

be heavy to clear to get rid of the enormous stumps, but once they are got rid of the land will be rapidly taken up and it is suitable for close settlement. Many years ago, when Commissioner of Crown Lands, I visited this portion of the country and was highly interested in it. I have reason to believe that the sale of the land will recoup the whole of the cost and we shall have the railway thrown in. This is a part of the country that has had very little indeed done for it, owing chiefly to its not possessing large areas of land fit for settlement. The acquiring of this concession will wipe out this disqualification, and do a great deal of good for Albany. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion. Although I do not know as much as some members about it, I have studied the question and I believe it is an excellent bargain for the country to acquire the land and the railway for £50,000.

On motion by the *Hon. W. Patrick*, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 9.54 o'clock, until the next day.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 5th December, 1907.

	PAGE
Questions: Natives Ill-treated, Mr. Blake's Statements	1319
Railway Sparks, Collie Coal	1319
Greenhills-Quairading Railway	1320
Mining Regulations, Greenbushes	1320
Bills: District Fire Brigades, 2a. concluded	1320
Fremantle Graving Dock, 2a. concluded, Com. reported	1325
Bunbury Harbour Trust, 2a. moved	1359
Estimates resumed: Public Works—Road and Bridges vote, progress	1362

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

Prayers.

QUESTION—NATIVES ILL-TREATED, MR. BLAKE'S STATEMENTS.

As to Mr. Canning's Exploration.

Mr. **TROY**, without notice, asked the Minister for Mines: Has his attention been drawn to the statements in to-day's *Morning Herald* with regard to the alleged ill-treatment of blacks by the Canning Exploration Expedition?

The **PREMIER**: I may reply that my attention has been drawn to the statements, and the leader of the expedition, Mr. Canning, has quite recently reported on the matter, his report being absolutely at variance with the statements made in the *Morning Herald* by Mr. Blake, who was cook to the party. Full particulars will be given to hon. members as soon as Mr. Canning has had an opportunity of replying to the newspaper statements.

QUESTION—RAILWAY SPARKS, COLLIE COAL.

Mr. **STONE** asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is he aware that several fires have taken place in the Greenough and Irwin districts within a few days, caused by sparks from the locomotives using Collie coal? 2, Will he take steps to prevent the use of Collie coal by railway locomotives during December, January, and February? 3, Is he aware of the decision of the Federal High Court delivered last month, declaring the Railway Department not liable for damages caused by sparks from those engines? 4, If so, what means do the Government propose to protect farmers and others from loss caused by the Railway Department?

The **MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS** replied: 1, Not officially, but I have been so advised privately. 2, Collie coal is not used on the Government railway locomotives in the agricultural districts during December, January, and February. 3, Yes. 4, By using the best coal procurable in the agricultural districts; the most suitable spark arresters; and arranging for effective fire-breaks.

QUESTION — GREENHILLS-QUAIRADING RAILWAY.

Mr. TROY, for Mr. Johnson, asked the Minister for Works: 1, What time was allowed the contractor for the completion of the Greenhills-Quairading Railway? 2, When will the time expire? 3, Is there a reasonable prospect of the work being completed in the time specified?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, Six months. 2, 10th December, 1907. 3, No. It is not anticipated that the contractor will complete before February, 1908.

QUESTION—MINING REGULATIONS, GREENBUSHES.

Mr. BATH asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Has the attention of the Minister been drawn to an alleged breach of Section 41 of the Mines Regulation Act by Moss & Co. at Greenbushes? 2, If so, has the Minister taken any action in the matter?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, No. 2, Answered by No. 1.

DISTRICT FIRE BRIGADES BILL.*Second Reading.*

Resumed from the previous day.

Mr. J. SCADDAN (Ivanhoe): I desire to say at the outset that though the Bill is not what it might be, still I am prepared to give it my support on the second reading, and I will support it to a large extent in Committee, though I recognise that the Committee may well discuss one or two clauses with a view to arriving at a solution of what may be termed the difficulty. I recognise that the Attorney General has done what many Ministers would probably not have done with a Bill of this kind. Last session, when a Bill with the same object was brought before the House, none but Mr. Holman publicly expressed an opinion on the Bill, though other members privately informed the Attorney General of their opposition; and out of consideration to the opposition then shown, and because the Bill was not a party measure, the Attorney General

agreed that it should be submitted to a select committee. I regret, however, that the committee sat on only two occasions, and that the evidence taken was not sufficient for the purpose. I recognise, too, that the Attorney General went to considerable trouble in obtaining other evidence after the committee ceased to sit. He also invited me and other members of the committee to attend at his office to hear the evidence submitted. But that evidence, on each occasion, only went to prove that the objections we raised to the measure were well founded. Apparently the Attorney General had viewed the question in the light of the experience he obtained as mayor of Kalgoorlie; but now he must surely recognise that a Fire Brigades Bill which may suit Kalgoorlie cannot be equally applicable to every part of the State. The result, however, is that we have now a measure which I believe will with a few amendments make a workable Act, and will put our fire brigades on a substantial footing. In Western Australia, as compared with other States, the difficulty is our sparse population and the considerable distances between municipalities. Here it will not be easy for all the fire brigades to work under one board. At the same time, I believe that one board can very well supervise the whole of the fire brigades of this State, and that such supervision will certainly tend to increase their efficiency, because we shall then have a uniform system of fire brigades working, and the system will be less costly than control by three boards as proposed in the Bill. But we know that we have on special occasions to break down a certain amount of parochialism; and I regret that the Attorney General did not seize the opportunity, even in the face of certain opposition from some quarters, of breaking down that parochialism at the very outset, so that we might have one system throughout the State. I know there is, even in the metropolitan area, a certain amount of objection to the brigades coming under the present Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board; and I think other members must recognise that feeling. I am certain that some brigades in the metropolitan area will object so

strongly that many volunteers will cease to act if the brigades come under the metropolitan board as at present constituted. But those members seem to forget that under the present Bill the board would be *non est*, and we should have a new board elected on an altogether different basis. The present board is practically a Perth board; but a board appointed for the whole State, as proposed in this measure, would be representative of the interests of the whole of the State, and there would be no danger of the smaller brigades outside of the city receiving harsh treatment. One thing absolutely essential to efficient fire brigade work, from a volunteer standpoint, is that there should be a certain amount of enthusiasm put into the work by the firemen. Unless there is absolute confidence in the system of government we cannot have that amount of enthusiasm in our brigades we should have. I am somewhat surprised at a communication I received recently—and I believe other members have received similar ones—from the town clerk of Kalgoorlie, which expresses the views of the Municipal Council of Kalgoorlie in connection with this measure, wherein they object to volunteer brigades having representation on the boards. They surely must recognise that, if the brigades are going to give their work practically free and also take that interest in it which is essential to efficient fire brigade work, we must give them representation on the board and a say in the control. The Fire Insurance Companies' representative before the select committee was of opinion that the fire brigades should not have representation, as he thought they would not work amicably with the other representatives, but when it was pointed out to him that the fire brigades had representation on the Country Fire Brigades Board of Victoria, and had done so since it came into existence, and that they had always worked amicably, he waived his objection. While there are only really three parties contributing to the finances we must recognise that the volunteer firemen are really contributing the greater portion, as they do all the work. While

we know the system of fire brigades from a permanent fireman's standpoint is very costly, we also know that the volunteer work is an efficient system and a very economical one. That can be proved by the cost of the permanent brigades in Victoria and even in this State, as compared with the volunteer system. In Victoria they have 100 brigades under the Country Fire Brigades Board, and the whole of the cost for the year 1906 was £11,322. Those brigades have a membership of about 2,000. If anything like one-half of those brigades were permanent, the cost would have been double and the efficiency would have been no greater. Therefore I contend that the firemen who render their services in a volunteer capacity have an equal right with any contributing party to representation on the board. There can be no objection to the brigades having representation, for the men are interested solely in the efficiency of the fire service. Every active member of a brigade is more concerned about his personal efficiency in the brigade and the efficiency of his brigade against all others in the State than anything else; therefore it must be recognised that the representatives would consider the question of fire brigade work only from that standpoint. There has been no evidence where representatives of the brigades in Victoria or elsewhere have ever endeavoured to increase the expenditure for the purpose of obtaining undue consideration for the volunteer firemen. The figures quoted by the member for Murchison (Mr. Holman) the other evening prove that, even where they have representatives on the board, the most efficient results are obtained. I cannot see the wisdom of the municipality of Kalgoorlie or of any other body attempting to prevent representatives of the brigades from being members of the board. There are other matters upon which I will express an opinion in Committee, but there is one to which I will refer now in order that the House and the Attorney General might give consideration to it. It is provided by the Bill that where property which was uninsured is destroyed by fire an exemption shall be made in the charges; no charge

being made where the value of the property does not exceed £50. No exemption, however, is made where the personal property of a tenant may be destroyed. This omission may be due to an oversight, but I hope the Committee will give it consideration for in many instances the insurance companies refuse to take a risk over a person's valuable property if they consider it would not pay them to do so. This applies to many tenants. We should exempt to a fair amount the personal property of tenants. A person who has uninsured property really contributes a fair proportion towards the up-keep of the brigade, for he pays his taxes to the Government, one of the contributing parties, also rates to the municipality, another of the contributing parties, and the only amount, in addition, which he does not pay is to the insurance companies. An insured person certainly pays a little more, but in the event of a fire destroying his property he receives something for the loss he has sustained, but an uninsured person not only loses everything he has, but also, under the Bill, he has to pay charges for the turning out of the brigade. The uninsured person may have the whole of his property destroyed, while the person adjoining him, who also may be uninsured, has his property saved owing to the arrival of the brigade. Really, therefore, he is the person who gains the benefit of the brigade turning out, for his premises are saved, and yet he pays nothing towards the up-keep. This is a question that requires careful consideration. I know it is very difficult to overcome this matter, but I would commend the clause as it exists in the Victorian measure. In that clause it provides that the total expense chargeable for the turning out of a brigade to a fire on uninsured property should not be more than one-fifth of the value of the property saved from destruction. That is very different from one-fifth of the value of the property destroyed. There it provides that if a brigade renders active service to an owner they may claim from him schedule rates not exceeding one-fifth of the value of the property saved. I hope the Attorney General will give

that matter consideration. The clause dealing with exemption is undoubtedly a good one, for there are many houses on the fields which are not of greater value than £50, and which the insurance companies will not cover by insurance. I know there are many houses there of a much greater value even than that which the companies will not take a risk on. An insurance agent on the gold-fields, when questioned by me at a meeting of the select committee at Kalgoorlie, said without a moment's hesitation that he would not insure houses in a certain part of Boulder. Surely the owners of those houses should receive some consideration. There should be a provision that where it can be shown that insurance companies are unwilling to take a risk, the charges for the attendance of the brigade should not be levied. Otherwise it would act with undue harshness upon owners who could not get their places insured. As to the question of the number of representatives on the board, while I do not agree that there should be three fire brigade boards, still I would agree that there should be representatives on the one board from the three districts. Probably a compromise might be arranged on this question, and a system might be decided upon which would result in economical working from an administrative standpoint. It must be recognised that in the city we must always have a permanent brigade. The present staff of the Perth brigade is not as it should be, for more permanent men are required. In view of that fact it would be as well if the services of the members of that brigade were available to other brigades. I had an opportunity recently of examining some of the work done by the men belonging to the Perth brigade, and I must say they are turning out some exceptionally fine work. A hose cart recently built there for their own use was a credit to the workmen, and I am sure is second to none in the Commonwealth. While we have men of that description, who must be found something to do while awaiting fire alarms, it would be well to provide some of the country district brigades with work done by them. Unless we have one

board and one system that cannot be done. The men could very easily build the reels and hose carts at the metropolitan fire brigade station, and distribute them through the board to other districts. That is one reason why we should have one board for the State. I desire to refer to one other matter, that is the gratification I feel, and firemen feel, that we have at last a chance of causing the fire insurance companies to contribute towards the up-keep of the brigades. One witness before the select committee in Kalgoorlie said he had been connected with fire brigade work here for years and during that period he had not received one penny, nor had the brigade with which he was connected, for the work they had performed at fires. He referred to one instance where he was called out on a Sunday evening and went to the fire just as he was, with the result that a new suit of clothes was destroyed. He applied for the damage to his clothes to be made good: but, although the brigade, by their work, had saved a considerable amount of property, the representative of the insurance company said he could not for a moment consider the application. This is the sort of treatment which is being meted out all over the State by the companies. A representative of the companies before the select committee, said the companies were absolutely opposed to the introduction of this Bill. If a measure were to be forced on them at all, and apparently he saw that Parliament, as at present constituted, desired to have one, the provisions should be as light as possible for the insurance companies. I regret that the insurance companies have not recognised the service rendered by brigades, and the consequent obligation for companies to contribute towards the up-keep of brigades equally with present contributing parties. I do not desire to say anything farther at this stage. I support the second reading, but will endeavour to secure some amendments of clauses when the Bill is in Committee.

Mr. H. BROWN (Perth): I intend to say but few words on this Bill. As one who has been closely associated with

the Perth Fire Brigade, it is gratifying to hear the complimentary reference made to that brigade by the member for Ivanhoe (Mr. Scaddan). I endorse the opinion of the hon. member that it would be better for the State were only one board established, and the services of the men trained in the head station in Perth to be available for places outback, as I believe some of the work done by firemen in Perth would be of vast importance if available to volunteer brigades. I feel there is no real necessity for this Bill, a few additions to the existing Act being all that is required. This Bill merely penalises Perth and Fremantle for the benefit of other portions of the State. As is well known, in Perth and Fremantle the corporations contribute four-ninths of the amount required for the up-keep of brigades, and the Government one-ninth.

The Attorney General: What is the expenditure?

Mr. H. BROWN: The expenditure in Perth last year was nearly £2,000 for up-keep.

The Attorney General: And what is the cost of up-keep of a volunteer brigade?

Mr. H. BROWN: I take it that all brigades under this Bill will not be volunteer, that there will be some permanent men appointed, for instance in Coolgardie, Kalgoorlie, and other large places. Even now I understand a proportion of the brigades at Subiaco and Leederville consists of permanent firemen, and some provision of a similar nature must be made in the Bill. Some brigades must be partly paid and partly volunteer. I think it unfair that while other municipalities receive a contribution of one-fourth from the Government towards the up-keep of brigades, Perth and Fremantle should receive only one-ninth. I agree with the member for Ivanhoe that one board could easily work this State. In the Bill is a proposal to subdivide the State into three divisions; and although one of the proposed divisions contains only three brigades, it will be necessary to go to the expense of creating and maintaining a board in that district. The provisions for representation on the

proposed boards is not a fair one, for the Government, who contribute only one-fourth of the expenditure, are to have three representatives as against the two representatives for each of the other contributors; and I am sure the insurance companies will object to the proposed representation of volunteer brigades. There is one clause which should be amended in Committee, that providing for the removal by a police officer of any person from a burning building. The clause is qualified by Subsection 3, as follows:—

“Nothing herein contained shall authorise the removal from any such premises of any person having any pecuniary interest therein or in any goods or valuables whatsoever thereon.”

A few months since it was only after the removal of a certain person from a burning building that the brigade was able to extinguish the fire; so if the clause be passed as printed, it will be detrimental to the efficient working of the Bill. One other small item needing attention is the attendance of brigades at shipping. Some provision of this character will be required, at any rate in Fremantle. There are a few farther matters in connection with which I intend moving amendments; but the Bill as a whole should satisfy those who advocate the volunteer fire brigade system in this State.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL (in reply as mover): I desire to make very few observations in reply, and those will turn on the matter of the subdivision of the State into three fire brigades districts. The reason for the inclusion of this provision is owing to the immense area of Western Australia, which cannot for that reason be compared with a compact State like Victoria. Victoria might be lost in one of the proposed divisions, and be difficult of discovery. The area of this State is so immense and the interests of the population are so diverse, that it would be extremely difficult to satisfactorily concentrate the administration in one board. I am personally persuaded that to attempt to do so would

possibly ruin the intent of the measure. It is for that reason only we propose to subdivide the State into three districts. There is one other matter to which I should like to refer. In Victoria they have two separate boards, one administering the metropolitan fire brigades of Melbourne, and the other a distinct board though having its headquarters also in Melbourne, administering the country brigades; and I know of no attempt being made in Victoria to coalesce the two boards, to bring the administration of the metropolitan and country brigades together. [Mr. H. Brown: There is no necessity.] If there be no necessity to do that in Victoria, there can be no necessity to do so in this State with its vastly larger area. The suggestion has been made that the Metropolitan Fire Brigades Board might be used to administer the fire brigade systems of the entire State. To attempt to thus administer a volunteer system would be dangerous.

Mr. Scaddan: Who suggested that?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I understood the hon. member to suggest it.

Mr. Scaddan: Not the present board.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The hon. member's suggestion was that a metropolitan board should be agreed upon to administer two separate and distinct systems, one a body entirely of paid officials and the other volunteer members. It is because the latter is a volunteer system that we ask the authority of Parliament to contribute proportionally more than we contribute to the paid system, knowing full well that even though we do pay a higher proportional amount, the sum the State will be actually called on to pay will be considerably less. There is no service which can be compared, for cost, with the service rendered by a volunteer fire brigade. The member for Ivanhoe himself reminded the House of an instance in which a fireman sacrificed all he stood up in, without hope of recovering a penny of his loss, in assisting at a fire. For that reason, because I believe the State will be called on to pay less under this Bill than it now pays in subsidies to brigades here, there, and every-

where in a haphazard manner, I think the Bill will yield good results.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—FREMANTLE GRAVING DOCK.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Mr. H. DAGLISH (Subiaco): It was not my intention to speak at this stage in regard to this Dock Bill, because I was under the impression the Government had no serious intention of going on with the Bill during the present session. Since yesterday I have had no opportunity of going into the matter with a view to preparing to discuss the Bill at length; but I venture to say that the measure is condemned, if nothing else, by the manner in which it is brought up, practically on a Ministerial statement, unsupported by any expert statement or by papers containing information of any value, and without any investigation in support of it. I contend it is entirely wrong for this House to entertain any proposition to expend an enormous sum of loan money without the fullest and most careful inquiry, and without the most complete investigation. There has not been that complete investigation in regard to this particular work. There has been the statement that no harbour can be regarded as thoroughly equipped which does not possess a dock; and that statement may, of course, be admitted as correct. But, assuming that to be correct, then the question is whether this State is at the present time justified in launching out into this expenditure, and whether there is absolutely urgent need for the expenditure. If there be urgent need for establishing a dock at Fremantle, then the question arises whether a floating dock would not serve the purposes of this State equally as well as a graving dock, at all events for some years to come if not for all time, and whether the large saving that could be made by adopting a floating dock in preference to a graving dock should not be considered by this House before coming

to a final determination on the subject. I have advocated before now, when other works representing a large expenditure of loan moneys have been before the House, that there should always be an investigation made in order that satisfactory data in regard to such works may be presented to members. If a standing committee is not to be appointed to assist members of the Legislature by investigating and reporting on each large proposal for the expenditure of public funds, then there should be an investigation by a board of experts in order that the House may have at its command not only the dictum of a Minister, but the opinion of those who are responsible for advising the Government on important technical questions. There has been nothing brought before this House in regard to this particular work. The House has been told by the Minister, speaking in regard to this question, that—

“Since last year this has been closely investigated, and the Engineer-in-Chief has selected a site which he believes to be a good one, and a site where a dock can be economically built. That site has been adopted by the Government. I may say that this is advice which the Engineer-in-Chief is well qualified to give, because I understand that for several years he was associated with a celebrated harbour and river improvements engineer in the old country, Mr. Stoney, and that he assisted Mr. Stoney in building the Dublin Harbour Works. The site which the Engineer-in-Chief has selected was considered in 1895, as I pointed out in my speech five or six weeks ago, but at that time it was thought to be in too exposed a position”——

And so on. A speech of that nature, saying that the Engineer-in-Chief had made a recommendation does not give this House the information members are entitled to and ought to insist on, before they practically vote away a large expenditure of public funds on a work intended to be permanent in character. Then again in regard to the cost of the work, we are assured that for the time being an expenditure of £287,000—I am speaking now from memory, but I think

that is the figure given—is all that would be required. But here again we have not got a complete statement. The House is entitled not only to have the fullest reports but likewise the plans of the work proposed to be constructed and estimates first-hand. Two or three days ago when it seemed likely there would be some public agitation at Fremantle for the purpose of securing a little energy on the part of the Government in pushing on with this work, I moved for certain papers that are absolutely essential for the proper discussion of this question. To-day the House is asked to discuss this question without these papers being available. I gave notice of motion to move that there should be laid on the table all papers relevant to this particular proposition, and the House cannot without these papers in its possession be expected to come to a reasonable conclusion on this question. I hope the Government will withdraw this Bill. I hope they will not proceed with the measure this session, because one voting against it may be voting wrongly. He may be voting wrongly because of a want of information, and if that information had been supplied, it is possible the very strongest case might be made in favour of a graving dock as against a floating dock, or in favour of this proposed site as against any of the numerous sites proposed in the past. But at the present time the House certainly has not enough information before it to warrant it in selecting a graving dock as against a floating dock, or to warrant it in approving of the proposed site which this Bill contemplates as the one on which the dock is to be constructed. For these reasons I intend to vote against the second reading of the Bill. I desire also to say that at present, in view of the impossibility up to now of the Government obtaining extra funds by taxation, it is necessary to consider very carefully all new public works proposals; and especially is that the case in view of the large amount of expenditure from loan funds to which the House has already committed itself, and to which it will be asked before the close of the session to farther commit itself. We have passed large numbers of railway propositions includ-

ing two of considerable length like the Pilbarra Railway and the Norseman Railway. It is proposed that we shall be asked to pass a Black Range Railway. We have committed ourselves already to half a dozen agricultural railway lines, and there are one or two more on the Notice Paper to be considered this session. On top of this we find that the loan requirements for additions and improvements to opened lines are if not increasing, at any rate maintaining a heavy demand year after year. We find that, with an annually increasing charge for interest and sinking fund, we are at the same time faced by an annually diminishing consolidated revenue. In all these circumstances it is absolutely necessary that the very strongest case shall be made in favour of any new public work of the magnitude and importance of the one under discussion, particularly in view of the fact that a dock cannot be expected to prove and certainly will not prove a re-productive work. It cannot be expected to pay sinking fund and interest on what expended on it, no matter how cheaply it may be constructed.

Mr. Taylor : It will not clear working expenses for years.

Mr. DAGLISH : I would not go so far as to say that. [*Mr. Bolton* : Hear, hear.] I will say that there cannot be any doubt from the experience of other places that it will be anything but a re-productive work ; and in view of these considerations, and in view of the lack of knowledge, I strongly urge the Government, until they are prepared to bring forward far more information than is supplied to the House, to withdraw the Bill and allow it to be considered next session, when all the information necessary to enable members to cast an intelligent vote on it is available to them.

Mr. H. E. BOLTON (North Fremantle) : In supporting the second reading of this Bill, I think most of the time could be taken up in a criticism of the remarks of hon. members who have apparently opposed the second reading.

The Premier : Apparently?

Mr. BOLTON : Yes. I will explain what I mean by "apparently" later on—

it is not too apparent, as the member for Yilgarn interjects—because one member who has spoken and who has decided to oppose the second reading; has said emphatically that he believes a dock is necessary. That is hardly the position to take up. Because the site does not suit the hon. member he will oppose the second reading though believing a dock is absolutely necessary. The member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish) has complained that there is no expert evidence nor any expert statement brought forward by the Minister in charge of this Bill for the information of members who are asked to vote on the measure. It seems to me somewhat inconsistent that the member for Subiaco in 1904-5 occupied the position of Premier and Treasurer of this State and had the impudence to introduce a Bill into this Chamber—

Mr. SPEAKER : That is hardly a word to use.

Mr. BOLTON : Well, "effrontery," if that will do. The hon. member who was then Premier put in His Excellency's Speech that it was absolutely settled that a floating dock was necessary, and that sufficient evidence had been obtained—two and a half years ago—to decide both as to the site and to the nature or class of dock ; and the hon. member at that time had gone very carefully into the files, because he had occasion to answer some small criticism on my part and from other members, even those supporting his Government, on the very question of the dock, and he was able to answer all the questions put, because he knew all the evidence that had been collected on the question for the previous nine years—to-day it is twelve years. The hon. member was then prepared to introduce the floating dock as having been settled by expert evidence ; but to-day, two and a half years afterwards, he complains there is not sufficient evidence before this House. [Mr. Daglish : To justify building a graving dock.] Any dock I say. If the Government had introduced a Bill to build a floating dock and had chosen the site which the hon. member chose, he would still say there was not sufficient evidence before this House. That is what it amounts to. The evi-

dence collected to the time the hon. member introduced into the Governor's Speech the question of a dock at Fremantle, was sufficient for him and his Government to declare that they would build a dock. I am led to this conclusion that the hon. member and his Ministers were just like other Governments before and after them ; they only threw out a bait to those most interested and did not intend to construct a dock. The hon. member and his Ministers met with some opposition because they proposed to construct a dock below the bridges. Is it not marvellous this Government also propose to construct a dock below the bridges ? Yet the hon. member who was Premier and Treasurer of that Government now opposes this dock because it is below the bridges.

Mr. SPEAKER : The hon. member is imputing motives against the member for Subiaco.

Mr. BOLTON : I have no desire to impute any motives. It was not my intention to impute motives except to show the absolute inconsistency of the hon. member. I make the statement that if the present Government propose to construct a floating dock on the same site as the Daglish Government decided on, the member for Subiaco would most likely be found opposing it to-day, though two and a half years ago he was prepared to support it.

Mr. Butcher : He has got more sense now.

Mr. BOLTON : Perhaps he has ; it is a pity it did not come a little earlier. The member for Subiaco also claims that a committee should go carefully into this question and report to this House. That again seems remarkable. I remember that when the Daglish Government were in power it was a settled claim of the members of that Government and its followers to have a committee of experts to advise on such matters, and I was one of those who advocated that system ; but it seems to me remarkable that the then Premier did not deem it necessary to have that committee to report on the dock at Fremantle—probably he had gone carefully through the files and considered there was sufficient evidence to build the

dock—but to-day he wants a committee of expert advisers to advise the Government. [*Mr. H. Brown : Hear, hear.*] Hear, hear, says the member for Perth. Of course he is quite right, but if two and a half years ago the then Premier thought it was unnecessary to call in farther expert advice because the thing was practically settled, why is it necessary to-day to have additional expert advice? Just because it does not suit the member for Subiaco to support the second reading of the Bill. I believe that an advisory board would be in the best interests of the State in a good many of these large undertakings, but I cannot see where the consistency of the hon. member comes in when to-day he wants that board, and though at the very time he proposed this work he was asking for an advisory board in connection with a good many other works, he did not ask for one for this particular work. To-day he wants it for this work alone. The hon. member also said that the dock could never be expected to pay. I am not going to dispute the fact. It will not pay for some time interest and sinking fund I have no doubt; but is the harbour complete without a dock? Is everything to hinge on that question, "Will it pay?" Has the member for Subiaco ever cast his vote in this House in favour of schemes, agricultural railways among them, he knew would not pay for a good many years?

Mr. Daglish : I was against them.

Mr. BOLTON : Undoubtedly he has so cast his vote, because he has felt satisfied that these works should be undertaken even at the risk of a little loss for the first few years. The hon. member says he was against them. He was against them, but when it came to a vote the hon. member supported them. I had the honour or pleasure—I do not know which it was—of supporting the Ministry which promised a floating dock on which the estimated expenditure was £150,000. Peculiarly enough that dock was never expected to pay; but times are bad now; it is not expected this dock will pay. It is not expected that the dock will pay at present, but indirectly it will make for the best interests of the

State and the people in the State. The argument has never been advanced that it will pay from the start, but that it is absolutely necessary to complete the harbour.

Mr. Bath : The Minister did not say when it would pay.

Mr. BOLTON : If the hon. member were Minister he would do just the same as the Minister. If the hon. member could forecast the date when the scheme will pay he would be worth a better position than that of Leader of the Opposition. No one can say when the scheme will pay, but I will show the tonnage using this port, and I am satisfied the Leader of the Opposition or any other member of this House will at least allow that a percentage of that shipping will use the dock. My figures will go to prove that the dock will pay working expenses, and some portion of the money that will be sunk in the work. The member for North Perth complained, and I sympathise with him in his complaint for I have been in the same boat myself many and many a time, that he was asked to deal with this measure without knowing that it was coming on. Let me compliment the member on his speech. I do not admit there was much logic in it, but for the member it was a pretty good speech. Because the member was upset probably he did much better than if he had been in his calmer moments. One thing that stood out very prominently in that member's remarks was this. He believed the dock was absolutely necessary; that was a dominant feature of his remarks, but he said he opposed the second reading of the Bill because the site did not suit him. If that is saying too much, because the site did not suit Mr. Keele. He quoted one argument against the selected site of the Government, that it was within the line of fire of an enemy. That was a joke. I thought, it is only a joke which has been played out long ago. That was an argument in use for years; but the Admiralty have some brains, and if the Admiralty are prepared to construct a dock at Colombo in an open roadstead, this site is no more in the line of fire of an enemy than a dock if constructed in the open roadstead at Colombo. Just

imagine how it is to be protected under the leeway of a cliff, four miles from the site proposed by the Government and four miles, not to dodge the fire of an enemy, but because it is four miles nearer Perth. If the dock is constructed below the bridges, the member said it would be of a temporary character. If it is constructed at Freshwater Bay or Rocky Bay—and Rocky Bay would suit me better than the site now proposed, but when a dock is necessary to complete a harbour, wherever it is put, I must stand here and support the dock, no matter where it is to be constructed—it will be permanent. I cannot understand why the member, and a metropolitan member of all members, opposes the second reading of this Bill because the site does not suit him. He will take the Freshwater Bay or the Rocky Bay site, or any other site, provided it is above the bridges. There is one suggestion that enters into this matter that members should not lose sight of. It will cost a certain amount of money to remove the bridges or replace them with swing bridges or of any kind. If the Government are in earnest in their intention to construct the dock and construct it on a suitable site below the bridges the cost of removing the bridges and the dredging of the river above the bridges will be done away with; therefore the Government are to be commended for that. I cannot admit, because the dock will be below the bridges, that it will be of a temporary character. I am perfectly satisfied if the dock is constructed as the Government propose, it will last for all time, and will take any vessel that is afloat. The hon. member referred to the estimated cost by Mr. Keele for a dock at Freshwater Bay, and he made a great many deductions from the estimate and reduced the cost according to his own mathematics to £750,000. He went on to show if the £750,000 was spent on a dock at Freshwater Bay the Government would be sufficiently recouped, because it would be of a permanent character instead of a temporary character. If the dock were constructed according to the dimensions given, and if it is able to take all vessels afloat, what necessity can there be to

construct the dock elsewhere? Why not leave it there for all time? Why should it not be of a permanent nature if constructed according to the proposition of the Government? The hon. member referred to one other point and unconsciously thereby assisted the argument for the construction of this dock. He said Fremantle was between two trade routes. That is the very reason that should aid members in supporting the second reading of the Bill; the mere fact of Fremantle being between two trade routes is an argument in favour of the construction of a dock, as well as an argument which the member used that because it was between the two trade routes it would be open to the attack of an enemy. The member asked why construct the graving dock below the bridges for 50 years when you might construct one for all time? Does the hon. member anticipate a war within the next 50 years? If he does so he should support the Opposition side of the House in their white Australia policy, then he would provide against any attack from unfriendly nations. If the member were asked the same question apart from the construction of the dock, if he anticipated an attack from the East or from some other unfriendly nation, he would say, "No, it is unnecessary; all this blow about a white Australia is nonsense." But because a dock is proposed at Fremantle, which is between two trade routes, it is open to an attack by an enemy. He forgets that if Fremantle is between two trade routes it is within easy reach of vessels passing along either route, and many vessels would thus be glad to avail themselves of the dock. The harbour works report to the 30th June shows that £1,390,783 had been spent on the harbour works; since that date there has been spent £16,500, and since the report was issued to the 30th June, perhaps a little in addition, making a total of £1,407,000 capital expended to date on the harbour works.

Mr. Bath: It is £1,700,000.

Mr. BOLTON: That may be so; I am taking the harbour works report, and they have spent for capstans £16,500, and other expenditure that could not be

included in the report for this year, but I will accept the statement of the Leader of the Opposition that the amount is £1,700,000. After all that expenditure for members to raise an objection about the completion of such a gigantic and necessary work is ridiculous. To now raise objections to the expenditure of another quarter of a million of money to make the harbour complete is a little bit paltry, to say the least of it.

Mr. Scaddan: Will a quarter of a million do it?

Mr. BOLTON: This brings me to one point. I do not believe it will cost more than the £250,000 the Government are providing. It must not be forgotten that there has been a suggestion that the Commonwealth Government and the Admiralty should do something to assist this State. Since the proposition was brought forward there is every reason to believe the Commonwealth Government, and possibly the Admiralty, will assist in the construction of that dock.

Mr. Butcher: Is that assured?

Mr. BOLTON: Not assured.

Mr. Draper: At Rous Head?

Mr. BOLTON: Yes, absolutely. The Admiralty know the site selected and the Admiralty have brains enough to know that if a dock, in an outer roadstead at Colombo, can be built they are willing to subsidise the dock at Rous Head. It is not assured that such assistance will be given, but may they not be inspired articles which have appeared in the Press showing the Commonwealth take an interest in the dock and are prepared to assist it, and to go into the question. Past Governments have approached the Admiralty and asked for assistance. Perhaps one of the arguments by those opposing the Bill is this: in addition to assisting in the construction of a dock, probably the Government or the Admiralty, or both, will assist to maintain it, and thus the greatest argument used against the dock paying its way falls to the ground, because if a certain annual grant is made for the upkeep of the dock, and that will be so if the Admiralty desire to use it, the cost of maintenance will be so reduced that it will not work any hardship.

Mr. Foulkes: Do you not think you should arrange the details with the Admiralty beforehand?

Mr. BOLTON: The Government have been considering it for 12 years, since Sir John Forrest put £42,000 on the Estimates for the construction of a dock. Since that time 4 or 5 Governments have considered the question and still are considering it, and the Commonwealth Government and the Admiralty are considering it. Therefore it is for the Government to get a move on. If the Commonwealth Government and the Admiralty think the Government are in earnest, then they will come to the front. If, as a good many members believe, the Government are playing with the scheme, we cannot expect the Commonwealth or the Admiralty to come forward with assistance. It is because of the breaches of faith with past Governments in connection with the construction of the dock, and I was going to say probably there was no intention to construct it now, because of that the Commonwealth Government and the Admiralty are hanging back.

Hon. F. H. Piesse: Do you not think it would be better to obtain the opinions of the Commonwealth Government and the Admiralty before starting the work?

The Premier: There has been correspondence with the Admiralty for the past 12 years.

Mr. BOLTON: I know that at least for six years there has been communication with the Admiralty, and for some years with the Commonwealth. What is the good of adding another 12 years to the number?

Mr. Scaddan: Where is the correspondence?

Mr. BOLTON: This is not the first time the dock question has been introduced into this Chamber. I remember the papers being on the table previously.

The Premier: Why, they are worn out.

Mr. BOLTON: Papers were asked for by the member for East Fremantle last session and were obtained by myself; and I remember on other occasions the papers being asked for and placed on the table of the House. The correspondence with the Admiralty has been

read out to the Chamber, and members' memories only fail them when they so desire. For some years there has been a correspondence with the Admiralty; but how is it possible to reach finality until some move is made by the State? I say that the Admiralty or the Commonwealth will not put forward a definite proposal until the State makes a start with the work; and I regret that out of the £109,000 the Government had on last year's Estimates they did not spend £108,500 to show that they really meant to construct the dock. I am satisfied that if the money had been spent prior to this session the Ministry would have been able to lay before members a proposition from the Commonwealth and one from the Admiralty too. But so long as no real move is made, it is idle to expect to have anything definite from either of these authorities. It is sometimes argued that Fremantle is quite a baby port, and that a dock there is hardly warranted. But on reading the annual report of the Harbour Trust, members will be agreeably surprised on learning the number of vessels which use the harbour, and their aggregate tonnage. During the last two financial years there were 1,458 arrivals and departures of vessels at Fremantle.

Mr. Butler: How many of those would have been docked if a dock had existed?

Mr. BOLTON: That is hard to say. Perhaps the hon. member, with his superior knowledge of the agricultural and pastoral industry, may be interested to know that a good many vessels have to be docked although they are not disabled or in any way injured. A periodical overhaul of every ship is necessary; and when a dock is available at Fremantle, it will therefore pay far better than some members expect. An annual inspection must be made of every vessel; and if there is a dock at Fremantle, vessels will utilise the dock, because that will suit them better than going elsewhere. It is impossible to say how many vessels will use the dock, but perhaps more will use it than any member dreams of, because its geographical position may possibly suit vessels, Fremantle being, as the member for North Perth states, between

two great trading routes; and the use of the dock for inspection purposes will result in fees which will help to pay working expenses and interest.

Mr. Scaddan: This is like the Treasurer's income-tax figures—all assumption.

Mr. BOLTON: What else can we have but assumption? Will any member say that only two vessels will use the dock? Or would that statement be any more valuable than a statement that ten times as many will enter? There is at least a little logic in my contention that as there must be an annual inspection of ships, surely it is reasonable to expect that a certain number will enter the dock at Fremantle for that periodical inspection.

Mr. Taylor: The situation is not suitable for that purpose.

Mr. BOLTON: It seems that my remarks are interesting. I like interjections, and it is far better for me to stand here answering them than to resume my seat leaving members unsatisfied.

Mr. Heitmann: Do you think the mail boats will use the dock?

Mr. BOLTON: That question would keep me going for at least half an hour. When the East is connected with the West by railway, and Fremantle is the first and last port of call, the mail boats will in my opinion use the dock.

Mr. Taylor: We shall then consider the question of constructing a dock.

Mr. BOLTON: But when I am asked, Will the mail boats use it under present conditions? I say they undoubtedly will not use it, except in case of their disablement. But the time must come when the East and West are connected, and when Fremantle is, as I believe it will be, the first and last port of call; and then the owners of mail boats will be glad to use the dock instead of letting the boats spend so considerable a time in the dock at Sydney. The aggregate net registered tonnage for the year was 1,564,837, showing an increase on the previous year of 131,769 tons. Strangely enough, in this instance, although a smaller number of vessels visited the port, a greater tonnage was recorded. I remember well, when I first came to this

State, that vessels of the class of the "Albany," the "Rob Roy," the "Westralian," and other cockleshells were considered quite good enough for this State; and the day on which a boat arrived was a gala day for the people. But time has rolled on; vessels of a far better class are now coming to Fremantle; and I believe that if a dock is constructed there, rates, freights and all other expenses will be lowered, because of the increased safety of the port; insurance will be cheaper, and in the long run the consumer must be benefited by the construction of the dock. A member interjects with regard to the capacity of the dock. As proposed, it will be large enough to hold any vessel that has yet been floated. Surely that should be sufficient. Moreover, I believe the Admiralty will be well satisfied with the dimensions of the dock.

Mr. Foulkes: Have the plans been submitted to the Admiralty?

Mr. BOLTON: Perhaps not the plans of this dock; but full details were sent years ago to the Admiralty, though it has not suited the member for Freshwater Bay or Claremont to notice the fact.

Mr. Foulkes: But the Admiralty have not been consulted with regard to this proposed dock.

Mr. BOLTON: The Admiralty have been consulted with regard to this dock. If the hon. member, as a Government supporter, is not in the confidence of the Government, I am sorry for him. I say the Admiralty have been consulted, and the hon. member says they have not.

Mr. Foulkes: Have the plans been submitted to the Admiralty?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must not continue interjecting.

Mr. BOLTON: I remember the proposition made by the Labour Government for a floating dock; and I remember stating—and I was almost universally supported in the district—that a floating dock was of a decidedly temporary character, and because of its short life, ten years at the outside, would not be acceptable. The argument then put forward by the Government—I have not refreshed my memory on the subject—was that if a floating dock were constructed it would last for ten years, and

we should have it quickly because it was wanted quickly; and in the meantime we could construct a graving dock. The member for Subiaco says, "Put it off; withdraw the Bill; five, six, or eight years hence will do for this work."

Mr. Daglish: I do not remember saying that.

Mr. BOLTON: The hon. member did not mention the number of years. He did not care what the period was, so long as the Bill was withdrawn.

Mr. Daglish: I said, "Bring it up next session."

Mr. BOLTON: And then he would oppose the second reading of the Bill, on the plea that the Government had not enough money. If a dock of any sort was required so urgently two and a-half years ago, to last while a graving dock was being constructed, why is a dock unnecessary now? Has the shipping fallen off? Last year shows a considerable increase of tonnage as compared with the previous year. And as the Government have a certain sum of money on hand, and as the Loan Estimates provide for a dock, surely members cannot be serious in their opposition to the proposal. They believe in the necessity for a dock.

Mr. Taylor: Is the hon. member in order in questioning the sincerity of members?

Mr. BOLTON: I have said they are sincere, and I suppose that pricks the hon. member, and he does not like it. All but the hon. member are sincere. Other members believe in the necessity for a dock; but they think the Bill is introduced somewhat late, and in that I agree with them. But I would point out that this is a Bill of one clause. Hardly any discussion need take place in Committee. The second reading stage is the time for discussion, and the time when those opposed to the Bill should give their reasons for opposing it. I know that some members will be slightly inconsistent; but I hope that in opposing this dock they will not take the cue from the member for Subiaco, who is entirely inconsistent. I hope that those who previously advocated the dock will not oppose it now. I trust the second reading will be carried unanimously, and that the

Bill will pass through all its stages at a very early date. I do not often give much credit to the present Government, but I say they have now a chance of gaining a little credit. I should like to say definitely to the Government that if this Bill passes they will have power to start the work. The event will be a test of their sincerity. If they sincerely believe their statement that a dock is necessary; if they intend to proceed with the work; then, having obtained the necessary authority, they will have no excuse for any farther delay.

Mr. H. BROWN (Perth): I wish to say only a few words on this question. Unlike the member for North Perth (Mr. Brebber), I shall not oppose the dock because of the site; I shall oppose it altogether. The scheme is at present most inopportune, and we have not the money to spare for a dock which we are told will cost over £280,000. I should like to hear the Minister for Works tell us this is not a party question, and that any members on the Government side of the House may vote exactly as they choose. [*Mr. Taylor: You will do so.*] I should like, if possible, to get the Minister's permission. Even the speech of the Minister clearly admits that the dock will not pay. [*The Minister for Works: Directly.*] Exactly. Well, we have enough works in this State not paying directly, and the sooner they are curtailed the better. When introducing the Bill of last session the Minister said:—

"They recognise in New Zealand that though a dock in itself may not be a strictly paying item—I am not going to argue that the Fremantle dock will pay, although a fair revenue may be expected—the indirect advantages in working a port through its being more advantageous for owners to send vessels there, are considerable, as lower freights are induced."

Now will it not have the very opposite effect of raising freights? If a dock is constructed, it will undoubtedly be handed over eventually to the Harbour Trust, and they will be expected to make the harbour pay. To do this

they will increase the wharfage charges, which will counteract any good which may accrue from the dock. A few weeks ago I was waited on by the agent of the Orient Company, who told me he was absolutely against the dock in any shape or form, for at present it was not required. He said it was quite time enough for this dock to be constructed when Fremantle became the terminal port of call. The man who made these remarks was Mr. Day. He stated distinctly that under no consideration, if the vessels could scrape along to their terminal ports, would the Orient ships dock at Fremantle. We know very well that with the large accommodation they have in the Eastern States, and with the cheaper labour there it would be only natural for the ships to go there to dock. It is argued that we will get all the boats of the North-West trade to dock at Fremantle; but can it be expected that with the cheap labour and up-to-date docks in Singapore, where there is no duty whatever on paint—which costs a great deal in connection with the docking of vessels—those boats will dock at Fremantle. Has a vessel arrived at Fremantle during the last 10 or 15 years that required docking? [*Mr. Bolton: Scores.*] If a vessel comes into Fremantle dismasted there is no necessity for her to be docked. A few weeks ago a vessel came in with a broken propeller; they simply tilted the ship over and made the repairs, and away they went.

The Minister for Works: What vessel was that?

Mr. H. BROWN: I cannot say from memory what the name of the vessel is.

Mr. Bolton: It was a paddle steamer running between Perth and Fremantle.

Mr. H. BROWN: One would think from the interruptions that this was not a national but only a local work. We have heard many experts on the question. Mr. McDonald passed through here the other day. He was working for some years in the department on the construction of the breakwater at Fremantle, and his opinion should carry some little weight at all events. This gentleman on being interviewed said—

Mr. Davies: What does he know about it?

Mr. H. BROWN: He had some four or five years' experience there, and that should count for something. He said:—

“With reference to the graving dock, what the Government here should do is to face the question as to what developments are to take place in the Swan River itself during the next 50 or 100 years. No works that they carry out now, or in the immediate future, should be effected before that is considered. For instance, you have temporary railway bridges over the river. It won't be very long before those will have to be renewed, and then you have to face the question of carrying the railway line across to the other side of the river, for the shipping, it seems certain, will eventually go up the river to Perth. With these matters looming up in the future, it seems to me that the Government should very carefully consider the position where the dry dock should be constructed before it is finally decided. If they intended to remove the railway bridge, there are several better sites to be had than that in the harbour. If you are going to put up a dock, you want plenty of room for extension. It is quite clear that the Government must keep in view what the requirements will be in say, 50 years' time. Long before then, I hope, Fremantle will be the first port of call for all the mail boats, and the mails will go overland from here. You have done for so long without a dock, that I think the Government could well wait for a little while to see what will be the new arrangements for shipping. This is a new country, and with such you must look well ahead. Otherwise, you will have a lot of patchwork works which will have to come down. Once you put up a dock, you are erecting it for all time.”

There is no doubt that the construction of this dock means the political life of one member of Parliament at all events. It has been said there are communications taking place with the Admiralty as to the dock. If it is possible to get any

portion of the expense borne by the Admiralty, or by the Commonwealth Government, it would be wise to wait and see if it can be obtained. Right through the session the Government have practically admitted that they are bankrupt, and yet now they are entering upon a very large expenditure for this work. They say they have no money, hence the imposition of increased taxation. The Government have now exhausted every source of revenue, the last step being the introduction of a land and income tax. In the face of that they are prepared to embark in another huge expenditure of a great many thousands of pounds, merely to gratify the wishes of a few members of one particular town in this State. We have had no definite statement as to the cost of the work, but we know well that when once these works are started they must be continued. Are we not taxed sufficiently already without being let in for farther taxation? A large staff will have to be kept for repairing the vessels that might want to use the dock, and can it be expected that the undertaking will even pay wages, let alone interest and sinking fund on a sum which will probably be about £300,000. I intend to vote against the Bill, for I think in the present financial position of the State we are not able to afford the work. If the Minister for Works were a business man and his business was in the same state as that of the Government, I am sure he would hesitate before entering into an experiment of this kind. I strongly oppose the measure, and I trust members will not take this as a party question, but will vote as their consciences dictate.

Mr. W. J. BUTCHER (Gascoyne): It is not my intention to debate this question for any time as I have but few remarks to make. With reference to the statement made by the member for North Fremantle (*Mr. Bolton*) wherein he said he would bow to my opinion upon agricultural matters seeing that I was an agriculturist and represented an agricultural district. I really should have called him to order as I am not a representative of an agricultural district at all. I

now ask him, if he will not bow to my opinion on the question of the dock, whether he will tell this House where he has obtained his wonderful knowledge of marine engineering to qualify him to give an opinion upon the construction of the dock. I take it he has not gained any knowledge of marine surveying during the term of years he was an engine-driver, or doing other work. I claim to have quite as much knowledge as to the value of this work to the State as he has. He probably is justified in doing the best he can for the constituency he is most particularly interested in, but at the same time he must not anticipate that every member in this House views the question through the glasses he uses. I am with every member when they say the harbour we have in Fremantle will not be complete until we have a graving dock. I am strongly of that opinion, but because one is of that opinion it does not necessarily follow that the present time is opportune for the construction of such a work. The hon. member gave some particulars as to the number of vessels that entered our port during the last 12 months. I am not going to question the accuracy of those particulars, but he did not go on to tell us the number of vessels which arrived here seeking a place wherein they could lay up for a time for repairs. From my knowledge of the shipping of the coast during the past 12 months I have come to the conclusion that the only vessel I am aware of that would have utilised the dock at Fremantle is the unfortunate "Mildura." There were other vessels I believe that had met with accidents, but allowing they were fit subjects for docking, still they were owned by companies who domicile their vessels in the Eastern States. It is not at all likely that those companies will dock their vessels here when they can take them to other ports where they can be repaired cheaper. Here we have two companies trading on the coast, or there may be three. The Adelaide Steamship Company is the principal one, and then there is the United Service Company. The vessels belonging to the former line are all domiciled in South Australia, and

they either dock in Melbourne or at Adelaide, where there are excellent docking facilities and cheaper opportunities for repairing vessels than there would be here. The other company have their vessels domiciled in Singapore, where there is an abundance of cheap labour and every possible facility for repairing vessels, in addition to an excellent dock. Is it likely for one instant that, unless it was absolutely necessary, these companies would dock their vessels in Fremantle? All the arguments are against the construction of the dock now. The only thing to my mind we have to look to as a means of making the dock pay is the possibility of traders calling at Fremantle in a disabled condition and docking there. These are the vessels which shippers term "lame ducks"; and are we to erect a dock merely to meet such a contingency? The member for North Fremantle referred specially to the necessity for building a dock to accommodate war ships, and he said he was certain the Imperial Government would assist in meeting the cost of maintenance.

At 6.15, the Speaker left the Chair.

At 7.30, Chair resumed.

Mr. BUTCHER (continuing): When we adjourned, I was remarking that so far as the question of assistance from the Admiralty or the Imperial Government is concerned, we should have to a certain extent a guarantee before we enter upon this enormous expenditure; because if after the dock is constructed it does not meet the requirements of the Imperial Government, they would of course be justified in withholding that support which otherwise they might be prepared to grant. I desire the House to distinctly understand that I am not opposed to the principle of a dock at Fremantle; for with other members I realise that an important work such as the Fremantle Harbour is not complete without a dock; and I sincerely hope that in the near future the finances of the State will justify the expenditure. But at the present juncture I must confess I do not consider it would be wise on the part of the Government to launch out to the ex-

tent probably of half-a-million of money in the construction of a work which everyone admits cannot pay either working expenses or interest on capital for many years. I should like also to mention that on our Notice Paper is a long list of works entailing an enormous expenditure already authorised during this and the previous session. We have practically admitted that our revenue is short of requirements, and have been compelled to resort to fresh taxation for raising money to pay our interest bill and provide what may be called the necessities of life. In view of this I would ask members to consider if it is wise to go farther without first considering how we are to obtain the money to pay interest and working expenses on this undertaking. We have already authorised the construction of railways in several parts of the country; and I now make bold to say that not one of those lines will be a payable concern from the commencement; in fact, I fear there is going to be a huge loss in the working of every one of them, and this will necessitate the allocation of a considerable sum annually from revenue for the maintenance and working expenses of those lines. I sincerely hope members will consider the advisability of going slow in this matter before agreeing to the expenditure of an extra half-million of money. This proposal might be postponed for a year or so, until the financial position of the State justifies the expenditure. It is my intention to oppose the second reading of this Bill.

Mr. A. E. DAVIES (South Fremantle): I have considerable pleasure in rising to support the second reading of this Bill. I feel sure this work is desired not only by the people of Perth and Fremantle, but by everyone who has confidence in the stability of this country and believes that the State will become in the near future one of the foremost producing and exporting States of Australia. If that position is to be achieved, it is necessary that the main port of the State be equipped in accordance with the proposals of the Government as enumerated in this Bill, by the construction of an up-to-date graving dock. I have little

doubt that members will agree that a dock is absolutely necessary to make the chief port of the State complete. This question of docking accommodation at Fremantle has been before the people ever since it was first proposed to construct a harbour at Fremantle; in fact it was part and parcel of the schedule of works put forward in connection with the original harbour scheme. It has been also admitted by most people in the State, and by many members of Parliament, that the Fremantle harbour is a national undertaking, for the benefit and in the interests of the whole State. Furthermore, it has been recognised by every Government in power since the Fremantle harbour works were first proposed, that the construction of the national work as proposed in this Bill is necessary in order that the principal port may be complete in every respect for shipping. I think I may say without fear of contradiction that the question of constructing a dock at Fremantle has found a place in the policy speech of every Premier during the past twelve years; and that is an acknowledgment that a dock has always been recognised as an important and necessary work by the various Governments in power since the introduction of Responsible Government. I may be allowed again to say that the question now under discussion is no new one. It first came before Parliament in 1895, twelve years ago. During that year Parliament agreed to the construction of a dock at Fremantle, going so far as to vote a sum of £140,000 to the then Government towards the construction of this all-important work. The sum voted was actually borrowed so that the construction of the dock might be gone on with; but unfortunately for the people of this State, and more especially for Fremantle, the harbour improvement scheme was not at that time sufficiently advanced to admit of an immediate start being made with the work. Subsequently the money voted and borrowed, and which rightly belonged to the Fremantle dock, was reappropriated to some other public work, with of course a promise by the then Government that they would replace a sufficient amount to enable a dock to be constructed

at Fremantle when the harbour works were advanced sufficiently to permit of the work being proceeded with. Every practical man in this State must recognise that the harbour at Fremantle, which is the chief port of this State and one may say the only port on the western side of Australia, can never be complete until there has been constructed an up-to-date graving dock. If the construction of a dock was considered necessary by the people and Parliament of this State as far back as 1895, when our population numbered only some 101,000 souls and the registered tonnage using the port of Fremantle amounted only to 232,000 tons per annum, surely that work is more than amply justified to-day since our population has increased to 264,000 people and the registered tonnage of shipping coming into the Fremantle harbour has increased to the enormous total of 1,176,000 tons, the figures for last year. In other words, there has been an increase in our population since Parliament agreed to the construction of a dock at Fremantle of 145,000 souls and an increase in the registered tonnage using the port of 944,000 tons. The shipping registered inward and outward last year at the port of Fremantle was nearly four times greater than for the year in which Parliament first agreed to the construction of a dock. During last year 600,000 tons of inward cargo were landed at Fremantle, and the increase in the amount of inward cargo landed at Fremantle for the last three years has amounted to something like 200,000 tons. I mention this to show that the business of the Fremantle harbour is increasing year by year. I would impress upon members that the business of the Fremantle harbour is increasing by far greater strides than was anticipated when the harbour improvements were commenced, and farther that the completion of the works in accordance with the original scheme for harbour improvement is imperative in the best interests of the people of the State. It may be argued that a dock at Fremantle would not pay interest and sinking fund; but a similar point is always raised in connection with new works; all new under-

takings are met with arguments of that description. On the other hand, we find that wherever up-to-date harbour facilities have been provided, trade has always followed their establishment, more especially where the enterprise has been conducted on broad-minded and business principles. It must also be realised by members who have confidence in the stability of this great country that the chief port of the State cannot be allowed to stand still, without serious results to almost every part of the State. It must farther be borne in mind that the construction of a dock at Fremantle would provide avenues of employment in many directions; and during its construction—though I admit this is but a small item—it would be the means of to some extent solving the unemployed problem in our cities. If we as a people desire to compete with the ports of the Southern Hemisphere for the shipping trade, we must build a commodious harbour equipped in every respect with convenience for shipping. I have little doubt that members will see the justice of the course taken by the Government in introducing this measure during the present session, when they take into consideration the fact that Parliament agreed to the construction of a dock so far back as 1895. There are scores of ships that come into the Fremantle harbour that need the facilities of a graving dock. Time after time we have steamers and sailing ships coming into Fremantle harbour disabled, and the result is that they have to be towed to the Eastern States, Sydney, Melbourne, or Adelaide, before they can have the necessary repairs effected. It has repeatedly occurred where ships have been ordered into dock by the different insurance companies; they have also to be taken to the Eastern States before they can have their repairs effected. I believe this public work is one of the most important works that has ever been introduced by any Government in this State, I therefore have much pleasure in supporting this measure, and I earnestly hope that now the Government have decided to proceed with this important work they will have the hearty support of hon. members of this House to assist them in

carrying into law the Bill for its construction.

Mr. J. C. G. FOULKES (Claremont): I can remember when the Forrest Government in 1894 or 1895 announced in the Governor's Speech that they proposed setting aside a large sum of money for the purpose of constructing a dock at Fremantle and North Fremantle; and nearly every Premier since then has announced that scheme as being part of the Government policy. Large sums have been passed by various Parliaments at various times for the purpose of constructing that dock, but there is one curious fact that has transpired, and that is, although we have had these various Parliaments passing resolutions in favour of constructing the dock we have never had a single Premier, to the present, who has taken on himself the responsibility of constructing that work. Even Sir John Forrest, although he was in power with a strong majority behind him, and although Parliament had allotted large sums of money for the purpose of constructing the dock, refrained from carrying out the work. After him the late Mr. George Leake held office as Premier and took certain steps for constructing the dock. I believe his scheme was to construct the dock in Freshwater Bay. At any rate he took the trouble to obtain the opinion of experts, Mr. Keele, one of the leading engineers of one of the other States, being one of them; and the Government spent £70,000 or £80,000 in the purchase of land, which was necessary for the purpose of constructing the dock above the present railway bridges. But Mr. Leake also refrained from carrying out that work. It goes to show that when the test of responsibility was felt by those various Premiers every one of them shirked it, and realised that it was a dangerous undertaking to take up. The member for North Fremantle (Mr. Bolton) on this occasion, as on many other occasions, has done his best to convince the House that this scheme should be carried out, and he argues that the Admiralty office in London and also the Federal Government are prepared to support us in the construction of this dock.

I should like to remind the House that during the last few weeks various members of the Federal Parliament approached Federal Ministers and brought up the question of the construction of this dock and asked the Federal Government to assist in the construction; and an announcement was made by one of the Federal Ministers the other day that the matter would receive the consideration of the Federal Ministry. The Premier has interjected to-night that during the last 12 years the Imperial Government have been repeatedly approached with regard to granting financial assistance towards this work, and from what I gathered from the Premier the Imperial Government have refrained—at any rate we have no announcement from the Premier of what contribution the Imperial Government are prepared to give towards this work. It would be exceedingly hazardous for us at this stage to decide whether we should construct this work, until we have a definite opinion from the Imperial Government and the Federal Parliament as to the manner in which they will assist us. I am strongly of opinion that if we show the Imperial Government and the Federal Government that we are prepared to take upon ourselves the responsibilities and the cost of carrying out this work, then they will refuse to give us any financial assistance; but if we make it clear to them that we are prepared to construct this work if they will help us we are more likely to receive financial assistance. It is only natural that they will say, if we are prepared to carry out the work without any assistance, that we are evidently prepared to shoulder the burden ourselves, and that we will not require any financial assistance from them. About six years ago, as the Treasurer may remember, the Government of the day spent something like £60,000 in the purchase of land in the neighbourhood of Freshwater Bay and around North Fremantle in connection with this work. The idea was to construct a dock in Freshwater Bay, and in order to carry out that work it would be necessary to deviate the railway line, so the Government spent this money in purchasing the land necessary for the construction of that railway deviation.

Mr. Keele recommended that this dock should be built in Freshwater Bay, and his estimate was that it would cost something like three-quarters of a million to do so. The reason why he recommended Freshwater Bay so strongly was that if a dock was built near the mouth of the river it would be one of the most dangerous positions that could be selected owing to the fact that if war broke out it would be subject to gun fire from any enemy attacking our shores, whereas if we constructed it in Freshwater Bay it would not be so liable to be attacked and would be less likely to receive injury at the hands of an enemy. I regret very much the Minister for Works has not placed on the Table the reports of the various engineers, like Mr. Keele's, in regard to the construction of this work. So far we have had no reports whatever from the Government in regard to the construction of this work. The only opinion we have had is one given by the Minister in introducing the Bill. He said that the harbour authorities at the port of Fremantle had received a letter from some naval gentleman—that is the description given of this person, but what it means I do not know—stating that the proposals for the dock were eminently suitable, and that a work of this nature would be a very valuable one to the shipping at Fremantle. Now, one would like to know who this naval gentleman is. I require some stronger evidence as to the authority of this person to pass an opinion on this work.

The Minister for Works: It was the captain of the warship then in port. I cannot mention his name.

Mr. FOULKES: I do not see what objection there is to mentioning his name. One would like to know what were the questions put before this naval officer, and had he made sufficient inquiries as to whether this was the best position available for the construction of this dock; had he seen Freshwater Bay, or was he asked to pass an opinion as to whether Freshwater Bay was not a more desirable situation than the site proposed by the Government? Many questions should have been submitted to that naval authority besides the broad question as

to whether the dock was an advantage or not to the shipping at Fremantle. We all agree that a dock would be advantageous to the shipping at Fremantle. It does not require a naval authority to acquaint us with that fact, because a person who has had no experience whatever of shipping would at once come to the conclusion that at all times a dock would be of advantage to shipping in any port. But there are other questions to be considered besides that question. The question of our finances has to be considered. It is all very well for outside people to come here and recommend us various works. There are hundreds of public works that we would gladly see constructed, and it is only a question of finance that prevents the Government from carrying them out. There are scores of railways that we would be very glad to see constructed. There is not a member in this House who is not prepared to advocate the construction of various railways, and railways that we feel quite certain it would amply repay the country to build; but unfortunately, owing to the state of the money market we are prevented from embarking on schemes of that nature. The member for Gascoyne has reminded the House of the fact that we are already pledged to construct various public works; and as he has pointed out, not a single one of those public works is likely to be remunerative during the next two or three years. It takes time for these works, and particularly railways in agricultural districts, to be remunerative. Now this dock at Fremantle will cost the State in interest and sinking fund, apart from working expenses, something like £14,500 a year. The Minister for Works has urged the construction of this work on the ground that it will tend to reduce the rates of freight. I do not agree with the Minister in that fact. I do not think it will have the slightest effect with regard to rates charged by the various shipping companies. I can tell the Minister what will have a far greater effect. During the last 12 months rates have been reduced to some extent, and the reason for the reduction is this, I think, and I hope it will continue, that we are now embarking

on an export trade. The various ships that come here can now do so with greater expectation of getting cargoes to take away from our shores. Up to now pretty well every steamer that has come from the other States has come loaded with freight, but unfortunately we have had no agricultural produce that we could export, and the result has been that the various ships that have come here have gone away without freight. That to a great extent is the reason why such high freights have to be paid for bringing goods to Fremantle. It is very strange to hear the member for North Fremantle solemnly announcing to the House that the Imperial Government and the Federal Government will assist us in carrying out this work. I am strongly of opinion that our best policy would be to defer this Bill till next session, and in the meantime—no doubt the Government have communicated with the Federal Government already—the Government could make farther inquiries from the Federal Government and see what contribution they are prepared to make towards the construction of this dock. It means a lot to us if we get a contribution from the Federal and the Imperial Governments. I doubt if we shall get any contribution from the Federal Government because I believe the Government of New South Wales have constructed docks for the men-of-war, and these men-of-war, and I am subject to correction on this point, are entitled to use the docks free of charge.

Hon. F. H. Piessé: They only pay the actual cost.

Mr. J. C. G. FOULKES: I am told that all they pay is the actual cost to which the Government of New South Wales are put for the use of the dock.

The Premier: Have they not docks of their own there?

Mr. J. C. G. FOULKES: No. Therefore, it is idle for us to expect the Imperial Government to contribute a very large amount towards the cost of this dock because we have to remember the Imperial Government already pay a tremendous sum of money for the protection of Australia. Australia pays a very small amount for its protection, and the ten-

dency on the part of the Imperial Government is to remind the Australian Governments that it is their duty to pay a larger amount for their own defence. I believe the Federal Government are imbued with the necessity for taking some steps for the proper protection of Australia, and as Fremantle and this Western part of Australia is looked upon as being part of the Australian Commonwealth that does require protection I believe we can look with every hope and confidence to a satisfactory contribution and assistance being given to us by the Federal Government. I am not opposed to the construction of this dock but I believe it will be very prejudicial to the interests of the country if we pass the Bill this session. If we can show the Federal Government that we cannot afford to construct the dock ourselves and that we expect financial assistance from them towards its construction, we are more likely to obtain the financial assistance than if we passed the Bill through this Parliament. Once the Federal Government see that we are prepared to take the responsibility on our shoulders of constructing the dock I am sure they will refuse to give us any contribution towards its construction. Another fact has to be considered, that we are not likely to get that financial assistance towards the construction of the dock if we do not consult them in regard to the question of site. The Federal defence authorities are likely to have more capable engineers, at any rate are more likely to have greater authorities with regard to questions of defence than we have in this State, and therefore we should consult the Federal defence authorities before we take on ourselves the responsibility of selecting a site for a dock. I believe the Federal Government are far more likely to select the site at Freshwater Bay for the dock than the site proposed by the Government. I have no opinion whatever as to the question of site. I am not a marine engineer nor would I take the responsibility of deciding which is the best site, but I strongly believe in consulting the Federal defence authorities. I consider it would be a most foolish thing to embark on an important work of this kind without consult-

ing men capable of advising us in this important work.

The PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore) : It was in October, 1900, that the Legislative Assembly passed a resolution to this effect:—

"That, in the opinion of this House, it is in the best interest of the Colony that the construction of a dry dock at Fremantle should be taken in hand immediately."

This resolution was carried without a division, and if at that time in the history of the State it was considered, by practically the unanimous voice of the House, that it was essential that if Fremantle was to be properly equipped it should be provided with a dry dock, it must be apparent to most of us the necessity is more urgent at the present time. Reference has been made to the fact that it would be advisable before committing ourselves to the expenditure of £285,000 that more information should be obtained; but those who have had an opportunity of seeing the files referring to this matter, when placed on the table of the House, must realise as far as the files are concerned the information there is so full that I am afraid members cannot possibly have time to wade through the whole of the correspondence and the various reports in connection with the matter.

Mr. Troy. Are the reports for or against?

The PREMIER : The reports are in favour. I could quote one or two reports, but if members turn to the speech of the Minister for Works in introducing the measure last session they will obtain a fund of information given from various reports of eminent engineers who have reported on this matter.

Mr. T. Bath : On the Rous Head site?

The PREMIER : Some of the officers are in favour of the Rous Head site, whilst others have thought that the dock should be farther up the river. Some capital has been sought to be made from the fact that owing to the dock being located at Rous Head it would be open to the fire of an enemy. Those who have taken an interest in marine gunnery know

that the mere fact of being able to see an object or not is a matter of detail. Equally as much damage can be done by indirect fire as when the object fired at is visible. The plan of the river is known and all information about the different localities, and there is no difficulty in locating any portion of the river, whether Point Walter or any other place. It does not matter whether an enemy can see the locality or not. The system of indirect fire proves that there is no safety from the fact that a place is not exposed to the direct fire of the enemy.

Hon. F. H. Piessé : They can drop the shots very accurately without the ships being visible.

The PREMIER : That is a recognised fact. It is only during the last few months I have made up my mind in regard to this question. I do not blame any member for giving the matter every possible consideration, but I think that in view of the very extensive inquiries made and the very definite information supplied by the Engineer-in-Chief, who has had an opportunity of considering the reports of other eminent engineers, we are quite justified in choosing the site selected by him. My decision to support the matter was arrived at after I had had an opportunity of inspecting the Sutherland Dock in Sydney. I thought that to construct a graving dock capable of holding any vessel visiting this port would entail an expenditure of over half-a-million of money, but I find to my surprise, after making inquiries as to the Sutherland Dock, that that dock was constructed for £285,000. The dock is considerably larger than that proposed for Fremantle. The Sutherland dock at Cockatoo Island is 86 feet wide and 666 feet long, with a depth of 30 feet. The total cost of it was £282,270. In checking the estimate roughly by simply cubing the excavations of the dock, I find, after allowing ten per cent. more for the construction of the Sutherland Dock, we are well within the estimate given by the Engineer-in-Chief. Members must be aware, as far as this dock is concerned, it is what is called a double ended dock; it is built on a point, and a vessel will be able to go in at one end and out at the other. The Sutherland

Dock has a dead end, and a vessel must enter and leave from the one end. In the Sutherland Dock the "Powerful" can be docked and another vessel as well, but I do not think for a moment it will be considered advisable to build a dock of that size to commence with.

Mr. Heitmann: Why not; are you not looking forward?

The PREMIER: The object in building the dock in the way suggested is that we shall be able to extend it as required. That is an advantage as against a dock that possibly might be cut out of a cliff. The excavations will be made on the point referred to, and the dock can be extended. The Harbour Trust Board, and no doubt members have had an opportunity of perusing their report, described the dock as follows:—

"The dock to be designed is to be of the character known as the double-ended type, i.e. with an entrance at each end; from 800 to 850 feet long by 90 to 100 feet wide. The completed structure is intended to be divided by means of movable caissons into compartments, and will thus be capable of dealing with two, or sometimes more, vessels simultaneously. One entrance will be from the Inner Harbour Entrance Channel, and the other from the Inner Harbour, and the situation is such that probably no weather, such as has been experienced in Fremantle up to the present time, would prevent a vessel entering or leaving the dock in perfect safety."

The situation is such that probably no ship such as we have visiting Fremantle at the present time will be prevented from entering or leaving the dock in perfect safety. I may say that in 1895 when Mr. C. Y. O'Connor, then Engineer-in-Chief, asked Mr. Dillon Bell, Engineer for Harbours and Rivers, to suggest a site for a dock at Fremantle, strange to say at that date Mr. Dillon Bell suggested Rous Head, just inside the breakwater, the site of the dock to be athwart the stream, or at the angle between Victoria Quay as then proposed and Arthur's Head. The latter position, I may explain, is practically opposite the site which has now been selected by the

Government. Mr. O'Connor stated that the site is a convenient one, but he rather doubted that the situation at the entrance gate would be too much exposed in rough weather. That might be some argument against the site, but we must recollect that the north mole has since been extended some 1,350 feet, thus in the opinion of all shipping men rendering safe the entrance at Rous Head.

Mr. Foulkes: You said just now Mr. O'Connor was asked to report on a site at Fremantle.

The PREMIER: Mr. O'Connor instructed the Engineer to select a site for a dock at Fremantle; and I take it he meant either at Fremantle or in the vicinity of Fremantle.

Mr. Foulkes: The engineer was limited to Fremantle.

The PREMIER: Fremantle, I take it, meant either at Freshwater Bay or below the bridge. There had always been a considerable controversy about those two sites, and I presume the engineer had the opportunity of recommending either of them. I listened with considerable interest to the speech of the member for East Fremantle (Mr. Davies), and to the statistics he gave to support the proposal for a dock; and I will not repeat the figures. But I should like to point out, in view of the number of vessels, and especially the number of mail steamers calling at Fremantle, it is well to remember that there is no dock to the eastward nearer than Sydney, 2,500 miles away, or nearer than Singapore to the north, or Durban to the west. So if a vessel lost her propeller, we can imagine what it would cost to tow her across to Sydney.

Mr. Foulkes: Is there not a dock at Melbourne?

The PREMIER: Only large enough to accommodate coastal steamers.

Mr. T. L. Brown: There is a graving dock at Williamstown.

The PREMIER: None of the mail liners can possibly enter the dock at Melbourne.

Mr. T. L. Brown: Then why was the "Austral" brought from Sydney to Williamstown?

The PREMIER: The "Austral" was a very small boat. Many of our present-

day intercolonial steamers are far larger than the "Austral." We wish to have a dock for vessels like the "Mongolia," and others considerably larger. One vessel, I think the "Liddesdale," went to Melbourne from here for repairs; but she was a comparatively small vessel, though the repairs cost some £15,000. Instances were given by my colleague, in his speech introducing the Bill, of accidents that happen to vessels at sea, and the expense entailed in taking them all the way to Sydney.

Mr. T. L. Brown: Is there not a floating dock at Sydney?

The PREMIER: No; there is a graving dock at Cockatoo Island. As to the risk of fire, those who have had an opportunity of seeing a graving dock must realise that by the time the dock is damaged everything else in the vicinity will be fairly well damaged. A graving dock is a fairly solid affair, and if things come to the worst, all that has been done is to let in the water, and what damage can then be done? The dock itself cannot be injured.

Mr. Stuart: Water would not protect it.

The PREMIER: I think it would. I should like to refer to the fact that after the establishment of a dock at Fremantle there is no reason to doubt that the Admiralty will find it convenient to station at least some of their war vessels at that port. We know what it means to Sydney. The navy spend something like £150,000 a year in Sydney; and provided we have the proper equipment for repairing and overhauling some of their vessels at Fremantle, some of their men-of-war would make Fremantle their home station. The New South Wales Government have recognised the necessity of doing all they can to bring their harbour up to date, and have already expended some £338,000 in connection with the naval station, not including the dock. But the prestige of the port of Sydney has been enhanced by the fact that such accommodation is available, and also by the indirect advantages derived from the encouragement of shipping, and from the protection afforded by the Admiralty making the port a naval base. The last speaker

stated that practically every Premier and every Parliament has advocated the construction of a dock. Well, is it not about time that we did something? Are we to carry on the same game by holding out this project in every Parliament and at every general election? The question Parliament has to decide is whether it considers the work is justified. If members are of opinion it is, they will vote for the second reading. If they are not of that opinion, they will vote against it. I do not see that anything is to be gained by this wait-awhile policy of constantly adjourning important questions. I hope the House will recognise that the necessity does exist, if we are to make Fremantle a properly-equipped port, for giving authority to expend the £285,000 which it is estimated this dock will cost. Statistics show that in Europe, for every 300,000 tons of shipping a dock is provided. I do not wish to detain members; but I have here a list of the various docks and ports, showing, in comparison with Fremantle, what equipment those ports have in the way of docks. Last year the tonnage of shipping at Fremantle was 1,564,000. Take that as a unit. Southampton has a tonnage of 3,800,000. Proportionately, Southampton should have dock accommodation which may be stated at 6.5. As a matter of fact, she has 18 docks. Newport has a tonnage of 2,700,000, and eight separate docks. Swansea, with two and a-half million tons, has 10 docks; Manchester, with two million tons, has one dry dock and two floating and other docks; while Leith has one dock over 350 feet in length and six docks under 350 feet, with a tonnage of 2,000,000 as against Fremantle with a tonnage of 1,564,000. Leith has thus seven docks, while at present we have none at Fremantle. It is unnecessary to go into farther detail; but as I have already said, that is the proportion as a rule throughout Europe; for every 300,000 tons of shipping there is at least one dock. As to the question raised by the member for Claremont (Mr. Foulkes), whether we should again put off this project with a view to consulting the Admiralty and the Federal Government, I may say the Federal Govern-

ment have vaguely indicated they are in sympathy with the construction of a dock. And possibly that is about where their sympathy will end. [*Mr. Heitmann*: Has there been any correspondence?] A considerable amount of correspondence, and all information has been given to the Federal Government; but the gentleman now in Western Australia, who has come to represent the Federal Government and to make certain inquiries here, is not prepared to say that his Government will do anything in that direction. The Imperial Government have been repeatedly approached for assistance in the construction of the dock, but no satisfactory answer has ever been received. I think we shall have to wait a considerable time before we receive from the Federal Government any answer that would be of value in deciding this question.

Mr. Foulkes: Do you not think you ought to try?

The PREMIER: I have just told the hon. member that every Government has tried, by pointing out that Fremantle is, from her position, practically the key to Australia, and that in the opinion of this State the Admiralty should assist in what may be called an Imperial work.

Mr. Foulkes: But I am referring to the Federal Government. Why not try again, to see what contribution they will give?

The PREMIER: Their contribution will be thankfully received to increase the length of the dock from 550 feet as is now proposed. Any Government in power will at least be pleased to accept the contribution.

Mr. Draper: Did not the Federal Government refuse to make any contribution?

The PREMIER: No. I notice that the Minister for Defence, in speaking the other day, made some statement to the effect that the Government were favourably considering the matter. Personally, after giving the matter careful consideration, looking at it from an unbiased point of view as one who a year or two ago was certainly not in favour of it, I have come to the conclusion, after

noting the advantages that any port derives through being completely equipped, that the work is justified; and I hope the House will think likewise.

Hon. F. H. PIESSE (*Katanning*): As a member of the Government which first brought before the public the question of constructing a dock at Fremantle, and which included in one of its Loan Bills provision for commencing this important work, I say my opinion has not changed one iota as to the importance of the work or the position in which it should be placed at the Port of Fremantle. We are at the extreme west of Australia, and we are continually boasting that Fremantle must ultimately become the gate of Australia. If the Transcontinental Railway, of which a survey has been agreed to, is constructed, as no doubt it will be within some eight or ten years, Fremantle must become of much greater importance. It may be said that we can wait for the construction of the Transcontinental Railway, and that as we have waited for so many years, the work of constructing a dock may again be deferred. I have listened with much interest to the discussion of the Government proposals for a dock, although I have some doubt in my mind as to the expediency of carrying out this work at this stage; and especially considering that we are faced with difficulties in regard to finance, I feel that this is a work of such an important character that, if the Government can see their way to arrange for its financing, it should not be delayed any longer. It is a work which is necessary, if we are to make Fremantle the chief port of this country. Of course we have in the southern portion of Western Australia a most important natural harbour, that of Albany, one that would no doubt have served the interests of the country much better than our artificial one at Fremantle but owing to the changed condition in regard to the shipping there, and as Fremantle has become of such importance, as has been shown by the figures relating to the tonnage at that harbour during the past year, this work should, from a business standpoint, be put in hand at Fremantle

as soon as possible. I am satisfied that we should do something, although I am still somewhat in doubt as to the site. I have read the various reports given to us and I find the expense in connection with the carrying out of this work at Rocky Bay would be enormous and far beyond the reach of this country at the present time. It is said that the work can be carried out for the sum of £280,000 and that the dock to be constructed with that sum will, while being sufficient for the requirements at present, be able to be extended in the future without interfering with the main work itself. Therefore it seems to me that to provide annually for a sum of £14,000 for interest and sinking fund will not be a great drain upon the resources of the State. It has been said that the money could have been better spent in the construction of railways in various parts of the country which we all agree should be settled. There are other works which could be put in hand and which would serve to develop the country, but if we are to make the port of Fremantle available for the shipping that will visit it, we must have a dock. Shippers will very soon send their vessels, which hitherto have not come here to the port, provided they knew that docking facilities are available. To-day shippers all know that they cannot get docking facilities here, and consequently the shipping is not so large as it otherwise would be. As a rule most of the ships now go to Sydney for docking purposes, although there is a dock at Queenscliff, in the vicinity of Melbourne. When Minister for Works I visited the docks in the Eastern States, for at that time the question came particularly under my notice. Although the dock mentioned by the Premier as being in Sydney was not then constructed, there were other docks, notably Mort's, and I saw that this was being made great use of. The work commended itself to me at the time and I was astonished to see the extent to which the docks over there were being utilised. I felt then that we should not delay in providing something similar on this side of Australia. The proposal to have a dock has had a varied existence,

and although money was voted as long ago as 14 years it has been reappropriated at different times to other works. This was not because those who were responsible for the votes in the past were not favourable to the dock, but there was the difficulty as to the site always cropping up; we were never able to settle the question to our satisfaction. The first proposal was to put a dock near the bridges on the north side of the river. It was found, however, that the depth of sand there was so great that it would be a very costly undertaking. Then another proposal came forward that the dock should be constructed at Rocky Bay, while Rous Head was also suggested. The result of the difference of opinion as to the site was that no dock was constructed. To-day we hear that there is a more settled opinion with regard to the question of site, and the reports of the engineers prove that they can carry out the work satisfactorily at the site named, and that with farther dredging and deepening of the river in the vicinity, the dock will be approachable from one end and have an exit from the other. This will be a great convenience and will enable farther extensions to be carried out in the future. Feeling as I do that this work should receive due consideration from members, having been associated in the past with the work, and recognising the necessity for it, I thought I should not let this discussion conclude without adding my opinion to those of other members. It is certain to my mind that the question is one more of the immediate financing of the scheme rather than one as to site. The site has apparently been settled on the best authority, and the Minister proposing this important work has evidently exhausted every means in his power to obtain all the information on such an important subject. In these circumstances, and qualifying my action by the remark that if the Government can see their way to include this work in the loan proposals without materially affecting other important works in the country the work should be gone on with, I have no hesitation in supporting the Government.

Mr. G. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) : I feel it is necessary to give some reasons for my opposition to the second reading of this measure. While I believe the House is almost unanimous as to the necessity for a dock to be provided at Fremantle to make the harbour complete, still that is beside the question at the present time so far as the Bill under review is concerned. Perhaps I may be twitted for opposing this Bill as I was a member of the Ministry which decided upon a floating dock for Fremantle some three years ago. At that time the Fremantle people were of opinion that a graving dock was a proper dock for the port and not a floating dock, but the Government of the day thought that a floating dock was sufficient and all that the then financial position of the State warranted. While I believe that a dock is necessary for Fremantle, and while I would support a Bill for a dock there, still I will not support a measure to embark upon an expenditure of that nature considering the present financial position of the State. We must also consider, in dealing with a question of this kind the extent of the public works policy which is brought down by the Government. When we recognise the number of railways on the notice paper, and think of those Bills which have been disposed of for the construction of lines for which loan moneys will have to be found, we will realise that care will have to be taken before embarking in other undertakings. We know that these agricultural spur lines cannot give any return for some time, and we also know that this dock if constructed will not be a remunerative proposition for many years to come. There is no difficulty in the Government financing the undertaking, but this will not prevent the Government from having to find interest and sinking fund out of our revenue. The trouble is that it will have to be found out of a falling revenue and in face of the fact that the deficit is already something like £227,000. With that deficit how are we going to burden the people of this country with farther taxation in order to find interest and sinking fund on loan moneys to build expensive

works which will not be remunerative to the State for some time to come? That is my ground for opposing the measure. The time is inopportune for the Government to embark on a huge expenditure of this character. It is idle for the Minister in charge of this measure to try and convince me, in the face of the evidence which is provided by similar works constructed elsewhere, that this dock is going to be built for £285,000. I think this Chamber should demand from the Minister an estimate from the Engineer-in-chief as to the cost. He is a responsible officer of this State and not a Minister whose position is a precarious one.

The Minister for Works: I have told you that the estimate of £285,000 is the estimate of the Engineer-in-Chief.

Mr. TAYLOR: What I want from the Minister is a detailed account supplied by the Engineer-in-Chief of the approximate cost of the dock. I am not particular, in getting an estimate of that kind, to £5,000 or £10,000, but I do object to estimates which are sometimes out to the extent of something like £100,000. We have repeatedly, in connection with public works, received estimates, and on them have passed votes which nothing like covered the actual cost to the country by the time the work was completed. The Minister should bring down an estimate from the Engineer-in-Chief setting forth that he can complete that work for a certain sum, and then if the engineer fails to keep within that estimate, we will be able to consider whether he is worth his salary. It is with a high and responsible officer that Parliament can deal, but an opportunity is not afforded us to deal with him unless a detailed estimate as to the proposed cost of a work such as this is brought down.

The Minister for Works: The estimate has been prepared.

Mr. TAYLOR: That is merely an approximate estimate. I do not believe this work can be done for anything like the sum stated by the Minister. This is judging by the cost of similar works in other countries where the material used and the labour are both very much cheaper than they are here. In those places they cannot construct a dock for

the amount estimated by the Minister in charge of this Bill as the likely cost of the dock at Fremantle. Here is an extract from the *London Engineer* of the 11th April, 1902, on the Colombo harbour works. The article first describes the new breakwater, and goes on to say:—

“ Besides the foregoing, there are other works in progress at Colombo of which Coode, Son, and Matthews are the designers and engineers. These are a graving dock, a slipway, and a coaling depôt. There being no dock for the accommodation of H.M. ships, nor for meeting the requirements of the splendid merchant steamers frequenting the port, the construction of one was sanctioned, and the first sod was cut by his Excellency Sir West Ridgeway on March 1st, 1899. This dock will be 600 feet in length on the floor, 125 feet in width at the copings, and 85 feet at the entrance, with a depth of 30 feet over the sill at low water. The cost of the graving dock is being borne jointly by the Admiralty and the Government of Ceylon in equal proportions. The foregoing works give employment to 3,300 workpeople, 2,600 of whom are free workmen, whilst the remaining 700 are convicts. The estimated cost of the breakwaters, coaling depôt, slipway, and other minor works incidental thereto is £687,000; that of the graving dock and its accessories is £318,000. It is anticipated by Mr. Matthews, who has just made a visit of inspection, that the various works will be completed in three years time. The resident engineer is Mr. J. H. Bastock, acting under whom are Mr. John Kyle junior, Mr. A. D. Prouse, and Mr. S. R. H. Beard.”

The cost of the dock and its accessories is stated at £318,000, and this is the cost where they have cheaper labour than in this State, 700 of the workmen being convicts.

Mr. Angwin : Do you call it cheap labour ?

Mr. TAYLOR : I am giving what is understood by every person who is opposed to the political principles I believe in, that cheap labour is such as you can

get at 4d. to 6d. a day for each man. I do not say that one of these men would be able to do as much as a workman in Australia, but some people do say this class of labour is cheap. We have it repeated in the sugar-growing labour for Queensland plantations, and in every walk of life where the employer can secure any coloured labour he does so on account of what he calls cheapness. In view of this fact, it is impossible for the Minister to say that this Fremantle dock is going to be completed as cheaply as he pointed out.

The Minister for Works : The hon. member will find that this Colombo dock is about 40 per cent. bigger than the dock proposed for Fremantle.

Mr. TAYLOR : There is also the Belfast graving dock, about the same size as the Fremantle work, and it was estimated to cost £300,000, but it actually cost £350,000, although cement is practically at their door.

The Minister for Works : Everything depends on the foundations, in works of this description.

Mr. TAYLOR : Can the Minister deny that cement, which is an important factor in works of this kind, can be produced or obtained in Fremantle as cheaply as in Belfast ? Will not a workman at Belfast be able to do as much work on that particular construction as a man at Fremantle ?

The Minister : You might build two docks of different sizes, and one might cost much more than the other.

Mr. TAYLOR : I have been converted to the desirableness of constructing a dock at Fremantle for many years, but not to its being constructed at the present time. Will the Minister say that workmen paid 3s. to 4s. a day in Belfast as against 8s. at Fremantle will not be able to do as much work as men at Fremantle ? The Minister wants to make me believe he can get the same amount of work done at Fremantle for the same cost as in Belfast, where a necessary material like cement is on the spot, and labour will cost about one half as against Fremantle. Will the Government or the Engineer-in-Chief tell me it is possible to construct a dock in Fremantle as cheaply as a dock

can be constructed at Belfast ? It is not possible. There is no stretch of imagination in saying that at Belfast most of the items will cost about one half as much as in Fremantle, and so they will get through more work at considerably less cost than in Fremantle, with material at half the price and the workmen paid about one half the Australian rate. You cannot place workmen at Belfast on the same footing as workmen at Colombo, but you can compare the Belfast workmen with workmen in Australia. It is impossible for the Minister to construct a dock of the same capacity in Fremantle and at the same price as it could be constructed for at Belfast ; and I want a detailed account from the Engineer-in-Chief, so that Parliament will be able to hold some officer responsible for the estimate brought down to this House. We find too in listening to the Premier that it is only since he visited Sydney and saw the Sutherland Dock there that he has been converted to the necessity for a dock at Fremantle. That is very strange when we know the Premier and his Ministers told the electors at Fremantle 18 months ago, while the present Minister for Works was standing as a candidate, and they were going to build this dock, that the Government were satisfied and were going to find the funds ; they told the people there that this was the last time a dock would be allowed to be made a political question in any election at Fremantle ; that they were going to build it if the Minister for Works was returned as the representative of Fremantle ; and we have it from the Premier's own lips to-night, 15 months after he was converted to this dock, that he had only been converted within the last few months to the necessity for a dock at Fremantle.

The Minister : He did not say "converted."

Mr. TAYLOR : He may have said "convinced." I say, he has only recently been converted to the idea, but I do not know whether the other Ministers were converted or convinced. I do know that the Attorney General said, as reported in the Press, that he had opposed the construction of a dock at Fremantle

in the past, but he was then supporting the candidate who was seeking election as Minister for Works, and he told the electors at Fremantle that if there was one man in this country who was capable of converting him to the support of a dock at Fremantle, it was his hon. friend Mr. Price. I do not know whether the Minister for Works has since converted the Attorney General, but it is to be hoped the House will hear the Attorney General, after conversion. The electors at Kalgoorlie have heard him before, and the people in this State have been told through the Press that his conversion set in during the election at Fremantle. If there is any occasion for this huge expenditure at the present time, it is that this jolly dock shall be built so that we may remove it from any political aspirants for a seat at Fremantle in the future. As far as the dock is concerned, it is positively indecent to see the member for Fremantle and others whipping to see how members are going to vote on the question. There are Fremantle members on this side of the House and on that side, and it was an insult to politics to see how they were whipping, and I believe the Minister for Works was the most energetic in doing it.

Mr. Angwin : I suppose that is a great sin ?

Mr. TAYLOR : It is log-rolling. I am told by the member for North Fremantle, it is natural. He did not say it was natural for Fremantle members, but only for other members. It is one of the standing jokes about the Fremantle constituency that when anything is required for Fremantle, whether on this side of the House or on the other side it matters not, honest principles fly to the winds ; when Fremantle is in question, are solid as a rock. Even members in another place join with members in this Chamber, when there is anything required for Fremantle. [Interjection by the *Minister for Works*.] The hon. member is trying to be sarcastic. If I had the arrangement of the blood that is circulating in my veins I would have it equally as blue as that of the hon. member's. But I shall have to do the best with what I have. It does not alter the fact as to

the Government being unwise in asking Parliament to vote this large sum of money, no matter whether the work will cover two or three years before it is completed. We can look forward to two or three years of very heavy expenditure with no possible return, and I venture to say this State will be called upon to pay interest and sinking fund to the extent of at least £20,000 on this proposition. On the estimate submitted by the Minister it will be something like £14,500; but I say without hesitation it will be nearer £20,000 to be taken from the falling revenue of this State. We cannot now meet our expenditure. Last month we were something like £40,000 light weight and the deficit is increasing. By the increased taxation passed by this Chamber and now under review by another place, we should increase our revenue by £81,000 or thereabouts, not taking into account the £15,000 or £20,000 that will be spent in collecting it. Yet we are going to earmark at least £20,000, or £10,000 in the first year, of this revenue to meet the interest and sinking fund on the Fremantle Dock. We are going to call up this extra taxation also to pay the interest and sinking fund on the cost of the railways now under construction, and those passed by the Chamber and not yet started on, and those still on the Notice Paper which will be passed this session. In fact, the increased revenue we expect to get by this taxation will not pay interest and sinking fund on all the public works that are unremunerative works being embarked upon by the Government. And we have a deficit facing us and a falling revenue. What position is the State going to be in? It is on these grounds that I oppose the Bill. I would have nothing to say against the Government embarking on this expenditure, if we had a surplus in our revenue to meet our requirements as we had when the Government with which I was associated proposed to build a dock. We were supposed to have a surplus of £80,000, but it was only a supposition. We had no deficit of £200,000; had we that deficit I question very much whether—in fact I may say there would be no doubt the Government would not have

embarked on an expenditure of this kind. The other day we committed ourselves to an expenditure of £50,000 in the purchase of the Denmark railway and lands. There will be no return from that expenditure. The railway has not been used for over two years, and now the Government are running it at a loss, and it will be run at a loss for several years. There will be no return to pay interest and sinking fund on the £50,000. Where will we be? We will be bankrupt unless the Government are careful. The Government tell us they have done all they can in retrenchment, that they have used the pruning knife to the trunk of the tree, and that they cannot use it any more, so that it is necessary to have farther taxation, as the Treasurer pointed out when introducing the Land and Income Tax Bill.

Mr. Collier: They will chop the tree down next.

Mr. TAYLOR: Chop the tree down? As a member in the Queensland Parliament said at one time, they will kill the calf that lays the golden eggs.

The Minister for Works: He mistook the calf for the goose.

Mr. TAYLOR: He did not see the Minister or he would not have said that. We have been informed by Ministers that the Government have used the pruning knife, and there is evidence of that so far as the railways are concerned. We find in the Railways report the number of employees dispensed with, and the Government have done all they can in other directions so that it is necessary to have farther taxation. Yet we find they are going on borrowing and spending; and the taxpayers will be called upon from the revenue to pay interest and sinking fund. We cannot get away from that. So far as the statement of the member for Katanning is concerned about financing this, there is no difficulty about financing the matter. The credit of Western Australia is not pledged to the hilt as yet. Western Australia can borrow money. Anyone who knows anything about the country knows that. There is no difficulty about the Government financing this concern. The Government can get the money all right.

But is it wise to borrow money and spend it on this undertaking? I say it is not wise at the present time, and I hope the Government will not press this measure; and above all things, I hope they will allow members on the Government side of the House to be as free on this vote as those sitting on this side of the House, and that it will not be made a party question, this pledging of the country to an expenditure of £285,000. I maintain that it will be far above that before the work is completed, so I hope members on the Government side will be allowed a free hand to exercise their votes in the best interests of the State. It is time when every member of this House should consider the financial position of the country before any expenditure of this nature is embarked on. The Minister for Works has recently incurred the displeasure of a very high citizen, the chief magistrate of Fremantle, the mayor of that city. I read in the Press on Tuesday where the Minister was chastised in no small way by the mayor of Fremantle for not being present at the swearing-in ceremony.

Mr. SPEAKER: What has that to do with the dock?

Mr. TAYLOR: It has this to do with the dock. The mayor of Fremantle said that they expected the Minister at this swearing-in ceremony to tell Fremantle that the Government were going to build this dock, and he abused the Minister for Works in no measured terms for his absence. I recognise the Minister deserved it. When the mayor of Fremantle is robed in his mayoral robes and he sends an intimation by telephone, or by telegram, or by a message boy that the Minister for Works, the member for the district, should be present at the swearing-in ceremony, why it is something more than a royal command. I wonder at the Minister being so brave as to dare to refuse. I question very much whether the member who preceded him as representative for Fremantle would have dared to refuse a command of this description from the mayor. In fact it is said by some that

he made it a point to be present at the swearing-in.

Mr. SPEAKER: I hope the hon. member will confine himself to the question before the House.

Mr. TAYLOR: I was pointing out that the probability of this dock is doubted by a small circle, and that the people of Fremantle through their representative the mayor pointed out no later than last Monday that they doubted the sincerity of the Government on the point, and that the Minister for Works should have been there to make a definite statement. When this sort of thing is being hurled far and wide through the Press, it is necessary that members of this House should probe the matter to the bottom. I have no desire to say that I will oppose the dock for Fremantle, but I do oppose it at this juncture. In the financial position of the State I certainly object to this expenditure; and if the second reading of this Bill is put to the vote, I will vote against it.

Mr. W. C. ANGWIN (East Fremantle): It is not my intention to take up the time of hon. members in regard to this matter, because I consider the speeches so far have in almost every instance proved the necessity for the construction of a dock at Fremantle. In reply to the member for Mount Margaret I would like to draw attention to a few words uttered by his chief, the then Premier of the Labour Government, and I think hon. members will allow me to say also that they were uttered with the hon. member's approval, because I was one of the hon. member's colleagues at the time. In speaking of the Loan Bill of 1904, the member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish) stated:—

“I have referred on more than one occasion to the desire and the intention of the Government to take an early opportunity of submitting to Parliament a proposal for the construction of the Fremantle dock.”

Mr. Taylor: That was a floating dock.

Mr. ANGWIN: There was no statement at that time in regard to a floating dock. There was no decision then as to what class of dock would be sub-

mitted to Parliament. The hon. member, as a member of the Labour Government confirmed the statement made to Parliament at that time, and therefore I am inclined to think that his opposition to-night is not as sincere as he would try to lead us to believe. I take this opportunity of thanking the member for Mount Margaret for his reference to the unity displayed by the members representing Fremantle electorates. I only trust that when the interests of this State require the unity of members for Fremantle they will always be found in accord as they are to-night on this question.

Mr. Taylor: Fremantle first and the State afterwards.

Mr. Johnson: It is a national work.

Mr. ANGWIN: The question of docking facilities for Fremantle has been given consideration by various Governments, and has been under the consideration of responsible officers of the Government since 1892. Since then we have had recommendations brought forward for floating docks—from floating docks with a lifting capacity of about 1,200 tons to floating docks with a lifting capacity of 10,000 tons. And we have also had recommendations brought forward for the construction of graving docks out of timber, using the natural wood of this State, jarrah; and recommendations for concrete or granite docks. The member for Katanning said to-night that the first dock recommended for construction at Fremantle was on the north side near the railway bridge, but that the site was disapproved of on account of the sandy foundation. I can inform the hon. member that before he had the honour of being Minister for Works there was a dock recommended for construction at Rous Head by an engineer of the department. It was to be built out of jarrah and was to be 600 feet in length. That was in January, 1895. Then we find again in the same year there was a recommendation for a dock to be constructed at Arthur's Head, to which the Premier referred just now, but owing to the extension of the Fremantle Harbour the site recommended at that time by Mr. Dillon Bell

for the dock was taken up by the wharves constructed in connection with the Fremantle harbour scheme. We find to-night a good deal of objection is offered to the construction of the dock because members say sufficient information has not been placed before them, and that no reports have been laid on the table of the House. When I ask myself the question whether members want that information or not I come to the reasonable conclusion that members are not anxious for farther information than that supplied to them by the Minister for Works when introducing the Bill in August of this year. The measure was before Parliament up to the date of the prorogation and no request was made for documents to be placed on the table. No member took action to move that the papers be supplied, and when the Bill was reintroduced on the 15th October in this Parliament no action was again taken until this week with a view of obtaining the papers giving information which members make out they so desire. If members are really anxious to get farther information than that supplied them by the Minister for Works, they would, when the Bill was introduced, immediately have moved that all papers in connection with the question be placed on the table of the House. Seeing that this was not done, I cannot come to any other conclusion than that the information supplied by the Minister is quite sufficient for members to decide on the question of the dock construction. The member for North Perth in dealing with this matter last night appeared to be of opinion that there was only one gentleman in Australia qualified to express an opinion as to the site for a dock at Fremantle. We have had a number of engineers dealing with the question, in my opinion more able than Mr. Keele, the gentleman whose recommendation the member for North Perth so highly approves. If the country is prepared for a large expenditure there is no necessity to go away for the opinions of an engineer to recommend the high expenditure that Mr. Keele has done. The engineers of the State, from Mr. O'Connor down to Mr.

Palmer and Mr. Thomson, have realised that it is impossible, for many years to come yet, to go into an elaborate scheme for a dock in the manner recommended by Mr. Keele. Mr. Keele was only called here at a time when Mr. Napier Bell, who no doubt had the confidence of the late Engineer-in-Chief Mr. O'Connor, and who at that time was the greatest expert in Australia on dock construction, was ill. Mr. Keele was called here to report on the scheme because Mr. Bell was unable to visit the State on account of illness. In 1896 on the recommendation of Mr. O'Connor the Government brought Mr. Napier Bell from New Zealand to report on the best site for the construction of a dock. He was brought here specially to consider the site recommended by Mr. O'Connor, and in spite of what the member for North Perth said last night, that no engineer had recommended the site at Rous Head—I do not know if the member had seen any of the reports or not or whether he contented himself with seeing one report and did not want to see more—but in 1895 the site recommended by Mr. Napier Bell for the construction of the dock was at Rous Head. Therefore when we realise that Mr. Napier Bell had the confidence of Mr. O'Connor, who was looked up to not only in Western Australia but in Australia as a whole, as one of the principal engineers here, we ought to be guided by his recommendation. Mr. Keele's scheme, which is so highly recommended by the member for North Perth, would involve an expenditure of £1,461,782. I ask members to give that consideration. Is it possible for the State to go in for such an expenditure within any reasonable time? We can only come to one conclusion, that as far as Mr. Keele's scheme is concerned, it is beyond the aspirations of Western Australia for the next two or three generations. Mr. Keele's second recommendation was also mentioned by the member for North Perth, and even that scheme was to cost £750,000. I maintain if it is possible to provide the same facilities in a place suitable for a dock at about one-third of that cost, it is the duty of the

State to see that that site is selected for the dock. The member for Mt. Margaret questioned very strongly whether the dock could be constructed for the price stated by the Minister for Works. There are differences of opinion in regard to that matter. We find the member for Mt. Margaret reading an opinion from someone he does not know anything about, but so long as it was print it was all right. We find another engineer well respected in the services of the Government in London, Mr. Palmer, stating that the dock could be constructed for £250,000, and coming down to later times, only this year an engineer, Mr. Shiels, stated that the dock could be constructed for £200,000. I am willing to take the reports of those who are associated with the manner in which we do our work here rather than the opinions of some men who write to the Press and who have never carried out a work at any time. During the debate on the Address-in-Reply I stated that in all probability there were details in the Bill that I should disagree with, and when the Bill goes into Committee and I am sure it will, I intend to deal with the matters which I disagree with. But it is unnecessary to detain the House longer. I leave the matter entirely in the hands of members, confident that in doing their duty to the State they will vote for the Bill.

Mr. T. P. DRAPER (West Perth): I came into the House to-night with a perfectly open mind as to whether the construction of this dock at the present time was to be to the advantage of the State, or whether it would be better to defer it. I have listened to a considerable portion of the debate expecting to hear facts and figures which would show, at any rate within a reasonable time, that the expenditure of £300,000 might be regarded as a profitable investment for the State. And if these facts and figures had been brought out by members and showed that the State as a whole could look to some profit within a reasonable measure of time from the carrying out of the scheme, I should without any hesitation have voted for the second reading

of the Bill, because I recognise with hon. members that the dock is certainly necessary to complete the harbour. But there are many things which are not clear to my mind at present, and one is whether the best site has been chosen for the making of the dock. Quite recently we have read in the papers that those who have charge of the finances of the Commonwealth are considering whether they should contribute towards the making of the dock itself, and we have no reason to believe that the Admiralty would not join in contributing to a dock if it were placed in such a position as would meet the approval of those who have control of the navy. I submit that without being experts it must be apparent to most men of common sense who take an interest in the navy which defends the Empire—it must be apparent to them to see that the dock which is placed in an exposed position like Rous Head can be really of practically little use to the navy for the re-fitting of their ships, if there be any chance, for no matter how short a time, of the navy losing control of the seas. I submit if naval opinion were asked it would be found that a dock, if it is to be constructed, should be inside the river and probably placed under some height whereby protection would be afforded from direct fire. Under these circumstances, with nothing settled either with the Imperial Government, or with the Commonwealth Government, I submit that alone is a very strong argument against passing the measure at the present time. It has been said, and no doubt many agree, that we should like to see the harbour at Fremantle completed by a dock. It is said that it is necessary to that harbour to have a dock there. But members must bear in mind that there are degrees of necessity, and when we are told that one thing is necessary, we should ask ourselves whether there are other things in the State at the present time which are more necessary for the prosperity of the State, and which would be more productive of benefit to those who reside in the State. It is admitted, I think on both sides of the House, that we must develop the country by means of railways; and it has been

said by the member for North Fremantle that some of the agricultural railways which we are building will probably for a time be unpayable; and he holds out those railways as analogous to the dock at Fremantle. But there is no analogy. In constructing railways that will not pay in the immediate future, we are at any rate developing the State, increasing the productiveness of the State and the capital of the State. But when we are building a dock at Fremantle which may one day become a source of profit, that work can hardly be said to be productive even in the imagination of a member who happens to represent Fremantle. The position is anything but analogous. When dealing with the question of possible profit, let us ask ourselves what ships are likely to come to Fremantle to use that dock? [*Member*: Facilities always make a business.] The facilities will only be attractive to ships which come from overseas; I mean from the old country, from Europe, or from the United States. We certainly shall not get ships which trade between Fremantle and Singapore, because they will do their dry-docking where labour is cheaper. We shall not be likely to get many coastal vessels, for they will when possible do their dry-docking where the headquarters of the company are situated, probably in Sydney or Melbourne. We shall have practically very little shipping to depend upon for paying the working expenses of the dock. We are told that the cost of the work will be about £300,000. That means £10,000 for interest alone, and for sinking fund another £5,000, in addition to the expenses of working the dock. I do not think it an exaggerated estimate to say that the dock will involve an expenditure of £20,000 a year, including sinking fund and interest; and I venture to think that for many years we shall receive very little to set against that expenditure. In these circumstances, when we are forced to resort to direct taxation to balance the ledger—when we are already almost a quarter of a million in debt—I submit it is at present very inadvisable to incur additional loan expenditure amounting to £300,000 for what it is admitted in

this House cannot be regarded as a re-productive work for some years to come. In these circumstances I shall vote against the second reading.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (in reply): I desire to reply to one or two observations made in this debate. First of all, I should like to say that I have not advocated the building of the dock for defence purposes at all, but purely for commercial reasons. I think we must all admit that no port of any importance can be considered complete without a dock. We know perfectly well that for almost every considerable improvement effected at Fremantle a reduction in freight has taken place. Take, for instance, the freights ruling at Fremantle at the present moment from abroad, and compare them with freights ruling to other and less improved ports in Western Australia; and we shall find that the difference amounts to anything between 3s. 6d. and £1 per ton. For this reason I think we may fairly conclude that with this other great improvement which is now suggested, we may expect to reap some corresponding advantage in the direction of a reduction of freight. I would mention, as I pointed out in my speech when introducing the Bill, that we are on the eve of a very considerable export trade from this State; that within the next five or six years we shall be shipping great quantities of wheat from Western Australia; that we must do everything possible to encourage at Fremantle shipping of a certain class, which at present does not visit our port. I do not wish to touch on the question from a military point of view, because I should be absolutely incompetent to do so; but still, one may bring one's common sense to bear on the question, even from that side. And when one recollects that at Port Arthur, in the Russo-Japanese war, vessels were shelled in the harbour at a distance of some eight or nine miles, when they were absolutely out of sight, there is not much to be said against this proposition. I wish to call attention to the criticism levelled by the member for Subiaco (Mr. Daglish). He when in power promised to

undertake the construction of a floating dock. The estimated cost of a floating dock is £150,000, of which something like £50,000 will be spent in this State, the remaining £100,000 going abroad. The cost of a graving dock—and this is the estimate given by the Engineer-in-Chief, and coming from him, it may be accepted—will be £285,000, of which £213,000 will be spent in this State. I would call the attention of the member for Mount Margaret (Mr. Taylor) to the fact that while he was quoting the cost of docks in Europe, which he thinks indicates that this is a low estimate by the Engineer-in-Chief, yet the graving dock at Cockatoo Island, Sydney, which is of similar size to the dock proposed at Fremantle, was constructed for about the same price as this is estimated to cost. The fact of the matter is, the question of foundations has much to do with the cost. Now this site has been commented upon, not unfavourably but favourably, by at least four engineers, all of good repute: Mr. Napier Bell, Mr. Dillon Bell, Mr. C. Y. O'Connor, and the present Engineer-in-Chief, Mr. J. Thompson. The financial position has been urged as a reason against the completion of this work at the present moment. Let me point out that our deficit now amounts to less than one month's interest. We do not anticipate a continuance of this state of things. Already we see signs of improvement; and in view of the fact that the dock will take some three or four years to construct, I think that with the export trade we have in view we are well justified at the present moment in authorising the construction. Reference has been made to the Premier's position in this matter. It is said he has been recently converted to a belief in the work. Let me point out that when first I took my position in the Ministry, the Government arranged to leave the question of building a dock to the Fremantle Harbour Trust, recognising them as a body of experts qualified to decide the question. The Premier coincided in that view, and agreed to bring in a Bill giving the Trust the necessary approval. The Bill was duly introduced, and had it been passed the selection of a site and

the construction of a dock would have been left absolutely to the Harbour Trust. That did not suit the House; the Government again gave the matter consideration, and this Bill is the result. I have never approached this matter from a parochial point of view. I have always believed this to be a great national work by which the whole State will benefit. If the tendency of the work will be, as I think it will, to reduce freights on goods coming to this port, especially from oversea, then the whole State will benefit by its construction. Though one may not be an engineering expert, still residence for a considerable time in a shipping port gives one an absolutely different light on this question from that possessed by an ordinary outsider. Throughout the whole world there is not I venture to say one graving dock in twenty built with a view to a directly profitable return from the investment. A dock is invariably built with the intention of providing improved harbour facilities which it is believed must lead to reductions in freight. I wish to draw members' attention to the fact that in this State we have some 5,200 miles of coast line; the State is going ahead; and we should be wanting in our duty to the State if we did not provide one port at least with every possible requisite for shipping. May I conclude by reading an extract from a paper written by Lord Pirie, of the firm of Harland & Wolff, on harbour and dock requirements as affected by the development of shipping? He writes: "It would be difficult to estimate the extent to which the progress of shipbuilding has been retarded by the inadequate supply of dock facilities. By shipping men a dock is recognised as one of the essential facilities of any port before it can be considered first-class." I submit this Bill to the House, with every confidence that members will pass the second reading.

Question put, and passed on the voices.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE.

Mr. Daiglish in the Chair, the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 4—agreed to.

Schedule—Description:

Mr. ANGWIN moved an amendment—

That all the words after "Fremantle," in lines 4 and 5, be struck out.

Boring, he understood, was still proceeding to test the foundations at Rous Head. It had been said the principal objection was owing to the financial position of the State. Mr. Shiels had stated that he could construct a dock on the south side of Arthur Head, between 850 and 900 feet long with an entrance of 100 feet, for £200,000. Compare this with the proposed scheme which would provide a smaller dock for £280,000, and it would be seen that there must be some reason for the decrease. Probably it was the difference in the foundations which made the difference in cost. The respective sites should be considered carefully. He was moving to strike out the words, not with the intention of inserting another site to allow the Government, after going into the question, to alter the site if they thought fit. All the engineers who had reported on the question of site had said the best one was between the two bridges on the South side of the river. The foundations there were secure for there was a solid limestone foundation, so that they would know from the outset there would be additional cost subsequently in connection with making the foundations. Mr. Palmer had said in 1902 that this was the only place on the river suitable for a dock, while Mr. Napier Bell had reported on the Rous Head site, and he also stated that the south side was the proper site. The present engineer-in-chief had also said, "Taking into consideration the foundations and economy the best site is on the south side between the two bridges, as already recommended by Mr. Napier Bell and Mr. Palmer." The question of the cost of altering the railway bridge should the south side be selected had been mentioned. In this connection he would like to point out that it had been mentioned by the railway authorities that if the State's export trade increased as now seemed certain, it would be necessary

to have an overhead railway line at Perth. It was estimated that the cost of this overhead line would be £500,000. If the dock were constructed between the two bridges and the railway were continued on the south side of the river, the whole of the traffic could be carried from Fremantle to the south side and go direct from the harbour to the country districts. This would also apply to the traffic coming into Fremantle. The cost of constructing the line on the South side would be about £112,000, and if this sum were spent it would mean there would be no necessity to spend £500,000 on an overhead line in Perth. This was a question which should be gone into carefully, and it would be better at the outset to spend £112,000 and have the most suitable site for the dock and the railway on the south side, rather than spend £500,000 on the large work in Perth.

Mr. BATH: Surely the amendment was a matter of sufficient importance to call for a reply from the Minister.

Mr. Bolton: No; it was only moved to defeat the Bill.

Mr. BATH: Nothing of the sort. If the amendment were carried it would have no effect, because the Government would probably differ from the intentions expressed in the Bill, and construct it on the site set out in the schedule. The whole of the evidence as disclosed by the file was against the Rous Head site. It was not even set out in the returns that there were foundations there for a dock. The amendment should have been expressed in a more direct form, for merely striking out these words gave power to the Government to do what they liked in regard to the matter. All the expert evidence was against the Rous Head site, and that was even agreed to by the Engineer-in-Chief, who really gave as his opinion that if the other sites suggested, which were superior to the present one, were not to be adopted then Rous Head was the best one left.

The PREMIER: If the amendment were carried it would still be left to the Government to do what they thought fit in the way of selecting a site, and they

could construct a dock at Rous Head if they thought fit. By an almost unanimous vote of the House, the second reading of the Bill had been passed, and therefore members showed they were of opinion that Rous Head was the most suitable site; but the amendment would leave the Government at liberty to construct the dock at Rous Head.

Mr. HEITMANN: It was surprising to hear from the Leader of the Opposition that nearly all the engineers quoted as authorities were against this site, considering it the most unsuitable site of the whole. The arguments in the House and the engineers' reports were deserving of attention from the Minister.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Mr. C. Y. O'Connor recommended this site as suitable, but for the fact of the rough water at the entrance. Since that date the mole was extended by some 1,350 feet, and Captain Irvine, Captain Laurie, and other shipping authorities at Fremantle were convinced that there would be a smooth-water entrance. Mr. Napier Bell also commented favourably on this site. Never had so exhaustive a test been made of foundations as was made by Mr. Thompson, the Engineer-in-Chief. The position was much altered since the lengthening of the mole.

Mr. BOLTON opposed the amendment. For the past 12 years, though the construction of a dock had been practically authorised, no site was definitely fixed, and there was a battle of the sites. The amendment would allow the battle to continue. Unless the Government stuck to the Rous Head site, the Bill would be useless. He was surprised at the Leader of the Opposition accusing him of glozing over anything. He was not in the habit of glozing, but perhaps of speaking too plainly. When the Government submitted a Bill nominating a site, they could not honourably accept an amendment to leave the site an open question.

Mr. BREBBER supported the amendment in the hope that it might obviate the possibility of selecting the site at Rous Head. How could we neglect the expert advice condemning the site, the unsuitableness of which was recognised?

If the usefulness of the dock were to be confined to Fremantle alone, it mattered not which site were selected; but the amendment would cause the dock to be built between the two bridges, which would have to have removed, and the whole State would derive some benefit from the opening of the river. If the amendment were rejected he would move that the site be at Rocky Bay, the second-best site recommended by the experts.

Mr. ANGWIN: The amendment was intended to leave open the matter of site. Even to-day the Rous Head foundations were still being tested, and might be found unsuitable. If the test proved satisfactory, the dock could still be constructed at Rous Head. He was told at Fremantle that if he were successful in passing the amendment he deserved the thanks of the whole town, but that if he failed and did anything to delay the dock he deserved to be defeated at the next election. If his electors would put him out of Parliament for looking after their interests, the sooner he went out the better. The majority of the engineers were opposed to the Rous Head site. Mr. Napier Bell had greater ability than Mr. Keele; and if the former had not been taken ill, we should probably have had his report instead of Mr. Keele's. When a Minister of the Crown, he (Mr. Angwin) spent considerable time in perusing the files, and became convinced on the reports then before him that no engineer would honestly recommend a dock below the bridges. As a matter of expediency he had agreed to a floating dock as a make-shift, better than no dock at all; and therefore he had been accused of preferring a floating dock to a graving dock. In a letter from Mr. C. Y. O'Connor to Mr. Napier Bell, dated 25th January, 1898, in reply to a question whether the material in the area recommended at Rous Head for a dock site was really sand, or whether it was not a mistake showing it as sand, as it had been previously understood to be rock, Mr. O'Connor stated: "This, I think, shows how delusive it would be to suppose that an excavation for a dock site would be entirely in rock, and bears out what I have already believed, that there

are large fissures in this rock, filled up with sand, through which the water would come when we made excavations for a dock, just as freely as on the site near the railway bridge." That being so, he could not see where the advantage came in dredging mostly through rock as compared with dredging where it was all sand. Mr. Bell thought that Mr. O'Connor was rather timid in regard to the construction of the dock, and on the 21st February, 1898, wrote to Mr. O'Connor asking whether a site could not be obtained above the bridge on the left bank where a solid wall was obtainable without risk of any kind. These engineers having reported on that site in his (Mr. Angwin's) electorate as the best, and after reading the files and spending months in going through them he would not be fulfilling the trust reposed in him by his constituents if he did not raise this question. Almost every recommendation was for a site different from Rous Head. A dock 557 feet long would be obtained at Rous Head for £285,000, but if it were possible to build a dock on Arthur Head, in equally as good a position as Rous Head, it would be 850 feet long and would cost only £200,000. It was one's duty to put the matter before hon. members. The amendment would have the effect of leaving the actual site open. It would not tie the hands of the Minister, but allow for the decision as to the site being reconsidered. If the matter were reconsidered it might mean the saving of hundreds of thousands of pounds.

Mr. BATH: On the second reading members gave general approval of the Bill without committing themselves necessarily to an approval of the site embodied in the Bill. In Committee they could express an opinion as to the proposed site. One was not concerned as to the claims of the districts or the members representing those districts, but the point was that the reports of the engineers who had reported on these different sites and who had been retained at heavy fees, should have been given consideration by the Minister for Works; for the consensus of opinion among those engineers was against the site mentioned in the Bill.

The Minister: No.

Mr. BATH: Then why had the Minister refrained from putting the files on the table?

The Minister: There was no refraining.

Mr. BATH: The member for North Perth had complained.

The MINISTER: The hon. member had 12 months to ask for them, but only showed a desire for them last night. The files had been on the table in the past, and he was willing to put them on the table again.

Mr. BATH: Why had not the Minister put them on the table on his own initiative? Mr. Palmer had declared in favour of a site farther up the river.

The Minister: There were all sorts of sites proposed.

Mr. BATH: Mr. Palmer declared for it emphatically as the site, and Mr. Napier Bell declared the same thing, while Mr. Thomson the present Engineer-in-Chief, said that though almost every site had been proposed, he approved of one on the south side as preferable; but then because of representations by the Minister, all those sites were excluded, and finally the Engineer-in-Chief gave a modified approval of the site at Rous Head. The justification for that remark was the minute of the Engineer-in-Chief and the Minister could read that minute to refute what was said, if it were possible to do so. The purport of the report was that the site above the bridge on the south side was the best, but in view of the fact that representations had been made that this would involve expense, the dock might be constructed on the south side.

The MINISTER: The hon. member was giving a totally incorrect interpretation of that minute. The purport of the minute was: Taking all points into consideration, the Engineer-in-Chief recommended Rous Head.

Mr. Bath: Did not the Engineer-in-Chief declare for a site on the south side of the river?

The MINISTER: The Engineer-in-Chief pointed out that on the south side we could only get one entrance. Though a dock could be built as cheaply on the south side as a dock on the north side,

we could not get a double entrance. That caused the Engineer-in-Chief to declare for the north side as against the south side of the harbour. In all probability had there been any chance of getting a double entrance the Engineer-in-Chief would have recommended the construction on the south side, and that would have suited his (the Minister's) constituency; but in this matter he had carefully refrained from pushing his own barrow, and had left it to the engineers to pick out what they thought was the best site.

Mr. HEITMANN was not satisfied with the explanation of the Minister. We had apparently imported experts until we got one who was of the same opinion as the Minister. What was the use of importing men and not acting on their recommendations? Evidently the Minister wished to avoid the issue. If the engineers were of opinion that the Rous Head site was the best, the House would agree with the Minister. It was only fair to the House that the reports should be put forward.

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

Ayes	16
Noes	17

Majority against .. 1

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Angwin	Mr. Barnett
Mr. Bath	Mr. Bolton
Mr. Brebber	Mr. Cowcher
Mr. H. Brown	Mr. Davies
Mr. T. L. Brown	Mr. Ewing
Mr. Draper	Mr. Gregory
Mr. Foulkes	Mr. Hayward
Mr. Gordon	Mr. McLarty
Mr. Horan	Mr. Male
Mr. Scaddan	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Stuart	Mr. Monger
Mr. Taylor	Mr. N. J. Moore
Mr. Troy	Mr. Price
Mr. Underwood	Mr. Smith
Mr. Ware	Mr. Veryard
Mr. Heitmann (Teller).	Mr. F. Wilson
	Mr. Layman (Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

Question stated, that the schedule stand as printed.

Mr. BATH: It was hoped that as far as possible local material would be utilised in connection with the building of the dock. No imported stone should be used.

The Premier: The Government could not afford to import stone.

Mr. BATH: It was peculiar to the Works Department that they always preferred to use German cement, but he trusted this would not be done in the present case.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The policy of the Government always had been to give preference where possible to local manufactures, and there was no reason to believe the policy would be altered in this case.

Mr. H. BROWN: As the Fremantle Harbour Trust would be given control of the work, it would be better for them to construct it. What the Works Department were capable of was shown in the matter of erecting the cranes at Fremantle. It would be far better to allow the Trust to import the best engineer capable of constructing a dock, for it was very doubtful whether a suitable man was in the Works Department now. If the work were given to the Trust, on its completion the men engaged upon it could be discharged, and so prevent overloading the civil service. This great work had been decided upon without any returns or a single paper having been produced by the Minister in charge of the Bill.

The Minister for Works: Some of the reports had been printed and circulated.

Mr. Foulkes: Members had not been able to see them. This was most unsatisfactory.

Mr. HEITMANN: Was it the intention of the Government to do the work by contract or day labour?

The Minister for Works: That question could not be answered, as it would have to be considered by Cabinet.

Mr. HEITMANN: The work should be done by day labour, for in the end money would be saved. With regard to the communications with the Federal Government, it would be wise for the Minister to communicate with that body again as they would have greater weight now owing to the fact that the construction of the dock had been approved by the Legislative Assembly.

Schedule put and passed.

Bill reported without amendment; the report adopted.

BILL—BUNBURY HARBOUR TRUST.

Second Reading moved.

The PREMIER (Hon. N. J. Moore): Practically the whole of the evening had been devoted to maritime matters, and it would be a pity at this stage if we introduced any matter other than one bearing a nautical term. The Bill I have to introduce is one that has for its object the placing of the Bunbury harbour under the control of commissioners, on very similar lines to the Fremantle Harbour Trust, with that difference however, that in this case the powers of the Commissioners are to some extent restricted. This is done for several reasons. The proposal to entrust the port of Bunbury to a trust is one which is not at all new, as it has formed the subject for agitation there for a considerable time. The Chamber of Commerce, the Bunbury Council, the Shipping Association and the Lumpers' Union are all anxious that the control of the port should be vested in a local board which has a thorough knowledge of the business of the port. More especially is it necessary owing to the diversity of interests in the control of the jetty. At the present time the Railways have control of the shipping arrangements, so far as the transport of cargo is concerned, and in addition they get most of the revenue derived from the wharf. The Colonial Secretary's Department, that is the Harbour and Lights Branch, are responsible for pilotage and lights, while the Works Department are entrusted with any repairs or additions necessary for the proper working of the jetty. Finally the municipal council own a certain portion of the jetty. Members will realise that some alteration should be made with regard to this diversity of control so that it should be centred in one responsible body which has a knowledge of the working of the port and its requirements. An independent body will obviate many of the disadvantages incidental to departmental control. It will not be out of place at this stage briefly to refer to the history of the port and make references to the marvellous strides made in

the shipping there. In 1897 Sir John Forrest laid the first stone of the breakwater. The trade of the port then was indeed very limited and, as a matter of fact, on the occasion of laying the first stone of the breakwater, the whole of the customs trade only amounted to £16,478, while the port was practically unknown, the only exports being occasionally a few shiploads of jarrah to the Eastern States. Since then the trade has gone up by leaps and bounds, until now it is over half a million pounds. That is a good record for any port of the State. As a matter of fact, as far as the tonnage of the vessels entering and leaving the harbour is concerned, it is something like one-third of that of Fremantle, while the exports have grown in value tremendously. Last year the total trade was £576,448. In 1901 the exports totalled £140,158, and the imports £42,250, or a total of £182,438. Last year the total trade of the port was, as I have said, £576,448, made up of exports £482,451 and imports £93,997. It is within the knowledge of members that most of that export trade is accounted for by the timber industry. When the South-Western Railway was constructed it opened up a large amount of the best timber country in Western Australia. As a result many mills were established in close proximity to the line, and when the Collie line was established several mills were opened up there. At the present time the export trade from the mills is over £500,000 and gives employment to practically 2,000 men. I think from these figures it will be evident there was every justification for the action taken by the then Government in spending money with a view to improving the shipping facilities of that portion of the State. Bunbury is the natural port for the whole of the country lying from Pinjarra south, and extending as far east as the Great Southern Railway. Several of the towns on the Great Southern Railway, it will be found now that the Collie-Narrogin line is constructed, will export from Bunbury. Narrogin will find its port at Bunbury, while with the construction of the Donnybrook-Upper Preston line the

mills established in that district owing to the construction of that railway will add their quota to the trade of Bunbury. It is interesting to note what has been the revenue derived at this port. The Railway Department during the five years that I have taken into consideration have received amounts for wharfage charges ranging from £12,707 in 1902-3 to £21,947 in 1905-6, while for the financial year ending June of this year the wharfage charges received amounted to £15,003. There is a slight falling off owing to the fact that during a portion of the time the mills were closed down and did not send away as much timber as previously. Analysed to date it shows the wharfage and berthage dues during the period have produced £98,299, special revenue £8,135, and harbour dues £14,750; or a total of £121,184. The harbour dues were £3,828 in 1903 and practically they have remained at that sum during the period I have referred to. In 1906 the total tonnage of vessels visiting Bunbury amounted to 444,000 tons gross, or very nearly one-third of the tonnage which entered Fremantle. The property which is to be entrusted to the charge of the Commissioners is the breakwater which has been constructed and the jetty. The original design for the breakwater was to extend it from a certain point some 6,000 feet, and the first work that was completed was 3,215 feet at a cost of £120,422. Since then the breakwater has been extended by 800 feet. The contract was let for £58,000 in April of 1906 and it is expected the work will be completed towards the end of this year. The length of the original design was 6,000 feet; so with the extra 800 feet it will only make a total of about 4,000 feet. The construction of the additional length of breakwater will be material to the safety of vessels in the harbour. Notwithstanding that during the last winter the harbour was subject to tempestuous weather, owing to the construction of the breakwater vessels were enabled to lie comparatively snugly while alongside the jetty. The cost of the original breakwater was to be £120,422. Out of this sum £90,000 was paid from

revenue. The total cost to date of the breakwater has been £158,767. Provision is made in the Bill, as in the Fremantle Harbour Trust Act, that the harbour shall pay interest and cost of maintenance from the money received by them. In view of the amount that has been received during the last five years from harbour dues and wharfage, there is reason to expect that after paying the charges which the Bill provides, the trust will have a very substantial margin that will go into the consolidated revenue. At the present time the revenue from the jetty, practically the whole of it with the exception of the harbour dues of £4,000 a year, goes into the profits of the Railway Department.

Mr. Taylor: It goes to revenue all the same.

The PREMIER: The port itself is not credited with the amount it returns. The whole of the wharfage charges, which only cost the Railway Department perhaps one penny per ton to earn, go to the Railway Department.

Mr. Taylor: The Treasury gets it all the same.

The PREMIER: It is credited to the Railway Department instead of being credited to the harbour.

Mr. Bath: The only trouble is the Treasurer does not know how to use it.

Mr. Taylor: If we had a wise Treasurer it would be all right.

The PREMIER: There has been an alternative proposal which I need not trouble the House with now, the construction of an inner harbour scheme, but the finances of the State did not allow of that going on. Possibly at no distant date, with the advent of a large export trade, more especially as we now find Collie coal is being used and apparently is giving satisfaction to the vessels using it, there is no reason why the coal export should not form a very considerable item amongst the exports from this port. In regard to the Bill itself, I may say it provides for, instead of five commissioners as in the case of the Fremantle Harbour Trust, for three commissioners nominated by the Government. The remuneration fixed is, for the chairman £100 and two members at £50 each.

As I pointed out earlier in my remarks, their powers are to some degree limited as compared with the powers of the Fremantle Trust. In regard for instance to pilotage, in the Bill it is provided that the pilotage shall be kept under the Chief Harbour Master, while the maintenance of the port in the matter of providing beacons and lights and putting down and maintaining and cleaning the buoys is taken from the Harbour Trust Commissioners and will be carried on by the Harbour and Light Department; first of all because they have a complete plant at their disposal, and did they not do this a duplicate plant would have to be provided at Bunbury to carry out the work. Under the circumstances I have decided it would not be advisable to entrust the work to the commissioners. It is proposed that the Trust shall be a corporate body with perpetual succession and a common seal, with power to hold lands. The boundaries of the harbour are set out in the schedule of the Bill. The appointment of the members of the board and of the chairman is to be in the hands of the Governor-in-Council, and the usual means have been provided for deposing any commissioner should circumstances render the same desirable. It is proposed to vest in the board the whole of the bed and shores of Koombanah Bay and of the Leschenault Estuary as far north as the mouth of the Preston River, and the board will be charged with the maintenance and preservation of the present mole and causeway at Bunbury, together with the railway lines and road approaches thereto. But the maintenance and control of all lights, buoys, beacons and seamarks is to remain in the hands of the Chief Harbour Master as at present. The commissioners are to be charged with the cost of all works within their boundaries, and the obligation is placed upon them of meeting interest on capital and providing for the replacement of depreciating property as well as the cost of administration and of maintenance; and power is reserved to the Governor-in-Council to increase or decrease, as may seem necessary, wharfage and berthing dues and charges levied by the commissioners. All new works,

as well as the extension or completion of all present works within the area of the board's jurisdiction will remain public works under the Public Works Act 1902, and the same may be undertaken under the advice of the commissioners, but the cost will be charged against the commissioners in the same manner as in Fremantle. The principle of handing over reproductive public works to the control of public bodies constituted and regulated under special Acts of Parliament designed to meet the special circumstances of each case has proved a success throughout Australia, and in New Zealand we know there is a large number of harbour trusts. In New Zealand I understand there is one principal Act governing the establishment of harbour trusts, and under that Act various district port harbour trusts are constituted. As I said before, wherever the system has been adopted the desire is that the administration of the port shall be in the hands of business men to carry out the work as they would their own business, thus doing away with the confusion that has existed in the port of Bunbury on several occasions. In New Zealand, as I stated, there is a general Act known as the Harbours Act of 1878, which lays down the lines on which the several harbour boards throughout the Dominion are created and have relations with the Government. There are 16 separate boards in New Zealand with very extensive powers indeed. Owing to the success that has attended the Fremantle Harbour Trust board and other boards in Australia, the South Australian Government have decided, on the completion of portion of their harbour works, to entrust the management of their harbour to a board, and the present Premier of that State is in communication with me at the present time in regard to the establishment of a trust. I do not know that I need say anything farther than to commend the Bill to the acceptance of members. I have pointed out the necessity that exists for the establishment of local control at Bunbury, and it is the unanimous desire of the various organisations, both those representing shipping companies and those representing the

lumpers' union there. This matter has been brought under the notice of several Governments and I have been on more than one occasion myself a member of a deputation desirous of securing this control. We have had the experience of the Fremantle Harbour Trust, and no one can say that it has not been a decided success. I am satisfied there is no reason why the same success should not attend the management of the Bunbury harbour, provided that approval is given to the Bill. I have much pleasure in moving—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by *Mr. Taylor*, debate adjourned.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1907-8.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the previous day on Works Estimates; *Mr. Ewing* in the Chair.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT (Minister, Hon. J. Price).

Vote—*Public Works and Buildings* (partly discussed)—

Subdivision 3—Roads and Bridges, £70,252—

Item—Roads and Bridges throughout the State, £35,000:

Mr. BATH: There was a reduction in the year's vote for grants to roads and bridges throughout the State to £35,000. Whatever might be the policy in view of the financial position of the State in regard to this was not so much his concern as that the reduction of the subsidy would be highly disadvantageous to roads boards which rated themselves reasonably, while those who had never rated themselves, but depended on grants, would practically laugh at the reduction of the subsidy. Boards such as those in the electorates of the Premier and the Treasurer had never rated themselves, except nominally, to comply with the Act. According to the member for Perth (*Mr. H. Brown*), the Sussex roads board raised 3d. in rates for every pound granted by the Government in special votes on the

Estimates; and in this year's Estimates we found £2,500 set down for Sussex.

The Treasurer: How much of that was for a Government road?

Mr. BATH: In other districts boards had to maintain roads out of rates and subsidies, not from special grants. Unless we had some assurance that together with the reduction of subsidies there would be a stoppage of this feeding by special grants boards which did not rate themselves, he would move that every item for the benefit of Sussex be struck out.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There was no intention of dealing differently with the roads boards this year from the past. Members should differentiate between this general vote and these specific items provided for various public works which were not considered as attaching to the constituency or the roads board district in which they happened to be. These works being urgently required were paid for by special vote. The hon. member referred unfairly to the grants for works in the Sussex electorate. The items included a grant for the road from Busselton to the Yallingup Caves. The town of Busselton was not in the roads board district, and the board was a small and not a particularly flourishing body. For years the Government had recognised the desirableness of providing a tourist resort in that district, and a road was constructed at a cost of £20,000. Was that road to be abandoned? Last year £1,090 was passed for repairs to the road, and only £303 spent. It was our duty to keep the road in good order, as it was used by residents from all parts of the State, and the repairs were a fair charge against the general revenue. In the distribution of the vote, the manner in which local authorities discharged their responsibilities had been and would be fully considered by the department. Boards which did not make adequate contributions by way of rates would be brought to their senses, and the Treasurer, when Minister for Works, had taken drastic steps with this and in view.

The TREASURER: A few remarks as to the unparalleled action of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Bath), who said

that because the general vote for roads and bridges throughout the State was reduced by £5,000 or £6,000 as compared with last year's expenditure, he would vote against every item for roads in the Sussex district. The threat was unparliamentary. Surely each item should be treated on its merits. So far, he (the Treasurer) has seen only two Sussex items on the Estimates—for the main roads leading to the Caves, Government roads under the Works Department. After sending to the Minister for Works requests received from the Sussex district, he (the Treasurer) had heard no more about them. These annual complaints about items for the wide and sparsely-populated Sussex district were unfair. The Sussex roads-board members had done their duty, and imposed a fair rate; but there were not many ratepayers in the district, hence the amount raised was not large. As to the statement of the member for Perth that only 3d. was raised by rating for every pound of special grants, that statement could not be accepted without proof. Moreover, it did not affect the present item.

Mr. BATH: The Minister for Works had misunderstood his proposal, which was to make the district of Sussex an example to others. The Minister said the subsidy would be fairly distributed; but it was distributed in accordance with the roads-board rating. A reduction of the aggregate amount of subsidy would affect roads boards that rated fairly, but would not affect a board that did not rate or that raised little by rating, if it could get special grants on the Estimates.

The Minister: There had been nothing of that sort.

Mr. SCADDAN: The roads vote showed a considerable reduction, being £335,000 as compared with £342,000 for last year; but the item "Roads to act as feeders to agricultural railways, £5,000," practically made up the difference. Part of this item was previously under "Roads and bridges throughout the State," but it was proper that all sums earmarked should be shown separately, and he agreed with the new departure.

Revotes for Roads, £5,461:

Item—Maintenance of main roads, Claremont-Subiaco, £200:

Mr. TROY moved an amendment—

That the item be struck out.

This and a number of items dealing with the maintenance of main roads could be treated as one. We originally provided the money to build these roads, and year after year we were called on to pay for their maintenance, while other districts were neglected in the matter of roads. It was time the local authorities maintained these main roads. The money that would be saved on these Estimates from this maintenance would construct many roads into new districts. He strongly objected to the Government maintaining roads about the metropolitan area or in populous centres.

Mr. SCADDAN supported the amendment. He had always protested against huge sums of money being provided for the maintenance of main roads about Perth. If it were to be the policy that all main roads throughout the State should be maintained by the Government he would not protest, but here was discrimination; only roads about populous centres were maintained. The fact that £500 was provided for the Kalgoorlie-Boulder road did not deter him from protesting against this expenditure. All country roads were main roads. Though members representing country districts objected to this expenditure, they still voted for the Government.

The MINISTER: These roads passed between centres like Perth and Fremantle, and the roads were mostly used by the traffic between the two places, so that it was unfair to call upon the local governing bodies along the roads to maintain them for traffic that did not belong to them. On the other hand, in the country districts some of the roads boards were of considerable extent, and the roads running through them were for purely local traffic. This matter had been discussed year after year *ad nauseam*, and no arguments would change the opinions of members on either side.

Mr. ANGWIN: The road on the south side of the river between Perth and Fremantle was entitled to consideration.

The Minister: There was not the same traffic.

Mr. ANGWIN: The traffic was heavier than the Minister thought.

On motion by the Minister, progress reported and leave given to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 11.28 o'clock, until the next day.

Legislative Council,

Friday, 6th December, 1907.

	PAGE
Leave of Absence	1364
Bills; Brands Amendment, 3a.	1364
Electoral, 3a. moved	1364
Limited Partnerships (Mr. Moss), 2a. con- cluded	1371
Fremantle Graving Dock, 1a.	1372

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

Prayers.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by the Hon. J. W. Langsford, leave of absence for 12 sittings was granted to the Hon. W. Oats, on the ground of ill-health.

BILL—BRANDS AMENDMENT.

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

BILL—ELECTORAL.

Second Reading moved.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. D. Connolly) in moving the second reading said: I do not intend to speak at great length on the second reading. This