes me this is a most undesirable time to borrow money, and if we were to defer

a loan for a little period, money might be obtained more advantageously to the colony.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: The Government do not intend to borrow the money now.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: In looking over the schedule, there are many works which are certainly imperative, and it would be undesirable in the interests of the country not to proceed with them. I also know that an immense amount of money will be required for rolling-stock for the railway service. These works that are necessary I have added up, and they amount to £285,000. Deducting that amount from the £750,000 it will not leave a very large sum to carry on other works with. It would require more than double the amount of money to be authorised by this Bill to carry out the works enumerated in the schedule. Therefore it is not fair to come to the House with a Bill of this sort. It would have been more straightforward on the part of the Government to have asked for the whole amount. We cannot reject every part of the Bill, because there are many works which are necessary and imperative, and these works cannot be carried out without money being obtained; still I do not think the colony will be in any way interfered with if these works are deferred for another six months. The colony is under enormous liabilities at the present time. We have incurred a debt of ten and a-half millions, and there are authorisations at the present time for another million pounds. There appears to be no end of borrowing, and our population is not increasing at present, nor are our resources extending in the way I consider they should to justify us in borrowing in the way we are continuing to do. I think it would be far wiser in the interests of the colony if we hesitated before we went to the London market for another loan. Every session we are asked to pass an Excess Bill, to which we cannot take exception, as the money has been expended; and every session a Loan Bill comes forward. We are continually borrowing.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: And we are continually developing.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: The interest has to be met, and the indebtedness per

head of the population is every year increasing. Our industries are not increasing in a way which would justify us in borrowing at the rate we are doing at the present time. When we consider that half the financial year has gone by, there is no immediate necessity for these works to be constructed. The line to Leonora or Malcolm is one which, no doubt, will be a paying line, but at the present time that part of the country is well served by teams, by camels, and other means of conveyance; therefore I think the line might very well wait a little longer. The line of railway to Norseman is one which, I think, very few members would like to see carried out at the present time.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: There is nothing to justify it.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: There is nothing to justify it. For my part, I would like to see a line of railway from Esperance Bay to Norseman constructed by private enterprise. I cannot look upon private enterprise in the light that the Government do.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Send that down as a recommendation. I will second it.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: I know the Government are not at all favourably disposed towards railway lines and public works being carried out by private enterprise, but, in the interests of the colony, it would be better to adopt this system.

HON. C. A. PRIESSE: What about the Midland and Great Southern lines?

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: They were constructed under the land-grant system, which has been a great failure. There was also the loose way in which the agreements were drawn.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: And the action of the Government in giving land away.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: In every possible way from which we look at it, this was a business transaction which will never reflect credit on the Government. There are several lines of railway which are wanted now, which might be carried out by private enterprise, and which would prove beneficial to the country. I heard a line suggested the other day from Collie to the Eastern railway. That would save an immense amount of delay and would relieve the

existing line a great deal. It would save the duplication of the present line, and the Collie coal would not have to be sent to Perth before being taken up to the goldfields as at present. This is a line which, I think, may very well be undertaken by private enterprise in the interests of the country. The cost to the colony would be simply that of the land upon which it is constructed, and surely that land would be of little or no value to the country, whilst the line itself would be of enormous advantage. It would be easy to have the charges for traffic on lines of railway undertaken by private enterprise, regulated in the same way as those upon the Government railways. Surely stipulations of that kind could be entered into before the railway was constructed. I cannot see anything which should make the Government so determined to oppose the construction of public works by private enterprise, and I think that, by their opposition, they are injuring the interests of the colony. In my opinion many works might be carried out by private enterprise with great advantage to the colony. Though I am not prepared to say I am going to oppose this Bill or this line, yet I should feel far happier and far more contented, in relation to the interests of the colony, if we did not approach the loan market at present. Some years ago we thought the Government would be in a position to pay the cost of all necessary public works out of revenue; but we are sorry to see such has not been the case. Notwithstanding the profits of our railways and everything else that has arisen through the enormous expenditure that has taken place, we find we have a large deficit; yet hon. members will stand up and say the colony is in a flourishing state, and that in consequence of borrowing as we have done there is an enormous revenue. The revenue, however, is not sufficient to meet all the contingencies and calls upon us; therefore it is absolutely necessary we should put our foot down and prevent a continuation of this enormous expenditure and this borrowing. I consider Mr. Loton brought the matter before us in a very sensible and business-like manner. He did not wish to interfere in any way with those important works which are carried on, but, at the same time, he said it was most undesirable to continue this

borrowing policy, and that it was not absolutely necessary we should do so. There is one line here which I may say I hope the House will view favourably, and that is—

A MEMBER: The Goomalling line.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: It is the Goomalling line. I can look the hon. member in the face and say I feel pleasure in advocating that line, and it is not self-interest which influences me.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: You spoil your whole speech.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: Oh, no. You just listen to me. I feel interest in this matter, and can conscientiously advocate that line. I am able to show hon. members that I am not speaking in my own interests or in the interests of any of my own family, but in the interests of a very large number of agriculturists. A very large number have entered into agriculture and taken up this land, which would otherwise be useless and valueless to the colony, believing that the railway would be constructed in a short time. We had good reason to believe the railway would be built, because the line had been surveyed and the Government had promised to construct the line out of revenue as soon as possible. Surely it would not be fair to dis appoint these poor settlers in relation to that line. It would be utterly impossible for those selectors to exist, if they had to compete with the more favoured districts close to the railway line, and were obliged to do so without better means of bringing the stuff into market than they have at present. If hon. members will look into the matter, they will see that the cost of constructing a line of railway such as the settlers require would not be equal to that of the line from Donnybrook to Bridgetown, for expensive stations would not be necessary, and the line would not pass through country of that description. Its construction would be perfectly easy and practicable, and the line could be laid with rails already condemned for use on the goldfields lines, where the traffic is much heavier than it would be on this line. The settlers would not require expensive stations, but just sidings to which they could shift their stuff for it to be brought to market. Therefore, I think it is only reasonable and just to

consider their demands. They have a fair and just claim, and more so, I think, than exists in relation to any other item in this schedule. I have a plan here, which has been very carefully prepared, showing the enormous amount of good agricultural land brought under cultivation. I will just give you the figures I have here, and I take it that they do not include any of the original freeholders, but those who have taken up conditional purchase land. There are 200,000 acres shown, and nearly the whole of that 200,000 acres has been fenced in, whilst a very large proportion of it has been brought under cultivation, on it being many respectable farmers, with as good farms as one could wish to see. There are also 27,000 acres open for selection. I am not going to say that the whole of this is first-class land, but a great deal of it is good agricultural land and good grazing land. The land has been surveyed, and some of it selected. There are also 250,000 acres marked off in 200-acre blocks for conditional purchase and selection. There is an enormous area of land, nearly the whole of which is occupied by men who are competent farmers and good agriculturists, and would it not be fair to give them a line of railway when it would cost so little? I have already said this line can be made with rails rejected as unfit for use on the goldfields line; and many sleepers condemned for use on that line could also be turned to account for the construction of this line.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Would it be necessary to take private land?

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: I think there are only one or two small exceptions in which payment would be required for land through which the railway would go. A few residents may claim something for land cleared which would be taken; but, speaking generally, the people do not propose to make any claim for land required for the railway.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: They would not take it, if offered to them?

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: I have no doubt they would, if you pressed them, but at the same time they are prepared to forego any claim of that kind for the value of the land.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: They did so for the Northam to Southern Cross line.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: You may be anxious to get something for your Southern district, and perhaps we shall not forget it. I am certain no work the hon. member will ever ask this House to support will so well deserve support as does this line which I am now referring to. There are the farms, and this land is occupied and under cultivation; so the line will be reproductive, and not only of benefit to the proprietors but to the whole of the consumers in the colony. There will be more agricultural stuff produced from a few of these farms than from the whole of the farms represented by the member for Bunbury or Wellington.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Is there good water all over it?

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: There is water in places.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: You can get water anywhere; that is no trouble.

A MEMBER: Can you?

HON. R. G. BURGESS: Yes.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: I hope hon. members will not allow themselves to be influenced in this matter, and that when the question comes before the Committee they will support the recommendation of this line. There will be a great amount of disappointment if the line is not agreed to. I invite hon. members to consider the enormous extent of land which will be served by this railway, and to remember that the cost of construction will be very small. The line will be easy to build, because there are no grades and no difficulties, and a good macadamised road would cost nearly as much as the proposed line of railway.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: Quite as much.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: Hon. members ought not to lose sight of the fact that this is an important part of the colony, and I hope they will support the line cheerfully and willingly when it comes to their turn to do so. There is one item to which I desire to refer, and that is the Bunbury breakwater. From what I have heard respecting it, there is now only about $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet of water at one end of the breakwater, and it is proposed that £40,000 more shall be expended in extending this further into the sea. We ought to be very careful about entering into this expenditure before we are thoroughly satisfied that the passage into

that harbour will not in the near future be blocked up with sand.

HON. A. F. MATHESON: Silted up.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: Silted up. If it is silting up now in the way represented, a careful examination should be made of the port before any further money is expended in improving it in any way. No further money should be expended on that structure until we are quite satisfied the result is likely to be what many people anticipate.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Put it into the Goomalling railway.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: Do not be nasty. I know the hon. member can be very sarcastic. I wish to be friendly towards the goldfields, but, at the same time, I think the House should bear in mind, in relation to the construction of certain lines of railway and the large sums of money which will be required to carry out these works, that the goldfields population are calling out for separation; and I therefore ask hon. members whether it will be wise for us to vote for large sums of money being expended on any public works when we know that such is the feeling. I would like to see a different feeling existing from that which has been expressed previously. We are heartily in favour of giving the goldfields everything that we know will be desirable for their welfare and future interests. I know how much the country is indebted to the goldfields for the establishment of a market for all our produce, and for promoting the welfare of the country in every way, and no member would feel more pleasure than I in doing everything possible to bring about goodwill and good feeling between the goldfields and the other parts of the colony. I hope hon. members who represent the goldfields will always take this view of the matter, and try to establish a neighbourly feeling, which will at all times in the future prevent any differences. I have already touched upon most of the important items that I meant to refer to, and, not being gifted with eloquence, I shall simply conclude by thanking hon. members for their kindly attention to what I have had to say, and expressing a hope that when the time comes they will all support the Goomalling railway.

HON. R. G. BURGESS (East): It is a matter of necessity we should pass the

second reading, because a number of the proposed works must be carried out. Fremantle harbour works, including the sheds, are to cost £70,000, though I understood £100,000 will have to be spent in this direction before August next, in view of the calling of the mail steamers. It is possible, however, the Government have made the items as small as possible, in order to induce this House to pass the Schedule, especially in view of the stand which we took last year in connection with similar legislation. No doubt the Bunbury harbour works are necessary, although Mr. Dempster has pointed out that there is only four and a-half feet of water at the end of the present mole, and the matter ought to be looked into before £200,000 or £300,000 is spent there. I am no authority on this matter, but I have been at Bunbury in the last 12 months, and, so far as an amateur could see, the work may not prove altogether satisfactory. Additions and improvements to opened lines of railway and the Boulder railway duplication are necessary works; but the Coolgardie to Bonnie Vale railway, for which £10,000 appears in the Schedule, is a proposal into which hon. members should look carefully. The distance covered by this line is only eight miles, but the route goes nearly all round the compass in order to pass a racecourse, and to supply, so far as I have heard, 300 people and a very few mines. Such a proposal seems absurd, although it has been pointed out the line may be extended hereafter to Mulline and other districts. A glance at the map will show that if the line had been run from the east end of Coolgardie, a route of only six miles and a half would have been necessary to tap the Bonnie Vale mines; and altogether I cannot see that this proposal is justified in any way. As to the Coolgardie-Norseman line, which is to cost £60,000, anyone who knows the country will see that the reports are misleading. The population of Norseman is put down at 1,600 or over, with 518 men employed on the various reefing properties, and 193 stamper heads at work, producing 4,727oz. of gold in March last, while at Londonderry and Burbanks 157 men and 320 men respectively are said to be employed. To anyone who knows the country, it is absurd to include Burbanks

and the Londonderry in the report, when these places, which contain one-third of the population proposed to be served, are only a stone's throw from Coolgardie, and a circuitous course has to be taken to reach them by this line. All this shows that the expenditure of the enormous sum of £290,000 is not justified by the small population on the route. If the country were in a position to borrow money, the circumstances might be different; but, under present financial conditions, I am opposed to this proposed railway. According to information, the goldfields to be tapped by the Menzies to Leonora line are in a flourishing state, and the work is no doubt justified, if we can afford it, and the question of means seems to be the trouble. There are several other minor works in the schedule to which I shall refer when in Committee; but it is no use taking up the time of the House now, because, as previous speakers have said, the second reading must be carried in order to authorise the completion of certain works. Within the last 18 months I have been over the country to be served by the Northam to Goomalling line, and I know a large number of people have taken up land and settled there on the strength of the survey, and of the promise by the Government that a railway would be provided. It is incumbent on the Government and Parliament to authorise this work, although Mr. Whitcombe has spoken about the Goomalling people being very fat and prosperous on the prices for produce. If Mr. Whitcombe had had to live on the prices obtained in that district in the last 18 months or two years, he would have become very lean; because considering the produce has to be grown, carted 40 or 50 miles, and machinery has to be bought, interest paid on money borrowed, and rent provided for, there is very little left for the settler. There is, however, a larger amount of settlement there than in any other part of the country, as is shown by the portions coloured green on the map.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: That is a very suitable colour.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: It is a good colour if the hon. member appreciates his native country. The returns show that some 200,000 acres have been selected; but taking 100,000 acres of

agricultural land as yielding 10 or 12 bushels to the acre, which is really about half that produced, a much larger amount of traffic will be provided for this small line than the goldfields will provide for the Bonnie Vale, or even the Norseman line. I am not now speaking of the great centres like Coolgardie or Kalgoorlie, but even there, the return traffic on the railways is next to nothing. This Goomalling line will not be expensive to construct, and most of the settlers affected have agreed to give the land necessary, free of cost, although it is possible they may require some compensation for the work of clearing. This latter charge cannot, however, amount to much, because the line does not run through the cultivated country to any great extent, but keeps near the bed of the river; and hon. members ought to approve of this railway as a matter of justice to the settlers in that district. The coastal districts have provided railways and other public works for the goldfields, means of communication and water tanks having followed up the search for gold almost everywhere, and now there is the goldfields water scheme, which is a tremendous undertaking for a small population of 170,000, and for which the country has almost been mortgaged. It is acknowledged by the railway authorities that when the pipes for the work have to be carried, the traffic will become congested, and that fact I pointed out when the water scheme was under consideration here, although the closure was applied on that occasion. I hope hon. members will give this little agricultural railway full consideration. It has been said that some agricultural railways have not paid. Railways may not pay at once; there are plenty of railways which do not pay immediately. Country is not worth living in which is not worth building a railway to. If the Government are going to open up the country, they must do so by railways, and if these railways will not pay directly they will pay indirectly. What would the Eastern districts have been like to-day if the railways had not been built. They would have been the same as they were 50 or 60 ago. There is another important matter which is included in part 2 of the schedule: I refer to rolling-stock. It must be known to everyone that the

present rolling-stock is not sufficient to cope with the traffic of the railways. It is a disgrace, the way people have to wait for trucks. One may order trucks and have contracts to carry out, but may have to wait a week for the trucks. This is occurring all over the colony every day. I do not know whether it is due to management or to other matters connected with the department. To show that this rolling-stock is really necessary, I will quote from a report by Mr. John Davies, General Manager of the railways. He says:

Owing to the development of local collieries and consumption of local coal, involving a long haul to consuming centres, it has been necessary, in order to meet the requirements of the traffic department, to cable for 300 bogie high-sided wagons. In New South Wales the colliery proprietors provide their own rolling-stock, and are charged a higher rate than obtains in Western Australia, which includes the use of Government wagons. Should the firewood supply for the Kalgoorlie gold mines fail, and coal be substituted, the Department will require at least a thousand (1,000) wagons, in addition to the existing supply and the number on order, to keep the mines supplied with coal for working purposes. This would involve an increase in locomotives, and duplication of existing lines at a large cost, and at the "half-penny" rate per ton which now exists for hauling Colliery coal (including wagon supply) the Railway Department would find the coal traffic very unprofitable.

This report shows that not only have 300 wagons been already ordered, but that if coal is to be used instead of wood another thousand wagons will have to be ordered. During the last few months if there had not been a lull in the timber trade there would have been a complete block in the railway traffic throughout the country. I heard the other day on the arrival of a large steamer that the local agent for the vessel went to the Railway Department and offered to pay any charge for trucks if the Railway Department could supply them. About this time I spoke to a railway station-master in the country about some trucks, and this official told me that it was no use asking for trucks as an order had come from Fremantle to send every truck which came from the goldfields right through. What has brought this on? It has been the narrow-minded way in which hon. members have looked at matters. If the Government build railways they must have rolling-stock to carry on the railways with. If the rolling

stock is not provided settlement cannot be encouraged. The whole goods traffic is in a state of muddle. No doubt we are face to face with the difficulties which Mr. Loton has pointed out. We have already borrowed ten and a-half millions, and twelve million pounds have been authorised, which means a debt of over £70 per head of the population. I have perfect faith in the country, but there is a limit to all things. It is time for us to be cautious in these matters. In the Bill there is the item, Coolgardie-Norseman line, £60,000; but according to a report which we have before us, it will cost £290,000 to complete this work. Then there is the Menzies-Leonora line, for which £60,000 is set down, but, according to the report, it is to cost £165,000 exclusive of rolling-stock. I may point out that, including the moneys already borrowed, we shall soon have a debt of £14,000,000, which, with a population of 170,000 persons, appears to be going a bit too fast. We have the gold-fields to back us up, still there was a great depression last year notwithstanding the gold output was increasing every month.

HON. D. K. CONGDON: There was retrenchment.

HON. R. G. BURGESS: There will have to be retrenchment if we go on in this sort of way. I cannot support Mr. Piesse in regard to what he said as to borrowing money. There is no reason why we should exceed our present loan authorisations. We ought to be careful in what we are doing, and see if we cannot get money at a reasonable rate. The day must come when there will be an end to these things, and what position will the country be in then? We shall be put back for a considerable time; we shall be at a standstill. All these matters should be considered when dealing with a Bill of this nature. The only railway line which seems to be necessary is that to Leonora; that is the only line proposed which is going to pay. Of course the Goomalling line is a very different matter; that is not a railway that is going to two or three mines which may shut up at any moment. This will be a poor country when the agricultural settlement is not considered. We must not import all we want from other parts of the world. With these few remarks I shall support

the second reading of the Bill. I shall not support a large number of the items when we go into Committee.

HON. A. P. MATHESON (North-East): I had not intended saying anything at all on the second reading of this Bill, because I am unable to look at it in anything but as a fitting comic sequel to the comic speech from the Governor with which the session was introduced. I entirely agree with what Mr. Whitcombe has said on the subject, when he called attention to the fact that the Government were now found introducing a Loan Bill, with the bank rate at 6 per cent., and no possibility of borrowing money for works they contemplate, and according to the honest avowal of the Premier, there is no intention of introducing Bills during the session for the purpose of authorising a certain number of these works. I submit, under the circumstances, the comic element could not possibly be exceeded. I am moved to say a few words by the remarks of the last few speakers, and the comments on those utterances by Mr. Hackett. I must say really to a person accustomed to look at things from a broad point of view, it is to me more ludicrous than the Loan Bill to find that members in the agricultural districts are jealous of each other. There is not one of these members, and they honestly avow it, who will not push to the utmost of his power the little work in which he is interested, and Mr. Dempster made a very great point when he advocated the line to Goomalling on the strength of promises which appeared, according to him, to be made by the Government. We know Mr. Dempster, whatever his views are, is perfectly straightforward and honest. I have never been in favour of this railway, I candidly say so; but I say that if the Government have given these pledges, and induced people to take up land, which otherwise would have been valueless—that is the case with the ordinary land at Goomalling without railway facilities—on the assurance that a railway would be built, the people have grave cause for complaint. I understand Mr. Dempster and also Mr. Burgess in backing that hon. member up stating their grievances to the House. I do not say that this altogether justifies the coun-

struction of the railway, but it justifies these gentlemen in putting their grievances to the House. When we turn to the other side of the question and consider the position of Mr. Hackett, and other representatives of the Bunbury district, we find what, I have no hesitation in saying, is the very gravest scandal that can occur at present in the colony. Not long ago, before the commencement of the session, I had occasion to visit Bunbury, and I can speak from my personal observations of the sand which is rapidly settling at the end of the breakwater and filling up the harbour. There is no doubt about it, because I saw it with my own eyes. I was prepared at that time to accept the assurance of the engineer in charge of the work that this was only a temporary thing owing to a set in the current, which a different set of wind or current would remove. But what is the position? Only yesterday we learn from hon. members who have visited Bunbury within the last few days that the matter is becoming more grave and accentuated than it was at that time. We learn from them, and I have no reason to doubt the accuracy of their statements, that the whole harbour is rapidly being silted up with the extension of the sand bank. Yet we find to-day the Government approaching us for a vote of £40,000 which is a mere trifle of the amount they will have to expend on the harbour works, and disguising the fact that as the breakwater extends, a little larger area than what is at present available for anchorage will become useless; because that is the position, if the statements which have been made by hon. members are correct. It is not as if the loss to the country were going to be limited to the sum of money already expended and the £40,000 the Government now propose to expend, but it means that this £40,000 must be followed by another £40,000 and a third £40,000 before the scheme that is contemplated, as I understand it, is complete; and when that £120,000, in addition to all that has been already spent, is gone, what will be the position of this harbour at Bunbury? if we are to believe what we hear, the Bunbury harbour will be a sandplain. There will be no anchorage, and nothing but a buttress constructed with the country's money, to which the taxpayers

have contributed—for what? In order that the people of that district may be propitiated. It is not possible to believe that, if these statements are correct, they can be outside the knowledge of the Government. If the statements are accurate, a most serious state of affairs exists, and it demands the closest investigation. I would suggest that this one item should be held in suspense, at any rate, and referred to another place until we receive some positive assurance from an expert, say the Engineer-in-Chief, and he is prepared to pledge his reputation that the statements made are untrue. If they are untrue, I have nothing more to say about the matter. If he is prepared to maintain that after the expensive dredging operations the area of water which it is proposed to protect by the pier will remain an area of water, and not be silted up, there may become justification for that expenditure; but if he is not prepared to give us that pledge, and to stake his professional reputation upon it, this vote of £40,000 should be struck out. We have to bear in mind that this scheme is not a scheme which the Engineer-in-Chief was ever prepared to advocate.

HON. D. K. CONGDON: How do you know that?

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I understand he advocated an entirely different scheme, and that papers lying in the office of the Public Works Department would substantiate that statement. That is my information. I have not seen those papers, and have not asked to see them.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: His scheme would have cost over half-a-million.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: The expenditure of half-a-million under proper expert advice to secure a proper result, giving Bunbury a harbour, might possibly have been not only a benefit but a credit to the colony; but the wasteful expenditure of quarter of a million is a scandal.

A MEMBER: It is not that.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: I do not say it is that at present, but it will be before the works now to be carried out are completed.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: There is just the same difficulty under that scheme with regard to the entrance to the harbour.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Taking the statement of the leader of the House, it is evident the Government are aware of this difficulty, because he said the same difficulty would have existed under the other scheme.

A MEMBER: They fully considered it.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: We are told on credible authority that the harbour is now silting up. It is a most serious statement, and calls for the closest investigation. I do not propose to say anything further on this subject, but I want to say one thing in reply to Mr. Dempster. That hon. member alluded to the question of separation, and asked why we should spend money on the goldfields. I do not wish to discuss the question of separation in any sense, but I want to remind the hon. member that if by any chance separation were granted to the goldfields, it could only be granted under the express condition that they would have to make themselves responsible for the money spent in the portion of the colony separated; so that the whole of the argument—if he really meant it as an argument and not as a complaint—is one without a basis. The money would all be taken into account, and the Government of this colony would regularly receive the interest on the sum of money shown by experts to have been spent on improvements on the goldfields.

HON. C. E. DEMPSTER: It might be an advantage to the colony in that case.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: It might in that case be an advantage to the colony to be able to get any interest on any lines.

HON. D. K. CONGDON: That was a dreadful sting at the last.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BEER DUTY AMENDMENT BILL.

Received from the Legislative Assembly, and, on motion by the COLONIAL SECRETARY, read a first time.

PEARL DEALERS LICENSING BILL.

Received from the Legislative Assembly, and, on motion by the COLONIAL SECRETARY, read a first time.

MOTION—SUPREME COURT-HOUSE SITE.

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY moved:

That in accordance with the request contained in the Legislative Assembly's Message No. 59, a Select Committee of five members be appointed to consider the question of the selection of a site for the new Supreme Court.

Question put and passed.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: There was a desire on his part to move a slight amendment, to the effect that the Committee should have power to consider plans as well as the question of site.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The House did not go into Committee on a question of this kind.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Such was generally the case.

THE PRESIDENT: The question had been put, and he gave his decision that the "ayes" had it.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: The question of site was so bound up with that of the plans of the building, that the two could not be separated.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: The two could be considered together.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: Not under this motion.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Oh, yes.

THE PRESIDENT: After the Select Committee had been appointed, the hon. member could move that power be given to call for persons, papers, and plans.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: It was too late to raise the question referred to by Mr. Hackett. The hon. member had let the opportunity pass.

HON. J. W. HACKETT said he had thought the House would go into Committee to consider the subject.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: No; we never did it.

THE PRESIDENT: All we could do now was to ballot for the Select Committee, four members in addition to the mover.

A ballot having been taken, the following members in addition to the mover (the Colonial Secretary) were appointed:—Hon. J. W. Hackett, Hon. A. P. Matheson, Hon. H. J. Saunders, and Hon. F. M. Stone, with power to call for persons and papers, to meet at 12 noon to-morrow, and to report to-morrow evening.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: It would be impossible for him to attend the meeting at noon, or any hour before 4 o'clock. In reference to this matter he had been caught napping, because he thought the Colonial Secretary was moving the President out of the Chair, when in reality a motion expressing concurrence with the message from the Assembly was being submitted. The object of the Select Committee could not be gained by a ten-minutes sitting, because he took it the Select Committee were appointed to decide whether the new Supreme Court-house should be built behind the Legislative Council Chamber or on the old site of the Boys' School in St. George's Terrace. He had been favoured with a sight of the plans, and he thought those for the site near the river were especially ugly, the building with its two verandahs having more the appearance of a hospital than any other structure.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: These details might be discussed at the meeting of the committee.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: But that had been rendered impossible by the intimation of the Colonial Secretary that only the question of site had to be considered, and that ten minutes would complete the business.

THE PRESIDENT: Mr. Hackett was not in order, because the only question before the House at present was as to the hour at which the Select Committee should meet.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: The hour proposed was unfortunate, and would give no opportunity for considering the plans and sites.

THE PRESIDENT: If there were not time for the committee to complete their labours, Standing Order 309 enabled them to obtain extension of time for bringing up the report.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: The ruling of the Chair must be obeyed; but, with great respect, he submitted he was in order in pointing out the inconvenience of the hour fixed for the meeting of the committee.

THE PRESIDENT: There was no doubt Mr. Hackett was in order in pointing out the inconvenience of the hour fixed for the meeting, but he was not in order in going into the question of the plans.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It would be impossible to hold a meeting of the committee at 4 o'clock, seeing that members were usually late, and that the House met at half-past four; but if Mr. Hackett were not present it would not affect his interest.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: It was to be hoped the Colonial Secretary did not mean what he said, because he (Mr. Hackett) had no personal interest whatever in the matter, or he would be incapacitated from sitting on the committee.

CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Consideration resumed from the previous day, on proposed new clause relating to newly divided provinces, and on amendment moved by Hon. A. P. Matheson.

THE CHAIRMAN: The question before the Committee was the amendment moved by Mr. Matheson to the new clause proposed by Mr. Jenkins.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY said he desired to move the following amendment:—

Any member of the Legislative Council who shall represent the North-East Province at the coming into operation of this Act may, within one month thereafter, by notice in writing addressed to the Governor, elect to represent in Parliament the South Province instead of the North-East Province, and upon such notice being communicated by the Governor to the House, such member shall be deemed to have been elected a member of the South Province, and his seat for the North-East Province shall become vacant as if by resignation, and a writ shall be issued for such seat at the same time as the first writs for the newly created province.

THE CHAIRMAN: Before this amendment could be put, the amendments before the Committee must be withdrawn.

Amendments (new clause and amendment) by leave withdrawn.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY formally moved the amendment which he had read.

HON. J. W. HACKETT said he was not willing to thresh this matter further. He believed the clause as now proposed would be unworkable. It was a serious matter for a member, whoever he might be, to be forced on a province against his will, and that a member should be compelled to remain in the North-East Province when he might wish to represent the

South Province. It was unconstitutional for the Committee to adopt this course; and this method of transferring a member was not only clumsy but unworkable. This was the innovation of a new principle which, within the memory of Parliament, had not been heard of, that a return should be made to the House by message from the Governor in place of a return by writ. The writ was the most valuable prerogative of all representative bodies; for it was on the question of the writ that the validity of the constitution of the House stood. We were asked to do away with the old writ, and declare its place to be taken by message from the Governor; but was the President going to receive the message from the Governor as equivalent to the constitutional writ? We were entering on a most dangerous precedent, and he could not allow this new clause to pass without raising his voice in protest. The House might meet with a deficiency of members, or members might be returned for the North-East Province on the old roll, whereas it was intended they should be returned on the new roll. Seats would be vacated by an extraordinary proceeding. We had in the constitution certain rules for the vacation of seats, and the House was bound by those rules. These rules were to be abrogated now, and a new precedent introduced. It would take clause upon clause to give effect to the alterations, however eminently fair they might be to the members affected. He could not submit to this amendment without entering his protest. The right course would be, if it were earlier in the session, to appoint a sub-committee to look into this matter and report to the House. If any member took his seat without being constitutionally entitled to do so he would render himself liable to a serious penalty. As soon as the House endeavoured to give effect to such a provision as that proposed and the House met and Parliament got into session, the House would have either to pass a direct bill of indemnity to relieve the members from the consequences of the election, or the members would have to go anew to their constituents for election.

Amendment (the Colonial Secretary's) put and negatived.

Bill reported without further amendment, and the report adopted.

STANDING ORDERS, SUSPENSION.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as might be necessary to pass the Bill through remaining stage at the present sitting.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: There was no reason why the matter should not go to a third reading in ordinary course.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: This was not a very full House, and a lot of time had been lost.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: The measure would not come into operation until after the prorogation of Parliament, and the Bill should not be rammed down the throats of hon. members.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It was for the House to say whether the Standing Orders should be suspended or not.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: The House must be unanimous for the Standing Orders to be suspended, when such a motion was moved without notice.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: No; a majority.

THE PRESIDENT: An absolute majority of the House.

HON. A. P. MATHESON: Could suspension of the Standing Orders be moved without previous notice?

THE PRESIDENT: A member could at any time move, without notice, that the Standing Orders be suspended, as long as there was an absolute majority. That was laid down in Standing Order No. 384, the last but one.

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

Ayes	...	...	...	13
Noes	...	...	...	3
				—
Majority for				10

AYES.				NOES.			
Hon. H. Briggs				Hon. A. G. Jenkins			
Hon. R. G. Burges				Hon. F. Whitcombe			
Hon. D. K. Congdon				Hon. A. P. Matheson			
Hon. C. E. Dempster							(Tellers.)
Hon. J. W. Hackett							
Hon. S. J. Haynes							
Hon. W. T. Loton							
Hon. H. Lukin							
Hon. E. McLarty							
Hon. C. A. Piesse							
Hon. G. Randell							
Hon. H. J. Saunders							
Hon. W. Spencer							(Teller.)

Question thus passed, and the Standing Orders suspended.

THIRD READING.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that the Bill be read a third time.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: The third reading of the Bill would be opposed by him. Owing to the attitude of the Government, with regard to the question of federation, it was proper to take such a step as would practically compel them to dissolve Parliament within the next month or so. The Government had decided that the question of federation should be submitted to the people in one form or another, but this House did not send the measure to the people in the way it was asked to do.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY rose to a point of order. The hon. member was now dealing with the Federal Bill, and not with the Constitution Bill.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: What he was urging was that the House should refuse to pass the third reading of the Constitution Bill.

HON. C. A. PIESSE: Would the reasons be removed to-morrow?

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: The Bill should be thrown out, and if members opposed to the extension of the franchise to women were of the same opinion now as at first, they would vote against the third reading of the Bill. Those who were earnest in their desire that the federal question should be submitted to the people would also oppose the passing of the Bill, and force a crisis upon the Government that would compel them to dissolve Parliament and bring the matter before the people in a constitutional manner. As a rule, when a Government found it could not pass its policy Bills through the action of the Upper Chamber, it dissolved Parliament and took a direct vote from the country, so as to bring to bear upon the Upper House the only influence which could fairly and constitutionally be brought to bear upon them. By that step the House and the country would be placed in a proper and constitutional position, and an opinion would be expressed as to what should be done in the present state of affairs.

HON. J. W. HACKETT: The Assembly would be penalised.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: We should not thereby be penalising the Assembly, which was practically a moribund body now. The step he advocated would, he

admitted, be an extreme one, but it would be the only way of practically forcing upon the present Government the responsibility of insisting upon holding office with this Parliament, and refusing to allow questions of vital moment to be settled by the people themselves.

A MEMBER: It was the hon. member's action which prevented the question of federation from being referred to the people.

HON. F. WHITCOMBE: The referendum was opposed by him because it was not a constitutional procedure, and the only constitutional way of submitting the question to the people was that of dissolution.

Question put and passed, the Hon. F. Whitcombe dissenting.

Bill read a third time, and *passed*.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at twelve minutes past 10 o'clock until the next day.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 12th December, 1899.

Question: Government House Flag—Fremantle Water Supply Bill, in Committee, reported—Fire Brigades Amendment Bill, first reading—Beer Duty Amendment Bill, second reading, in Committee, third reading—Health Act Amendment Bill, second reading (moved)—Pearl Dealers Licensing Bill, second reading, in Committee, third reading—Sunday Labour in Mines Bill, recommittal, reported—Totalisator Amendment Bill, in Committee, Clause 3 onward, reported—Petition *re* Perth Tramways, discharge of order—Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Bill, discharge of order—Police Act Amendment Bill (No. 2), first reading—Harbour and Pilot Services, Joint Committee's Recommendations, amendment passed, Divisions (2) Bank Holidays Amendment Bill, second reading, in Committee, reported—Petition of Mr. F. L. Weiss (withdrawn)—Mines Regulation Amendment Bill, Council's Amendments—Adjournment.

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

PRAYERS.