

lines have been utter failures. They are worth nothing; but the Government have kindly come forward and taken them off the hands of the proprietors. I should like to know what they are going to do with them. They are put down as reproductive works; but I should like to know how the Government are going to make them so. I understand that the Tarrangingee railway proprietors are selling it simply because they cannot turn it to good account, and that the rails, sleepers, and so on are not worth anything; while we know that the Rosehill railway has not been a success. It runs very close to the northern railway, and has also to compete with the Parramatta River. Upon these jobs we are asked to expend £35,500. There are other equally bad items in the bill, and many works put down as reproductive which will give no returns upon the money expended upon them.

The Hon. H. E. KATER: Does the Vice-President of the Executive Council consider the McSharry case a reproductive work, or the Australian Museum, or the National Art Gallery a reproductive work?

The Hon. J. HUGHES: The Art Gallery is a permanent and a national work!

The Hon. H. E. KATER: What about the McSharry case?

The Hon. J. HUGHES: I am afraid that is a permanent work, too!

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read the second time, and reported from Committee without amendment; report adopted.

Bill read the third time.

STRATHFIELD RAILWAY-CROSSING BILL.

The Hon. J. HUGHES rose to move:

That this bill be now read the second time.

He said: This is a very small bill for a very important purpose. Most hon. members, I dare say, know that the crossing at Strathfield is a level crossing at a junction. There is a great deal of traffic there, and it has become necessary for the Railway Commissioners to take steps to erect an overhead bridge and close the level crossing. The bill simply gives them the requisite powers.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read the second time, and reported from Committee without amendment; report adopted.

Bill read the third time.

LAND AND INCOME TAX (DECLARATORY) BILL.

Bill read the third time.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT.

Motion (Hon. J. HUGHES) agreed to:

That this House at its rising to-day do adjourn until Wednesday next.

House adjourned at 4:10 a.m. (Friday).

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 22 December, 1898.

Privilege—Questions and Answers (Zoological Society—The Agent-General—John Petersen—Springs at Kiama—Maintenance Men—Bursaries: School of Mines—Tenders: Public Works—Public School, Alexandria—Painting Park Railings—Long-service Medals—Inspectors of Accounts—Undressed Timber Duties—Public Works Department—Bando Leasehold Area—Railway to Mulgoa—Stipendiary Magistrates—Richie Sheep Trucks—Diseases in Sheep Act—School-hours: Country Districts—Sunday Trading—Petitions—Margarine Bill—Alleged Dummying—Municipal Subsidy—Greater Britain Exhibition—Parramatta-Singleton Railway—Fish Markets—Increases to Civil Servants—Warren Bore—Homestead Selectors—Temora-Wyalong Railway—George-street Tramway—President of the Greater Britain Exhibition Committee—North Coast Harbour Works—Darling Island—Papers—Road Contractors: Fines—Case of J. M. Swift—Improvements on Crown Lands—Rabbit Bill—Navigation (Amendment) Bill—Limitation of Debate—Early-closing Bill—Gold-fields Reserves—Electoral Boundaries—Norfolk Island—Special Purchase at Bega—Ministerial Statement (City Railway Extension—Federation)—The Rock to Green's Gonyah Railway Bill—Adjournment (Produce Market)—Wollongong Water Supply—Dubbo to Coonamble Railway—Cobar-Wilcannia Railway—Railway: Grenfell to Wyalong—River Darling—Public Offices: Bridge, Young, and Phillip Streets—Public Offices in Phillip and Hunter Streets—Penitentiary and Prison for Females—Personal Explanation—Crown Lands Bill—Land and Income Tax (Declaratory) Bill (No. 2)—Koorawatha to Grenfell Railway Bill—Byrock to Brewarrina Railway Bill—The Rock to Green's Gonyah Railway Bill—Thomas Suffield—Adjournment (Land Exchange: Interest on Overdue Rents)—Prorogation of Parliament.

The CLERK informed the House of the unavoidable absence of Mr. Speaker, through illness.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER took the chair.

PRIVILEGE.

MR. NELSON (Sydney—Flinders) [3:31]: As a matter of privilege I have to call the attention of the House to a question in which, I think, every hon. member here is concerned. An article has been published commenting very severely upon hon. mem-

bers, and in my opinion it reflects very much indeed upon the honor of Parliament. I should not trespass upon the House in this matter, but I have waited patiently, thinking that some hon. member of larger experience in such questions than I myself have would have dealt with it. But finding that we have come to the last stage of the life of this session, I think it my duty to call the attention of the House to a certain article which has been published in a Sydney newspaper, which, as I say, reflects, in my opinion, upon the credit of the House and upon the honor of members of Parliament.

Mr. REID : What is the newspaper ?

Mr. NELSON : The article was published in *Truth* on the 18th December.

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : I do not think anything which occurred on the 18th December can now be brought up as a matter of privilege. "May" says :

A privilege matter may also be brought forward without notice before the commencement of public business, and is considered immediately on the assumption that the matter is brought forward without delay, and that its immediate consideration is essential to the dignity of the House.

This matter has not been brought forward without delay, and I do not think its discussion would lead to the dignity of this House. This House, moreover, cannot punish persons outside who write articles. I rule, therefore, that the matter to which the hon. member refers is not one of privilege and that he cannot proceed with it.

Mr. REID : The House has been sitting since Monday, so that there has been ample opportunity.

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : It is within the right of hon. members to bring forward a matter of privilege at any time.

Mr. NELSON : Then, why not now ?

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Because delay has taken place. The matter is five days old. The House has sat upon three of those days. I am merely following the rule of Parliament in the ruling I have given, and I hope hon. members will uphold the Chair in this decision.

Mr. NELSON : I accept the ruling of Mr. Deputy-Speaker.

ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

Mr. T. BROWN (for Mr. DACEY) asked the COLONIAL SECRETARY,—(1.) What is the total amount paid away by the Zoo-

[*Mr. Nelson.*

logical Society to private analysts ? (2.) How long has the present superintendent occupied his position ? (3.) Is the secretary a zoologist ? (4.) Where did the secretary obtain his knowledge of animals ?

Mr. BRÜNKER answered,—(1.) 10 guineas. (2.) About three and a half years. (3 and 4.) It does not require a person to be a zoologist, or to be possessed of special qualifications, to understand the duties of secretary to the Zoological Society ; but the present holder of the office is a gentleman of considerable attainments, and is, in the opinion of the council, thoroughly qualified to carry out the duties which he is required to perform.

THE AGENT-GENERAL.

Mr. WRIGHT (for Mr. CHANTER) asked the COLONIAL TREASURER,—(1.) Has the position of Agent-General been offered to Mr. Gould, ex-M.L.A., or to the Hon. J. H. Want, Attorney-General ? (2.) Has it been accepted by either of these gentlemen ? (3.) If not, will he state who is to obtain the position before Parliament goes into recess ?

Mr. REID answered,—I have already made a statement to the House, which shows that there cannot possibly be anything in the questions asked.

JOHN PETERSEN.

Mr. WRIGHT (for Mr. McLAUGHLIN) asked the MINISTER OF JUSTICE,—(1.) Is he aware that at the last court of quarter sessions, Kempsey, Mr. Judge Docker sentenced one John Petersen to twelve months' imprisonment with hard labour, to commence at the expiration of a sentence he was then undergoing, for alleged contempt of court in refusing to become a Crown witness and give Queen's evidence ? (2.) Is it the practice for a chairman of quarter sessions to order imprisonment with hard labour, to commence at a future date, for alleged contempt of court ? (3.) Can he mention any case where even the Supreme Court has awarded such punishment ? (4.) If the sentence is illegal, will he take steps for the immediate liberation of Petersen ? (5.) What term of the sentence has been served ? (6.) Assuming that the judge had power to make the order referred to, in view of the severe nature of the punish-

ment for the alleged offence, will he take steps to have the prisoner now liberated?

Mr. C. A. LEE answered,—The matter referred to in these questions is under consideration.

SPRINGS AT KIAMA.

Dr. ROSS asked the MINISTER OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION,—Will he obtain from the Government Astronomer his views, or some information, as to the cause of springs breaking out and commencing to run at Kiama and other places in the interior during the present protracted drought, and how this peculiar phenomenon is produced in dry seasons?

Mr. HOGUE answered,—I will request the Government Astronomer to furnish a report upon this matter.

MAINTENANCE MEN.

Mr. BENNETT asked the SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS,—(1.) Whether he is aware that some maintenance men, who have to keep 20 miles of road in repair, have to provide a horse to enable them to travel the road at their own cost? (2.) Is he in favour of flying gangs of roadmen being sent to localities to construct culverts and carry out road work in localities where there are many unemployed workmen? (3.) Is he in favour of all road work being let by tender or to local men, instead of being carried out by flying gangs? (4.) Is he aware that maintenance men who provide a horse and cart to repair the road are only allowed 2s. 6d. per day for same; will he favour an increase?

Mr. YOUNG answered,—(1.) Where a maintenance man is in charge of a long length of road, cost of shifting camp is allowed. Men who use horses for their own convenience in riding to and from work receive no allowance for this. (2.) It is the custom to use flying gangs only when it is clear the work to be done can be carried out to greater advantage in this way than by contract, and the gangs are then made up of picked men. (3.) As far as practicable, the work is done by tender. (4.) Maintenance men are not expected to provide a horse and cart for the repair of roads; but when the services of a horse and cart are required, the allowance varies from 2s. 6d. per day upwards, according to the conditions as to the cost

of horse-feed. The question as to allowance given in the hon. member's district will receive my consideration.

BURSARIES: SCHOOL OF MINES.

Mr. BENNETT asked the SECRETARY FOR MINES AND AGRICULTURE,—(1.) *Re* bursaries for the School of Mines, are the subjects for competitive examination for the bursaries as follows:—(i) Mathematics, namely, (a) arithmetic, including the elements of mensuration, 150 marks. (b) algebra, including progressions, the binomial theorem for a positive index and the properties and use of logarithms, 150 marks. (c) Geometry—Euclid, books i-iv, vi, xi, propositions 1-21, with easy deductions, 100 marks. (d) Trigonometry, 150 marks. (ii) Latin, 150 marks. (iii) Not more than one of the following:—(a) French, 150 marks. (b) German, 150 marks. The bursar will be required to matriculate, and to commence attendance upon the School of Mines classes immediately after the award of the bursary to him. (2.) The examinations being so severe, is there no danger of excluding the sons of miners and people in ordinary circumstances in life.

Mr. COOK answered,—(1.) Yes. (2.) The subjects are those which a student is required by the University by-laws to pass before admission to the classes of the Mining School; and unless he passed an examination of that standard he would not be capable of understanding the lectures in the subsequent course of instruction at the Mining School.

TENDERS: PUBLIC WORKS.

Mr. ARCHER asked the SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS,—(1.) How many tenders have been called for works this year which, owing to a considerable excess of the department's estimate, have to be re-tendered for? (2.) Does not the faulty estimation of works by the department cause considerable loss of money and time to contractors? (3.) Is the lowest tenderer compensated for such loss? (4.) What is the number of contracts for the year 1896 and 1897 on which extras have been incurred? (5.) What are the amounts and causes for such extras? (6.) Similar information for the year 1897-98? (7.) Why are certain senior professional officers

of the Government Architect's Department doing ordinary clerical and book work which can be done under their supervision by a junior clerk?

Mr. YOUNG answered,—This information can be prepared and laid upon the table of the House in the form of a return if moved for in the usual manner.

PUBLIC SCHOOL, ALEXANDRIA.

Mr. ANDERSON asked the MINISTER OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION,—(1.) Has he taken any steps to have plans and specifications prepared for the proposed boys' and girls' school at Alexandria? (2.) If not, will he give instructions to the clerk of works of his department to do so without further delay?

Mr. HOGUE answered,—Plans and specifications of the proposed primary school buildings at Alexandria will be prepared without unnecessary delay.

PAINTING PARK RAILINGS.

Mr. WILLIS (for Mr. D. DAVIS) asked the MINISTER OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION,—(1.) How many men are employed on the cleaning and painting park railings? (2.) How many gangers are employed in charge of the men? (3.) What pay do the men receive per day? (4.) What pay do the gangers receive per day?

Mr. HOGUE answered,—The cleaning and painting of the park railways is being carried out under the supervision of the Works Department. These questions should, therefore, be addressed to the Secretary for Public Works.

LONG-SERVICE MEDALS.

Mr. O'CONNOR asked the COLONIAL TREASURER,—(1.) Did the home Government some years ago intimate that medals would be awarded to volunteers for long service? (2.) Have these medals been awarded to members of the volunteer forces in South Australia and Victoria? (3.) Why have these medals been withheld from the volunteer forces of New South Wales? (4.) Will he take steps to provide for the distribution of these medals among New South Wales volunteers?

Mr. REID answered,—(1.) Yes. (2.) Not known. (3.) Pending the Imperial Government deciding as to whether those serving under a partial-payment system

[*Mr. Archer.*

are eligible, the Secretary of State for the Colonies intimated on the 10th August, 1897, that this question was about to be considered by a joint departmental committee of the War Office and the Colonial Office, and that a further communication would be made. A reminder on this subject was sent last July to the Imperial Government. (4.) Yes; if questions referred to in answer (3) are satisfactory.

INSPECTORS OF ACCOUNTS.

Mr. S. E. LEES (for Mr. JESSEP) asked the COLONIAL TREASURER,—(1.) From what sources are inspectors of accounts, departmental accountants, or other examiners of accounts appointed? (2.) If persons are appointed to such positions from the clerical ranks of the public service, are they compelled by the Public Service Board, by examination or otherwise, to demonstrate their fitness for such important positions? (3.) If not, will he, in view of the importance of such officers' duties, bring under the notice of the Public Service Board the desirability of testing future applicants for such appointments in their knowledge of national finance, banking, and cognate subjects?

Mr. REID answered,—When vacancies arise, appointments are always made from within the service, if there are suitable persons to fill the positions. If it is necessary to appoint a person from outside the service, special examinations and inquiries are held to test the suitability of the applicants for the positions applied for.

UNDRESSED TIMBER DUTIES.

Mr. SAMUEL SMITH asked the COLONIAL TREASURER,—(1.) Is it a fact that the Customs Duties Act of 1895 enacted that the duty on undressed timber should remain in force till 30th June, 1896? (2.) Is it a fact that, contrary to the provisions of this act, the Collector of Customs permitted two large shipments of undressed coopers' pickets to be landed in Sydney, duty free, during January, 1896? (3.) Did Mr. Henry Dose, of Pymont, write to the Under-Secretary for Finance and Trade, on 4th August, 1896, informing him that, at the time of this illegal action on the part of the Collector of Customs, the greater portion of three shipments of these pickets, on which he (Mr. Dose) had a short time previously paid duty amounting

to £123 15s., was thereby rendered un-saleable at remunerative rates? (4.) Will he place on the estimates for next year a sum of £100 to reimburse Mr. Dose for the loss suffered by him through the action of the Collector of Customs in removing the aforesaid duty six months prior to the date fixed by the Customs Duties Act?

Mr. REID answered,—(1.) Yes. (2.) No. Pickets were free of duty from 31st December, 1895, being specially mentioned in schedule A in the tariff of 1892; were not mentioned in schedule A in the tariff of 1895; and were free under the tariff in January, 1896. (3.) Yes; but was informed that the duty was paid in October and November of 1895, when properly chargeable with duty, and that a refund could not be made. (4.) As the pickets were properly charged for duty at the time of importation, there is no valid claim for refund.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.

Mr. S. E. LEES (for Mr. E. M. CLARK) asked the COLONIAL TREASURER,—(1.) What officers of the Public Works Department have applied during this year for six months' leave of absence? (2.) What applications have been granted; and why? (3.) What is the length of permanent service of the officers so favoured? (4.) Are the grounds for granting such leave stronger than those on which similar leave has been refused other civil servants retired; if so, what are they?

Mr. YOUNG answered,—(1 and 2.) An officer, John Barr, applied for twelve months' leave of absence without pay, which was granted. Another officer, G. J. Oakeshott, made application for six months' leave—four with pay and two without—and was granted six weeks' leave with pay and the remainder without pay. The former officer required his leave for the purpose of travelling and studying in England, and the latter to attend to urgent family matters in England. (3.) John Barr, 1 year 9½ months; G. J. Oakeshott, 3 years. (4.) I am not aware what applications were refused to which the hon. member refers, and, consequently, cannot answer this question.

BANDO LEASEHOLD AREA.

Mr. WRIGHT (for Mr. GOODWIN) asked the SECRETARY FOR LANDS,—(1.) Has the

survey of the Bando leasehold area, county Pottinger, been completed; if so, when? (2.) When will the lands embraced in the survey above referred to be open for settlement?

Mr. CARRUTHERS answered,—(1.) The completion of the survey has not yet been reported, but efforts are being made to expedite the work. (2.) A date cannot at present be fixed, but in any case the land will not be available for application before the 1st March next.

RAILWAY TO MULGOA.

Mr. S. E. LEES asked the SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS,—In introducing the railway policy of the Government before the close of the session, will he give the proposed line of railway from Liverpool to Mulgoa has favourable consideration, with a view to its inclusion?

Mr. YOUNG answered,—I am sorry to be obliged to inform the hon. member that the consideration of this line must stand over until next session.

STIPENDIARY MAGISTRATES.

Mr. S. E. LEES asked the MINISTER OF JUSTICE,—(1.) When considering the question of appointing stipendiary magistrates, will those already filling such positions be considered with a view to promotion? (2.) Also, if there be any acting stipendiary magistrates, will their claims for promotion or permanent appointment be considered?

Mr. C. A. LEE answered,—The claims for promotion of the officers referred to in these questions will receive due consideration.

RICHIE SHEEP TRUCKS.

Mr. T. BROWN (for Mr. DACEY) asked the COLONIAL TREASURER,—(1.) With reference to Mr. Dacey's previous question, respecting the structural defects in the Richie sheep trucks, is it a correct inference that the cost of such "minor faults" was charged to the contractor, as well as cost of replacing faulty axle brasses? (2.) If not so charged, who was responsible, and how do they arise? (3.) Is he aware that stockowners have suffered injury and loss from the use of leaky sheep trucks?

Mr. REID answered,—(1.) I am informed the contractor was not charged

with the cost of the minor faults referred to, as he was not responsible for the alteration in the top floors of the vans. (2.) The original drawing provided for a tongued and grooved floor, but the officer in charge of the work found it would be an advantage to have the boards rabbeted. It is pointed out that the vans in question were of a new design, and have answered satisfactorily. As pointed out previously, minor defects also arose through the timber not being thoroughly seasoned. (3.) The commissioners are not aware of loss and injury being occasioned as represented.

DISEASES IN SHEEP ACT.

Mr. WRIGHT (for Mr. CRUICKSHANK) asked the COLONIAL TREASURER,—Will he have full information made public as to how the money collected under the Diseases in Sheep Act is expended, as Appendix IV in the Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Stock for the year 1897 is not satisfactory?

Mr. COOK answered,—The full information showing the expenditure of moneys collected under the Diseases in Sheep Acts, for the year 1897, was laid upon the table of the House on the 20th October last.

SCHOOL-HOURS : COUNTRY DISTRICTS.

Mr. WRIGHT (for Mr. CRUICKSHANK) asked the MINISTER OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION,—Owing to the present wave of heat in some country districts, will he, when the parents and teachers approve, allow the alteration of the school-hours to 8 till 11.30 in the morning, and from 3 till 5 in the afternoon?

Mr. HOGUE answered,—I cannot see my way to accede to this request. The hours of instruction are fixed by the regulations, and I do not think it advisable to make any alteration in the daily routine authorised. Under regulation 110, school may commence at either 9 or 9.30 o'clock a.m.

SUNDAY TRADING.

Mr. COPELAND asked the COLONIAL SECRETARY,—Referring to his reply to Mr. Copeland's question on 15th instant, *re* Sunday trading, wherein he states that "the law has been and will be enforced as far as practicable and reasonable,"—(1.) Will he be good enough to state whether the police find it impracticable to discover

offenders against this law on any Sunday while patrolling George-street, King-street, or any other of the principal streets in the city or suburbs, or in the country towns? (2.) Has he given instructions for the constables not to take notice of such breaches of the law in most cases, while examples are being made in individual cases? (3.) Does section 10 of the Sydney Police Act, or section 10 of the Towns Police Act, contain any provision for the law being administered in a "reasonable manner; on the other hand, are not the said laws imperative and binding on all alike, and do not "permit or suffer any house, shop, or store, or other place therein to be open on that day for the purpose of trade or dealing"? (4.) Is it "reasonable" that some persons should be punished for doing what others are allowed to do with impunity? (5.) Will he cause the said laws to be repealed, or else see that they are administered to all persons alike?

Mr. BRUNKER answered,—(1.) No difficulty is experienced by the police in discovering persons engaged in Sunday trading. (2 and 3.) No. (4.) The magistrates, by their decisions, evidently think that certain businesses, such as retailers of fruit, milk, cakes, and non-intoxicating drinks, are not unreasonably carried on on Sundays, and are in some cases a public convenience, but that no necessity exists for other shops to be kept open for the sale of goods not required on Sundays. The Government cannot control magistrates' decisions. (5.) The law certainly requires revision in some respects, and the question will be considered.

PETITIONS.

Mr. REYMOND presented a petition from William Henry Monaghan, stating that he had, about nine years ago, made application to conditionally purchase 300 acres of land, situated on Flagstone Creek, land district of Parkes, and paid as deposit thereon the sum of £30 sterling; that, subsequently, the lessee on whose run the land was situated selected the same land, and when the applications came before the local land board the name of the lessee was called before that of your petitioner; that your petitioner was allotted other land of very inferior nature; but refused it, and his deposit money was therefore confiscated; and praying the House to

[*Mr. Reid.*]

take the premises into consideration, and grant relief to the petitioner.

Mr. REYMOND presented a petition from Michael Madden, stating that he had, about nine years ago, made application to conditionally purchase 500 acres, and to conditionally lease 750 acres of land, situated on Flagstone Creek, land district of Parkes, and paid £50 deposit and £6 5s. as rent, respectively; that, subsequently, the lessee on whose run the land was situated selected the same land, and when the applications came before the local land board the name of the lessee was called before that of your petitioner, the land allotted to him, and your petitioner's money confiscated; and praying the House to take action in the matter, and grant relief to the petitioner.

Petitions received.

MARGARINE BILL.

Mr. ALEXANDER CAMPBELL: I wish to ask the Colonial Treasurer what has become of the Margarine Bill he promised to carry through Parliament this session?

Mr. REID: I regret to say it is lying peacefully side by side with some other bills.

ALLEGED DUMMYING.

Mr. WILLIS: I desire to ask the Secretary for Lands a question without notice. Is it not a fact that some months ago a royal commission was appointed to inquire into some alleged dummying in the west? Is it not a fact also that the names of certain hon. members were mentioned in that connection? What has become of the royal commission—is it dead or is it alive? If it is alive, will the hon. gentleman make the House and the country a promise that hon. members who have been slandered in this matter will have a chance of fully vindicating themselves before the royal commission during the recess?

Mr. CARRUTHERS: It is a fact that a royal commission was issued to Dr. R. M. Sly to inquire into certain allegations with regard to dummying in the western division. That commission was given to Dr. Sly for him to hold the necessary inquiry. I understood the parties were communicated with and informed of the issue of the commission. After that stage the matter, so far as the Lands Department is concerned, is in oblivion. I will make

inquiries as to what has been done under the commission, and if it is necessary to revive it it will be revived. Of course, the commission cannot proceed unless the parties choose to bring some evidence before it. No evidence has been adduced before the commission, and no material has been supplied to the commissioner to enable him to proceed with his inquiry.

MUNICIPAL SUBSIDY.

Mr. NOBBS: I desire to ask the Premier whether, bearing in mind that a number of municipalities are giving work to their unemployed at this season of the year, will he take into consideration the advisableness of granting the promised subsidy of 2s. 6d. in the £ to the various municipalities?

Mr. REID: I never promised a subsidy of 2s. 6d. in the £ in any absolute way. I have always said that when the state of the finances permitted it, I considered that the claim of the municipalities for a special endowment should rank amongst the first demands upon the liberality of Parliament. I think so now; but, unfortunately, with the present state of the finances, and with the refusal to grant certain additional revenue I have asked for, I find it difficult to undertake any obligations beyond those the law casts upon me.

GREATER BRITAIN EXHIBITION.

Mr. MOORE: I desire to ask a question of the Premier with regard to the Greater Britain Exhibition. Persons have been asked to send exhibits to this exhibition, and preparations are now going on. In view of the vote given the other day, is it the intention of the Premier to go on with the exhibition; if not, will he announce the fact as soon as possible, so that these preparations may be stopped?

Mr. REID: As announced in the newspapers the morning after the vote referred to was arrived at, the Government, carrying out the desire of the House, as shown by the division on the item, resolved not to proceed any further with this exhibition, and that resolution is not likely to be altered. It is in obedience to a vote which was arrived at in Committee. But, of course, if this matter has been going on, I cannot very well issue an immediate notice cancelling the committee, because

there are certain things that must be wound up, and things returned to the exhibitors, and so on; so that it is impossible to issue a notice at once. But it is to be understood that the committee will only be kept in existence in order to undo all that has been done.

Mr. MOORE: Will the hon. gentleman see that the notices sent to the exhibitors will be cancelled as soon as possible, so that the preparations may be stopped?

Mr. REID: Certainly. Of course the news of this matter will be spread over the colony; but, in addition to that, we will send out notices to every one who has been communicated with, intimating that it is not the intention of the Government to proceed with the exhibition.

PARRAMATTA-SINGLETON RAILWAY.

Mr. O'CONNOR: I desire to ask the Secretary for Public Works whether in framing the railway policy of the Government, he will give the proposed line from Parramatta to Singleton favourable consideration with a view to its inclusion in the policy?

Mr. YOUNG: I cannot undertake to do that this session.

FISH MARKETS.

Mr. FERRIS: I desire to ask the Colonial Treasurer whether he will be good enough to appoint an inspector to attend the fish markets on Sunday morning, and to inspect the bait which is disposed of at Circular Quay, and prevent people from being summoned before the courts?

Mr. REID: Among my multifarious duties and responsibilities, the care of the fish, especially bait, on Circular Quay is not included. The fish markets are under the control of the municipal council—I have nothing whatever to do with them.

INCREASES TO CIVIL SERVANTS.

Mr. ROSE: I wish to ask the Premier a question about an answer which he gave to the hon. member for The Hume. The right hon. gentleman is reported to have said that he would assure the Committee that no public officer receiving a salary of over £400 would receive any increase under the estimates. I wish to know from the right hon. gentleman if this is to hold good in

such cases where the House has affirmed an increase to officers whose salaries are over £400 a year? As a case in point—

Mr. REID: I do not think it is necessary to mention a case. I think I can give an answer which is satisfactory to the hon. member.

Mr. ROSE: I have another question to ask!

Mr. REID: Let us take one question at a time. I intended to make an explanation to the House if the hon. gentleman had not asked a question on the subject he mentioned, because, owing to an error in the newspaper report, which we can quite understand, considering that it was written at a quarter to 7 o'clock yesterday morning after a long sitting, it was made to appear that I promised the hon. gentleman opposite that no increases in salaries over £400 would be given to the officers. I have got a rough proof of the *Hansard* report, which shows that the hon. member for The Hume asked me this question:

Mr. Lyne wished to ask the Colonial Treasurer whether the item of £4,000 for the Public Service Board included any increase of salaries to the officers of that board?

We were on that matter only, not a general increase, but any increase in the Public Service Board. Hon. members will recollect that I had to acknowledge to the Committee of Supply that the estimates of that department were put in a most unsatisfactory way on the estimates-in-chief; and, instead of the details of the officers' salaries being given, as in other cases, there was simply a lump sum of £4,000 for the "reorganisation of the public service." I read to the Committee a list of the officers and their salaries last year and this year, from which it appeared that no increase was included in this item of £4,000. But still that was a very hurried statement, and I promised the hon. member for The Hume that I would make thorough inquiry to perfectly satisfy myself that there is no increase in a salary of £400 on that estimate; and, if there is one, it shall not be paid for the reason that the Committee of Supply had no opportunity to deal with the increase. Consequently, under the general understanding which was arrived at, I certainly could not give an increase, under the circumstances, on an estimate in which the officers were not fully stated, and an opportunity given

[*Mr. Reid.*]

to the Committee either to give or refuse the increase. My statement was entirely confined to the one department, under the special circumstances of the case that the estimates for that department were not set out properly on the estimates-in-chief. I wish emphatically to state that every increase voted by the Committee of Supply will be paid other than an increase in this department, about which the Committee had not proper information.

Mr. J. C. WATSON : Does not the hon. member recollect asking the Committee to indicate whether they would take £300 or £400 as the minimum in respect to general salaries, and not in respect to the Public Service Board? I have a distinct recollection of an understanding having been arrived at.

Mr. REID : £300 was mentioned first, and then there was a general desire to make it £400!

Mr. J. C. WATSON : So I understood. All the hon. member wanted at that moment was an indication from the Committee as to which was to be taken as the minimum, and I think he suggested that we might have a vote on some salary below £400, so as to test the feeling of the Committee.

Mr. LYNE : So we had!

Mr. J. C. WATSON : Just so; and now I understand the right hon. gentleman to say that there was no understanding in the Committee as to increases of salaries below £400.

Mr. REID : I never made any such statement. I simply say that it is for the Committee of Supply to vote as they like on these estimates, and no matter what understanding may have been attempted to be effected, if the Committee by a deliberate vote chose to give an officer an increase, in spite of any understanding the officer is honestly entitled to it, and will get it.

Mr. ROSE : Do I understand from the right hon. gentleman that in any case where the Committee of Supply have voted an increase on the estimates prepared by the Public Service Board he is going to undo that?

Mr. REID : No; the officer will get the salary voted.

WARREN BORE.

Mr. WILLIS : I wish to ask the Secretary for Mines and Agriculture if he

has any objection before the House is proposed to lay upon the table the correspondence between his department and the Warren town council in reference to the Warren bore, and some allegations made about the contractor as to whether he was on granite or rock?

Mr. COOK : I am not aware of the nature of the allegations; but I will look into the matter at once, and, if possible, I will comply with the hon. member's request.

HOMESTEAD SELECTORS.

Mr. HAYES : I wish to ask the Secretary for Lands whether he will take into consideration the position of the homestead selectors who have lost their crops this year and are unable to pay their rents. There is a provision in the Land Act by which ordinary selectors get a remission of their rents; but as the provision does not apply to homestead selectors, I would ask the hon. gentleman whether he will take into consideration the necessity of remitting the rent for the current year in those cases where there has been a total loss of crops?

Mr. CARRUTHERS : All cases will be taken into consideration whether they are homestead selectors, homestead lessees, conditional purchasers, or squatters. So far as the Government are concerned we intend to be merciful to those who are enduring such a terrible drought.

TEMORA-WYALONG RAILWAY.

Mr. BARNES : I have a motion on the business-paper asking the House to affirm that a proposal to extend the railway line from Temora to Wyalong *via* Barmedman should be referred to the Public Works Committee. As the Public Works Committee will be going down to inquire into the Grenfell-Wyalong railway proposal, will the Secretary for Public Works empower them to obtain evidence on the Temora to Wyalong railway proposal?

Mr. YOUNG : I can only inform the hon. member that the Public Works Committee are absolutely beyond my control. I have no right to instruct them, or to suggest to them even what they should do.

Mr. A. CHAPMAN : Cannot the hon. member direct them by a resolution of the House?

Mr. YOUNG : I do not think so. The committee have statutory powers which the House has no right to interfere with.

Mr. A. CHAPMAN : The hon. member could interfere by resolution !

GEORGE-STREET TRAMWAY.

Mr. A. H. GRIFFITH : I wish to ask the Secretary for Public Works a question with regard to the George-street tramway—first, if the laying of the tram-line is done by contract ; second, if he is aware that already there are a number of serious subsidences in the new wooden blocks between the rails, indicating that the foundation is faulty ? Further, if it is contract work, will he have the matter looked into before he takes over the work ?

Mr. YOUNG : The blocks between the rails for a distance of 18 inches on each side are being laid by the contractor as part of his contract. The hon. member mentioned this matter two or three weeks ago, and I made inquiries. The reports which came to me do not bear out the hon. member's statement. I was assured at the time that these blocks were being laid in a thoroughly satisfactory manner, and that there were no such subsidences as the hon. member spoke of. I will have the matter further inquired into in the light of what the hon. member has said. If there has been any mistake made, the contractor is responsible, and I will take care that it is rectified. Perhaps the hon. member will mention the exact places in writing.

Mr. A. H. GRIFFITH : I will do so.

PRESIDENT OF THE GREATER BRITAIN EXHIBITION COMMITTEE.

Mr. GILLIES : I wish to ask the Premier a question as to whether he is aware that the health of the hon. member for Paddington has completely broken down because of the work and worry in connection with his position as president of the committee of the Greater Britain Exhibition ? If so, will he consider the advisability of compensating him for his trouble and anxiety during the past few weeks ?

Mr. REID : I scarcely appreciate the question of the hon. member, unless it is a serious one, in view of the fact that the hon. member at whom it is aimed is not in the House, and is actually not well. But I wish to say, in reference to that hon. gentleman, that those who have seen the

[*Mr. Young.*

work which he has done in connection with the subject of old-age pensions and charities, and which is in the report that has been published, would give him the highest credit for the labour bestowed on that work, which I have good reason to believe did injuriously affect his health, which has not been of the best, as I happen to know, for some years past.

NORTH COAST HARBOUR WORKS.

Mr. LYNE : I see by the morning papers that the Legislative Council last night rejected the bill for the construction of harbour works at the Tweed River. I understand that the Government do not intend to proceed with the other measures dealing with works on the northern rivers. That being so, I want to know if the Minister intends to go on with those works in the face of the fact that the Government will not proceed with the measures because they fear they will be rejected ?

Mr. REID : As far as this question is concerned, I do not know that I can really deal with it, because it relates mainly to the business of the Government in the other Chamber. At present, I have not been advised that the bills are going to be dropped. In the pressure of business that may happen ; but I have not been so informed. With reference to these works generally, it is not likely that the Government would go on with works supplies for which have been absolutely refused, with this reservation that if any work which has been begun under the authority of Parliament, that is of both houses, is in such a state that the expenditure already incurred would be thrown away or prejudiced if some measures were not taken to preserve them, I apprehend both houses would justify the Government in incurring the expenditure which would prevent such damage to work upon which public money has been spent. But as for any new departures, such as going on with an extension of those works beyond the preservation of the works already undertaken, I do not think the Government would be justified in such a course.

Mr. LYNE : When I put the question it did not strike me at the moment that the business really related to the other Chamber. With reference to the reply given, what I mean by the question is this : If a little expenditure is required to pro-

tect the edge of a bank or anything of that kind no one would object; but if the Government do not go on with these measures I presume they will not proceed with the works contemplated in the measure which has been rejected, or in those not proceeded with in the Upper House.

Mr. REID: Supply has been refused?

Mr. LYNE: I have been informed by a high authority that the Government do not intend to proceed in the Council with the other measures.

Mr. CRICK: Who is the high authority?

Mr. LYNE: I am not prepared to give the information.

Mr. REID: It was not an official conversation, was it?

Mr. LYNE: I do not know. I simply asked what was going to be done. I understood that there is a doubt whether these measures will be proceeded with, and that they are not to be proceeded with, because the Council is inclined to reject them. That being so, I want to know whether if the measures are not proceeded with the Government will go on spending the money which it seems they are afraid to ask the Council to allow them to spend.

Mr. CRICK: I should like to ask upon that what right has the Government to spend a shilling until the bill becomes law? I cannot understand how they dare to start spending money on any of these large works.

Mr. REID: As to some of these public works, we have advances on hand which both houses have voted for the purposes of the works. As to these balances, if we consider it in the public interest we will spend them, and for spending that we have parliamentary warrant. As to the expenditure not authorised, the Government cannot indulge in such expenditure unless under very special circumstances, for which we would be responsible to the House. Under ordinary circumstances we have no right to spend any money not voted by Parliament. If we do it is under a sense of responsibility to the House, and we must be prepared to justify ourselves to the House; but we are not likely to take that course unless there is a very strong reason of emergency, something to show in fact that we must do something to protect what has been already done. We would not be justified in going on with a

scheme as if we were sure to get a vote in favour of those bills. Of course, I cannot foresee any such emergency at present.

DARLING ISLAND.

Mr. LYNE: I desire to ask the Secretary for Public Works whether work is being proceeded with at Darling Island at the present time without the authority of the Public Works Committee, and, if so, whether he will stop that work until he obtains the necessary authority? I ask the question, because I have been informed to-day that such is the case. I am told that the works will cost a large sum of money, and that they are being proceeded with in sections under the value of £20,000.

Mr. YOUNG: Before moving a foot in the matter, before expending a shilling upon these particular works, I took the precaution of getting the best legal advice in the colony—not only that of the Attorney-General, because it might be said that he was likely to be biassed, but also that of Sir Julian Salomons. I consulted with these gentlemen as to the necessity for putting this work before the Public Works Committee, and I have their opinion, whatever it may be worth—and most persons will think it worth a good deal—that in the case of this particular work it was not necessary that it should be referred to the Public Works Committee. It is impossible for me to reproduce their advice from memory, but I have stated the effect of it.

Mr. LYNE: Why is it not necessary that the work should go to the Public Works Committee?

Mr. YOUNG: It is impossible for me to say at this moment, speaking from memory.

Mr. REID: We will lay the opinion upon the table!

Mr. YOUNG: If the hon. member desires to see the opinion, he is welcome to it. We will lay it upon the table.

Mr. LYNE: I hope that will be done!

PAPERS.

Ministers laid upon the table the following papers:—

Amended by-laws of St. Andrew's College, University of Sydney.

Return to an order, made on 22nd November, 1898,—“Penny Postage System.”

Notification of resumption, under the Public Works Act of 1888, of land for improving the traffic on the railway from Milson's Point to Hornsby Junction.

Amended regulation No. 324, under the Crown Lands Acts.

Return to an order, made on 23rd November, 1898,—“Awards for Shark-killing.”

By-law of the borough of Richmond.

Referred to the Printing Committee.

ROAD CONTRACTORS: FINES.

Mr. A. CHAPMAN: I wish to ask the Secretary for Public Works, without notice, whether his attention has been called to the fact that unmerciful fines are being imposed upon road contractors all through the country, and whether he will extend some little mercy to these men, especially at Christmas-time?

Mr. YOUNG: I can only say that every case liable to fine is dealt with upon its merits. I have had a number of complaints from hon. members that work in their particular districts has not been carried out satisfactorily, and, in some instances, in consequence of delay on the part of the contractor, sums of money voted for these works have had to lapse. Under those circumstances, hon. members are very anxious that I should be hard upon the contractors, and should keep them up to time. It has been almost invariably the case, when I have endeavoured to keep the contractor up to time, and have insisted upon fining him, that hon. members have taken the part of the contractor, and endeavoured to get him off his liability. I can only tell the hon. member that I have no wish to be harsh with any contractor; but I must be allowed to exercise my judgment in the administration of my department, and I do occasionally insist upon fines when I consider it is to the advantage of the country that fines should be imposed.

Mr. A. CHAPMAN: Will the hon. member temper justice with mercy?

Mr. YOUNG: I always do.

CASE OF J. M. SWIFT.

Progress report of select committee presented.

IMPROVEMENTS ON CROWN LANDS.

Mr. T. BROWN: I wish to direct the attention of the Secretary for Lands to the case of Gilchrist, Watt, & Co., the lessees of Genanagie holding, against the Crown, in which is involved the question of ownership of improvements on Crown

lands, taken under section 3 for settlement. I desire to know whether the hon. gentleman proposes to take any further steps to sustain the Crown ownership of the improvements, and if so, what steps?

Mr. CARRUTHERS: I cannot bear in mind the particulars of the case to which the hon. member refers. There are thousands of such cases coming before me in the Lands Department.

RABBIT BILL.

Mr. T. FITZPATRICK: I wish to know when the Secretary for Lands intends to introduce the long-promised rabbit bill?

Mr. CARRUTHERS: During next session the long-promised rabbit bill will be introduced, and it will rest with hon. members to assist in passing it into law.

NAVIGATION (AMENDMENT) BILL.

Mr. W. M. HUGHES: I wish to ask the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government, without notice, if he is aware that the Representative of the Government in the other House agreed readily last night to postpone the Navigation (Amendment) Bill? I want to know whether the hon. gentleman also is aware that the chief reason he had for such an unheard-of proceeding was the fact that he himself proposed to insert forty new amendments? I would ask the hon. gentleman further whether he is aware that a large number of the proposed amendments are quite unnecessary, seeing that they are already incorporated in the bill, and whether he does not think that he himself is to be blamed for the delay, in that he did not see beforehand that the bill was a complete one? I also wish to know what action the hon. gentleman proposes now to take?

Mr. REID: I can only say that I have not had an opportunity, as most hon. members would imagine, of looking into all these matters. I should have thought hon. members would be prepared to show me a little indulgence in view of the fact that the House sat, as it did, from Monday morning until last night.

Mr. W. M. HUGHES: We all did that!

Mr. REID: I have a little more to do than has the hon. member.

Mr. W. M. HUGHES: The hon. member gets more for it!

Mr. REID : That is a very appropriate remark from the hon. member.

Mr. W. M. HUGHES : The hon. gentleman can sleep when he stands. It takes me an hour to get to sleep !

Mr. REID : When the hon. member sleeps every one thanks Heaven that he is asleep. In reply to his question, I wish to say that I have not had an opportunity of learning all the things he states. Some schedule of amendments has been submitted, I think, by the Chamber of Commerce. I have not had an opportunity of dealing with them. I have not yet conferred with the Attorney-General about them, but they will form the subject of a conference between us during the recess. As to the unheard-of proceeding of putting off the bill under the circumstances, I do not think it is such an unheard-of proceeding at the end of a session that a bill likely to create some delay and opposition —

Mr. W. M. HUGHES : Why did the hon. gentleman let it go until the end of the session ?

Mr. REID : I do not know that I am on the rack at present. I am endeavouring to answer the hon. member, who sometimes has a very unreasonable way, and also a somewhat offensive way of putting questions to me. I wish to say that the Attorney-General has a pretty difficult task, representing the Government in another place, to get any Government measure passed. It is in the power of one or two members, who may take a determined stand in that Chamber, to absolutely prevent the Government from getting any measure through. It is no use at the end of the session to do a thing which we find impossible under existing circumstances, and it has been found impossible to go on with this bill under existing circumstances. That being so, the bill has been put off until next session. Hon. members must recollect that we are not in a position in the Legislative Council to carry out our policy, even as Government business. We have about ten supporters.

Mr. W. M. HUGHES : I do not blame the hon. member at all. Does he know the reason Sir Julian Salomons, and other gentlemen, urged for postponing the bill ?

Mr. REID : I am not aware of it.

Mr. W. M. HUGHES : The hon. gentleman said, when he introduced the bill,

that it was a complete and comprehensive measure, and that it did not require amendment !

Mr. REID : That is a point in which I must hold myself open to conviction. I must have an opportunity of looking into the suggested amendments. But there were other hon. members, beside the hon. member mentioned, who took up the position of insisting that this bill should be put off, and, unfortunately, at present the Government have no power behind them to resist an attitude of that kind. Out of the ten gentlemen we sent up there, I suppose we have three left. Some of them never come near the Chamber, and others, when they do so, vote against us.

Mr. THOMAS : It serves the hon. gentleman right for sending them up there !

LIMITATION OF DEBATE.

Mr. AFFLECK : I wish to ask the Prime Minister whether he will, during the recess, take steps to have a meeting of the Standing Orders Committee, in order that a standing order may be passed in accordance with the hon. gentleman's promise to limit the length of debates, and also for the consideration of other necessary amendments in the standing orders ?

Mr. REID : I think the experience of many of us has been somewhat sharpened by recent events. In saying that, I do not wish to refer specially to the Opposition ; I am referring to our experience on both sides. We have certain hon. members who do take up an unreasonable share of our time, and that practically has the effect of shutting the mouths of a large number of other hon. members who would otherwise like to say a few words. That being so, I think it is the duty of the Government to consider whether some rule cannot be framed which will not take too much out of the hands of the House, but which will practically leave the matter to the decision of the House then sitting—whether some rule cannot be adopted by which the House can be relieved from a position of actual impotence.

Mr. CRICK : Does it not rest with Mr. Speaker to summon the Standing Orders Committee ? The hon. gentleman has no power at all !

Mr. REID : I have this power : that, without referring to the Standing Orders Committee at all, I can come down to this

House and submit resolutions, as any hon. member can do, to the effect that certain new standing orders be adopted, or that a certain existing standing order be amended. Any hon. member can come to this table and put on the notice-paper any scheme for reform he likes, and, if the Government have a scheme of reform, they need not trouble this committee about it. It is quite within the power of the Government to bring in such a scheme at once, and no one can prevent them from doing so. On the other hand, if the House wishes that a scheme should be referred to the Standing Orders Committee for further inquiry, that might be a most reasonable request. If the House said, on the other hand, that that should not be done, that the scheme was a perfect one, and that they did not want further information, we could go on to pass the standing order without further delay by resolution in this House.

EARLY-CLOSING BILL.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: I wish to know whether there is any truth in the rumour that the hon. gentleman does not intend to proceed further with the Early-closing Bill this session?

Mr. REID: I am glad the hon. gentleman asked me that question, because several hon. members desired me to make some statement to the House about the bill. I am quite willing, if we have the time, to go on with the third reading in this House, and to go on with the recommittal, but I can see from the time which was taken over the bill, that it would be simply impossible to get it to another place in time to pass it this session. It is one of the most difficult subjects we can legislate upon. A number of representations have been made to me from various points of view, which show that other interests have to be studied to a certain extent besides those which we have in view. Not as affecting the main principles of the bill, but in order to make its operation more convenient to the employers. For instance, we all know that every year an establishment takes stock. Well, some provision should be made for that.

Mr. CRICK: That would only be a matter of three or four days!

Mr. REID: Sometimes in a large establishment it would be much longer.

[*Mr. Reid.*]

An HON. MEMBER: They can take the stock at Anthony Hordern's in three days!

Mr. REID: The management must be very good. There are a number of things of that sort which have been suggested as worthy of consideration, and it seems impossible that we can get the bill through this session, and if we cannot get it through Parliament this session, there will be very little benefit derived from getting it half through—that is, getting it through this House. By deferring it till next session we shall give to those interested throughout the country a chance of making their representations to us, and in the light of those representations we shall have an opportunity of making the bill as beneficial as we can.

Later,

Mr. CRICK: In regard to the Early-closing Bill, I should like to ask the Premier whether he will consider it advisable to extend the sitting over Christmas for the purpose of passing this bill? It is the most important bill the hon. member has brought forward for many years. It affects thousands of people.

Mr. A. H. GRIFFITH: The hon. gentleman is against it!

Mr. CRICK: I am not against a proper bill.

Mr. FERGUSON: The hon. gentleman is against this bill; what does he want it considered for?

Mr. CRICK: I am quite prepared to support a proper amendment of it.

Mr. FERGUSON: That means a couple of years!

Mr. CRICK: It can be done in a week. As the Premier promised the hon. member for Waratah time to discuss the Suffield matter to-night —

Mr. REID: I am going to give him time to-night for the purpose!

Mr. CRICK: This man can suffer no greater injustice between now and next session. He is out of gaol; his time has been served. If time can be given for a discussion of the Suffield case, where there is only one man at stake, surely the Premier can see his way to deal with this important bill, which affects thousands and thousands of people.

GOLD-FIELDS RESERVES.

Mr. A. CHAPMAN: I wish to ask the Secretary for Mines and Agriculture if he

is aware that serious inconvenience, trouble, and loss is being occasioned to miners on different fields in the colony through the leasing of the gold-fields reserves, and whether he will take steps to instruct the wardens to oppose these applications where it is evident they are against the interests of the miners?

Mr. COOK : These leases are invariably given upon the recommendation of the warden: He being the officer knowing most about these matters we must naturally be guided by him. If the hon. member has any special case he would like me to inquire into I shall be glad to do so.

ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES.

Mr. A. CHAPMAN: I wish to ask the Premier whether, during the recess, he will take some steps to alter the anomalies that at present exist in regard to the boundaries of certain electorates with a view of bringing them more into line?

Mr. REID : What does that mean?

Mr. A. CHAPMAN: In some electorates the number of electors is considerably below the minimum provided by the act, and in others it is considerably above the maximum. This has existed for a long time, and a readjustment of the boundaries is required.

Mr. CRICK : Two years ago the commissioners recommended a readjustment!

Mr. REID : But at that time there was some difficulty in the way of dealing with the matter in the House. I shall have time during the recess to look into the matter.

NORFOLK ISLAND.

Mr. SLEATH : I wish to ask the Premier if it is his intention to make provision so that the residents of Norfolk Island shall have their names placed on the electoral roll?

Mr. REID : As Norfolk Island is not part of the colony, the residents are not entitled to be on the roll. The island is not incorporated with New South Wales; we simply administer its affairs.

SPECIAL PURCHASE AT BEGA.

Ordered (on motion by Mr. O'SULLIVAN):

That there be laid upon the table of this House all papers relating to the special purchase application at Bega, No. 97-2, by J. T. Ritchie and W. J. Lane, for 32 acres; No. of papers, 97-8,890.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

CITY RAILWAY EXTENSION—FEDERATION.

Mr. REID (Sydney—King), Colonial Treasurer [4·42]: I promised the House that I should make some observations on two subjects—the city railway and the federation question. It will be more convenient that I should embody both subjects in one statement, and I will deal first with the city railway. The history of this attempt to extend the railway system into the city is, I think, rather familiar to hon. members. The subject has been before the House for many years, but I do not think the extension has ever been submitted to the House except in connection with a terminus in Hyde Park. I think the projects which have been submitted for the approval of this House in past years always contemplated a central station in Hyde Park. I am not now referring to recent events, but to events of years ago; and, so far as my knowledge goes, I believe that one of the main reasons which have thrown this project back for so many years has been a very strong objection to the railway coming through the park to St. James' Road, and to a great central station which would have to take up a very large portion of the northern part of the park. I believe that that element in the question has had, perhaps, more to do with the delay in extending the city railway than any other factor. Two or three years ago, knowing, of course, that this matter is really urgent, and must become more urgent with the lapse of time, I had a conversation with the late Chief Commissioner for Railways, who had always been extremely anxious and properly anxious that this subject should be settled one way or another—I had a series of conversations with him on the matter, recognising that it is one which the Government should not neglect, and I came to this compromise with Mr. Eddy about Hyde Park, that I would not oppose a scheme which stopped short of running through the entire park, which stopped short at Park-street, and took up the south-western quarter of the park. I think if any railway-station is to be in Hyde Park, that quarter would be more suitable, viewing the objections at any rate of those who regard with disfavour any railway-station in the park. If we had to choose between the four quarters of the park, the extension of the

park being a necessity, I think a vast majority would prefer that the railway should not go beyond Park-street, at any rate that would preserve the park much more than the old proposal would. Well, upon those lines that the railway should not go beyond Park-street, I consented to submit the matter to the Public Works Committee, and as hon. members can see from the printed reference to the committee, it provides, not for a terminus at the Supreme Court or St. James' Road, but for a terminus facing Park-street, and stopping short of the second half—the northern half—of the park altogether. That proposal was submitted to Parliament and referred to the Public Works Committee; but the great desire of the authorities connected with the railways to have the terminus at the original place, near the Supreme Court, which is, from the railway point of view, we will admit, far the best arrangement, and, in fact, for the convenience of the public, is probably the best arrangement, but which is one that brings against the whole project the full force of those who wish the railway out of Hyde Park. In spite, I say, of the compromise which I arrived at with Mr. Eddy, and which was submitted to the Public Works Committee, that body adopted the scheme to resume the northern part of the park, near the Supreme Court, which I had always opposed; and thus the Public Works Committee put in, not a scheme of the Government, but a scheme of their own. We have been unthinkingly abused for having submitted a scheme to the Public Works Committee, for having got that scheme adopted by the committee, and then, having obtained all we asked for, suddenly stopping, and refusing to go on with the scheme which we had submitted. All these statements are a series of misrepresentations; and, coming from some quarters, deliberately, gross misrepresentations.

Mr. MOORE: Has the hon. member got the precise terms of the reference to the committee?

Mr. REID: I have referred to the resolution. If any hon. member will send out for the resolution, he will see that what I have said is absolutely correct. There has been an attempt to bring down on my head the bad feeling and indignation of the thousands of people who would

be inconvenienced by the extension of the railway by putting me forward in that light by persons who absolutely know that their statements are false, and who have a deliberate desire to injure me.

Mr. BARTON: Who!

Mr. REID: Never mind who; I am well within the truth in making the statement which I now make.

Mr. CRICK: Name some one here!

Mr. REID: I have no desire to gratify the hon. gentleman. I wish to show the manner in which this matter has been put to my prejudice. It does not stop short of a bald blank statement which is untrue, but there has been an ingenious use made of my own words, by a quotation of a few lines from a speech I made on the 23rd September, 1896, when the Government scheme to Park-street was before the House. This has been quoted against me on a number of occasions by a number of people. I am quoted from *Hansard* to have said:

I have been as jealous of Hyde Park as any individual in the community. I have represented a constituency in which the park is situated for many years, and for a long time I had the most rigid objection to a single inch of that park being taken; but I confess that I have none of those objections now.

These persons who quoted me stopped short there. If they quoted a few lines further on, and immediately after the words they have quoted, the truth would come out, that my objections have been removed because of the —

Mr. CRICK: This is an attack on opponents; this is not a statement!

Mr. REID: What opponents?

Mr. SEE: The persons whom the hon. member is alluding to!

Mr. REID: Surely the hon. member does not want to hamper my freedom of expression?

Mr. CRICK: The hon. member can make a statement without attacking people!

Mr. REID: I confess that I have been attacked a large number of times without making any reply. I do not wish to make this the groundwork of an attack on any one; but, incidentally, I wish to justify the position of myself and the Government in connection with the matter, and in order to justify myself, I have to some extent to take a few moments in clearing away this elaborate fabric of misrepresentations. I simply intend to devote a minute or two

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to it and then to leave it. If hon. members will refer to the report of my speech, at page 3459 of *Hansard* of the 23rd September, 1896, and look at that particular quotation at the head of the page, they will see how ingeniously I have been quoted in the most unfair way. I was absent in England when this matter came up from the Public Works Committee, so that I had no opportunity of dealing with it at the time, but ever since I have returned I have refused to go on with a scheme which was not the scheme I agreed to, which was not the scheme which the Government submitted to the Public Works Committee.

Mr. WADDELL: —————

Mr. REID: I think I should have known it if that had been put in.

Mr. WADDELL: It was done when the hon. member was away!

An HON. MEMBER: The Minister is responsible!

Mr. REID: That goes without saying. At the present moment I am making a personal explanation. This is the motion of the Government which was carried during the debate in which I spoke:

That it be referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works to consider and report on the expediency of extending the railway from Redfern into the city of Sydney. The particulars read by the Minister in the debate show that what I say is correct. This sentence is in the official description of the scheme read to the House at that time:

The station building fronting Park-street will be 380 feet by 60 feet deep, three storeys in height, and attics, with central tower 200 feet high.

That is the scheme which was submitted by the Government to this House, and unless some amendment was arrived at in the debate, that is the scheme which went to the committee; but certainly the Government did not include ———

Mr. WRIGHT: —————

Mr. REID: I shall be very glad, when I am finished, to answer any question. It is very inconvenient to have questions from all parts of the House when one is making a statement. I wish to point out that these are the details of the Government scheme, showing absolutely that the station building was to be erected facing Park-street.

Mr. WRIGHT: No; St. James' Road!

Mr. REID: I suppose hon. members are slightly mixed up. I am not talking of the scheme of the Public Works Committee; I am talking of the scheme submitted by the Government.

Mr. WRIGHT: I am talking of the resolution of this House!

Mr. REID: I have already stated that the Public Works Committee did report in favour of a scheme to King-street; but I am stating that the Government scheme sent to the committee was a scheme to stop at Park-street.

Mr. WRIGHT: No; at St. James' Road. We reported on the scheme sent to us by the Government in 1897!

Mr. CRICK: The hon. member had better postpone his statement until he has had some sleep!

Mr. REID: All I can say is that intensifies the inconvenience no doubt of a Prime Minister being absent from the country. I take the full Ministerial responsibility if the Government submitted that scheme afterwards.

Mr. ASHTON: It was done after the royal commission reported!

Mr. SEE: Here is the report!

Mr. REID: The report is dated 1897; but I am now on the year 1896. The hon. member will see that it is very unfair to take me into 1897 when I am talking of 1896. My statements addressed to this House refer to what was done in 1896.

Mr. SEE: The Government referred it to the Public Works Committee since that time!

Mr. LYNE: I rise to order. I have no objection to hear a statement from the Prime Minister.

Mr. REID: I do not wish to make it; I am satisfied!

Mr. LYNE: I only wish to hear a statement from the right hon. gentleman on the question of the city railway. I wish to take your ruling, sir, on the point whether it is in order for the hon. gentleman to go into a defence with regard to some attacks made upon him by somebody—I think by the hon. member for Ashfield. If it is, there must be latitude allowed in replying to his statement; and if it is allowed, it will create a discussion which, I do not think, is allowable on the occasion of a ministerial statement. I do not do it with any desire to prevent the Premier from making an explanation.

Mr. REID: I would like to point out that I have passed away from those remarks, to which the hon. member might object. I am now explaining the proposal which the Government made on the subject. It is necessary, in order to explain the history of the matter, that I should refer to that aspect of the case. Of course, if hon. members want an imperfect statement, I can give them an imperfect statement, but I do not want to do so.

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I think the statement made by the Premier is in order.

Mr. LYNE: If the hon. member attacks some one, will he have an opportunity of replying?

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: No; only the leader of the Opposition has a right to speak after the Minister.

Mr. REID: The hon. member for The Hume is quite right, and I am the last man who would wish to bring up any heated element at the end of the session. But I was anxious to put before the Committee the more important stages of this matter, and that was interrupted by a reference to something done in 1897, for which I take the fullest responsibility, although I was not in the country at that time. I am speaking now of the year 1896, when I was in the country, and when this matter was submitted to the Public Works Committee on the 23rd September, 1896. As I have said, the information shows that our Government scheme was one fronting Park-street. Coming away from that, there was a royal commission appointed, and the Government scheme was withdrawn for the purpose of referring the matter to a royal commission. In that reference to the Public Works Committee, the matter was put as an extension to St. James' Road. But I wish to point out that my statement in reference to Hyde Park in 1896 was not with reference to the scheme of the committee in 1897, the year after. It was with reference to the scheme we were then submitting to the Public Works Committee. Now, this matter as to St. James' Road was referred by the Government to the Public Works Committee, and they brought up a report in favour of it. No wonder, because all the professional skill of the Government of this country is apparently centred on building a great central station near the Supreme Court. The whole of the professional skill we seem to

have at our command has set itself in favour of that scheme. I have made several attempts to get the head of the engineering authorities, and those interested in this matter, to contemplate the possibility of some other scheme; but I have been reduced to a practical position of helplessness. That is the practical result of all my efforts—you must go to St. James' Road. Well, I will not go to St. James' Road. Although I take the responsibility of what my colleagues did in my absence fully, I say that I will not go to St. James' Road. My proposal was to go to Park-street, and I thought that was a very serious inroad into the park, but I was prepared to settle this matter, seeing the urgency of it, by making that compromise. Now, as I say, the royal commission reported in favour of St. James' Road. It was no secret long ago that I was against that, and I am against it still; but I must acknowledge it is the responsibility of the Government to solve this matter. The responsibility is mine, or rather that of the Government, and I took this matter up again to see if I could get from our own engineering authorities a scheme on this basis. I said to them: "Now, forget there is such a thing as Hyde Park; let us suppose that Hyde Park is covered with enormously valuable public buildings; is it impossible to extend the railway into the city under those circumstances?" Without being an engineer, I say that it is a monstrous absurdity to tell me that, because a certain bit of Sydney like Hyde Park will not be permitted to be destroyed for the sake of a terminus, there is no engineering ability that can give us an extension of the railway into Sydney.

Mr. LYNE: Supposing Hyde Park were not there?

Mr. REID: That is exactly what I say. I say Hyde Park is worth more to the people without its streets of public buildings on it, than it would be if those buildings were there. That park as a park is infinitely more valuable to the people of this country than if it were covered with the most valuable buildings in the world, is the most central in the world, and, more than that, it is a park intersected by a number of thoroughfares which are a convenience to tens of thousands of people every day. I only consented to the com-

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promise of taking the south-western corner for a terminus after the matter had been worked out to my satisfaction that there would be no serious interference with those thoroughfares. Any one who has seen the park between 8 and 9 in the morning, and 5 and 6 o'clock in the afternoon, cannot fail to see that it consists of a dozen busy thoroughfares which are of the greatest convenience to the people. Under these circumstances, I took a step which I admit was rather a strong and unusual one; but feeling my responsibility in this matter, when I found that the professional assistance which we had in this country was not able to help me practically and clearly by giving me some other scheme, I thought I would go outside the colony and get an engineer of the highest standing, who is in no way affected by all these schemes, who has never had anything to do with them, and who could be trusted to be quite free from feeling or prejudice. I took the responsibility of asking the Premier of Victoria to allow the Engineer-in-Chief for Railways of that colony to come over here for a week, and look at the city and the various routes suggested in order to give me the benefit of his advice. I put that engineer-in-chief in communication with all our engineering officials, the Railway Commissioners, and other persons who were likely to be able to give him assistance.

Mr. FEGAN: Did you give instructions to save Hyde Park, if possible?

Mr. REID: I asked the engineer-in-chief to begin with the assumption that Hyde Park was impossible. I did not want advice to take Hyde Park. I said, "Mr. Rennick, assume that Hyde Park is covered with buildings of enormous value, and that it would be altogether too costly to take." That is the basis on which I put it. I did not want a recommendation to take Hyde Park. I had skilled advice of that kind by the bushel. I received a preliminary report from him setting out all the matters that would have to be studied; I got that two days ago.

An HON. MEMBER: What were the suggestions?

Mr. REID: The suggestions are coming with the report. This is an interim report, which indicates all the points that have to be studied in solving the matter. He has pro-

mised his final report in a very short time. But I know enough to say this—and in view of the fact that I have not yet received the final report, I hope hon. members will excuse me from going into details which subsequent investigation might, perhaps, not bear out. As far as I am informed from conversation with that officer, I have every reason to believe that a scheme equally convenient, equally central, will be adopted, and extending to Circular Quay, which will not involve a terminal station in any part of Hyde Park. That I have every confidence in believing, will be the substance of the report which that gentleman will send in. As to cost, I can assure hon. members—speaking of course not finally—but I have every reason to believe that the cost will not be in any way seriously greater, if it is as great, than the cost of the proposed Hyde Park scheme.

Mr. SEE: Will it be a tunnel?

Mr. REID: How can I give details when I have not received the final report? I am giving hon. members the benefit of what I know without committing the engineer to a definite opinion before making his final report. But I ask the House to take my word to this extent—

Mr. LYNE: It will not take Hyde Park!

Mr. REID: No; but I wish the House not to run into any mistake. It may be necessary to allow the trains to run under it, or through a portion of the park; but there will be no station on it; there will be no stopping-place. I fancy that those in favour of the Hyde Park site will not object to a route which will go very closely to all that they want, and which will remove the great objection which has blocked the railway for many years. Hon. members will admit that I have made a sufficiently full explanation on that subject. I think it is now more convenient that I should refer to federation—a question about which I propose to make a statement to the House. I am very glad to get away from a controversial matter to one not of that sort. Hon. members will recollect that, on the invitation of the Government, the Legislative Assembly expressed its views as to the matters which required attention in connection with the revision of the bill agreed to by the national convention in a series of definite resolutions. There was a resolution added on the motion of the hon. member for Redfern, which I voted against,

but which resolution was supported by hon. gentlemen from all sides of this Chamber, including a number of ministers. I believe four ministers voted with the majority in favour of the amendment to which I have referred, although I opposed it. Since I invited the House to give me as the best register of the opinions of the constituencies their views on this matter, it would be an altogether inconsistent and wrongful position on my part to take up to say that I would only accept those views which the House registered which may coincide with my own. I do not say that I am converted by the fact that that proposition was carried. I do not at all say that I will surrender my own opinion; but I do incur the responsibility of putting before any conference which is held in the fullest and fairest way all the resolutions which have been adopted by this House. I wish now to refer to the series of resolutions adopted in the other Chamber. We invited the other Chamber to express its views upon this very difficult matter, and they have adopted a large part of the Government resolutions, and have added some resolutions or alterations of their own. Now, with every respect to the opinions which have been expressed by the other Chamber, so far as they deviate from the opinions expressed by this House, I think no one will consider me in any sense offensive if I say that, under the circumstances of the case, I must naturally attach greater weight to the opinions of a new-elected legislative assembly than to the opinions of the Legislative Council. And I think the same statement might be made with great propriety in the mother country under similar circumstances. I will submit the resolutions of the Legislative Council, as I am in duty bound, to the conference. I will submit to the conference every resolution which the two houses have passed, as it is my duty to do, and hon. gentlemen will recollect that the object of the approaching meeting is to endeavour not to force everything that we wish to have done upon the other governments; but to do our utmost to impress on the other governments the views which have been so deliberately expressed. The conference, as hon. members will see at once, must be in the first instance at any rate, whatever is done afterwards, a conference of premiers. Hon. members will see that the first con-

ference must be constituted of the responsible heads of the different colonies. That goes without saying; but the moment the conference meets it must be a matter of mutual arrangement as to what the subsequent steps shall be.

Mr. BARTON: The conference will really be one as to procedure!

Mr. REID: Exactly. It is only fair to say that I have read very carefully the views expressed by the Premier of Victoria upon this matter, and although to my mind it might seem perhaps better that we should postpone expressing our individual views until we have an opportunity of consulting together, still since Sir George Turner has taken the course of expressing his views beforehand, I may as well observe upon them. Sir George Turner, as far as I can judge from the published reports of his speech on the subject, looks forward to this possibility—that the premiers upon meeting may be able to arrive themselves at a mutual understanding as to the matters they should unitedly agree upon, and submit to their parliaments and people. I confess that I have all along hoped that would be the decision of the conference of premiers.

Mr. J. C. WATSON: It will save a lot of time!

Mr. REID: We are all supposed to be fully seized of the feelings of our respective colonies upon the draft bill. If we are not now in that position we never shall be, and being in that favourable position, and being under a sense of direct responsibility, I think that if we can arrive at a satisfactory agreement in the conference as to the basis of the amendments which we will stand by and advocate in our respective colonies, that way of dealing with the matter will save a great deal of time.

Mr. CRICK how does that fit in with the hon. gentleman's statement that the conference was to be a conference only as to procedure?

Mr. REID: I do not need to qualify that statement, because it would be absolutely within the rights of the premiers to take any course they liked, and if in the course of discussing procedure, we considered that particular procedure the best, then it would be perfectly consistent with my statement that the conference was to be as to procedure, that it should be adopted; because, surely, this procedure is

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involved as a matter for consideration ; and if in discussing the question we come to the conclusion that that is the best way of proceeding—as far as I am at present advised, I consider it infinitely the best solution of the question—well and good. If, again, it is found that it is impossible for us to arrive at a uniform basis of amendment in the draft bill, then it will be necessary to consider some other form of procedure, because it will never do that the conference should fail of arriving at the best possible way of dealing with this subject in the speediest possible manner. No method that is not agreed to can possibly be the best method. The best method is the best practical method ; and if it be found that this method suggested by Sir George Turner is not the best practicable, because we cannot agree upon it, we must study the question as to the best practicable method of procedure other than that. Upon that question I do not intend at this moment to express any opinion at all. It is a matter that will require a great deal of thought, and upon which there may be a great difference of opinion. Before deciding upon anything, I should like to have the benefit of the freest possible intercourse and consultation with the premiers of the other colonies. The first step, therefore, is that which I have just indicated. It is highly probable that the conference will meet in the month of January. The premiers of the different colonies have to meet in Melbourne in connection with the Federal Council. I do not say that the meeting will be held there. That is not a matter which has been touched upon at all yet ; but it would be obviously convenient, when all the premiers of the colonies are gathered together for the purpose to which I refer, that we should choose that time for dealing with this matter—either before or after the meeting of the council.

Mr. WADDELL : In the event of the procedure advocated by Sir George Turner being adopted, would the Premier arrange for a short session of the different parliaments ; otherwise we shall have to let the matter go over until the end of April ?

Mr. REID : As to subsequent stages, I would not like to enter upon any definite statement without full consideration. Nothing is easier than to ask questions, and nothing is easier than to answer them sometimes. But it is better that I should

make no undertaking of any kind, and that I should leave myself particularly free to discuss these matters in conference.

Mr. A. CHAPMAN : Will the first conference be confined to premiers only ?

Mr. REID : I have just said so.

Mr. CRICK : Why not let there be representatives of each party in the House ?

Mr. REID : I do not think the hon. member is justified in dragging in any party issue. It is very ill-timed interruption to a matter of this kind. We had much better keep entirely away from our local politics. I am dealing now with a matter of Australian concern, and I think I have made as ample a statement as I can be expected to make in the circumstances.

Mr. BARTON (Hastings—Macleay) [5·20] : The right hon. member has been allowed by the House a fair degree of latitude in dealing with the two important subjects to which he has referred. I do not complain of that, and I dare say hon. members generally will not complain of me if I touch somewhat upon those matters of argument which the right hon. gentleman has put forward, although I do not intend to make a controversial speech. There is one thing which we ought all to recall in regard to the city railway, and it is this, that we have cogent evidence before us on the part of the Railway Commissioners that every day's delay in dealing with the city railway extension and the enlargement of the present accommodation at Redfern involves a danger to the public. It does seem to be a pity that some steps should not have been taken during the present session which would have enabled this House and the other House to express an opinion upon some definite plan, so that the work might be put in hand immediately—that is viewing the matter from the standpoint of the public. It is impossible to overlook the significance of the evidence which is contained in statements made before the Public Works Committee, and the royal commission, and in the reports of the Railway Commissioners. The fact cannot be overlooked that there is a daily growing danger. For myself I rather share the hon. gentleman's objection to using any portion of Hyde Park if possible, if it were feasible that a scheme could be found which would not

involve the taking of any part of it; but I would rather consent to the railway going into or through Hyde Park than see the extension of the railway from Redfern denied. I think that hon. members on all sides will agree with me that the construction of the railway into the city is a matter which cannot be much longer delayed, and I have only to say that rather than see no railway at all I would be satisfied, in the last resort, to give my vote for the bringing of it through a portion of Hyde Park. At the same time, I think care ought to be employed to see whether a scheme cannot be devised which does not involve the taking up that portion of the city. Leaving that matter aside I only wish to express the regret, which I am sure is shared by hon. members, that some steps have not hitherto been taken which would enable the House to decide upon this question of the city railway, so that whether the line be taken through Hyde Park or in some other direction immediate steps might be taken to prevent the daily danger which now exists. As to federation, I quite recognise the difficulty in which the right hon. gentleman is placed from the course of procedure which he has adopted. He has brought a very long string of proposals before each house, and in each House they have been extended. Of course, everyone will know this, that after the votes which have been taken in the other colonies favourable to the bill as well as the vote favourable to the bill in New South Wales, the difficulty of amendment is very large, and the more numerous you make your amendments the more you are increasing difficulties, and I am afraid the right hon. gentleman has very largely increased the difficulties in the way of federation by the course he has pursued, instead of in the first instance summoning a conference of the premiers after the general election which took place in New South Wales, and discussing with them upon his responsibility as a constitutional minister the steps that were necessary to be taken. I am afraid, now that we have laid down many things to which he himself and many hon. members are committed, that, if we do not get a federation which embraces all or most of those points, there will be a very strong opposition to federation, which opposition might have been

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avoided if the course had been taken of enabling members to deal with this matter without previously committing themselves. I am afraid that by this course a very large difficulty has been placed in the way of federation. But let me add this: I am not going to be a party to any multiplying of the hon. member's difficulties. As far as I am concerned I shall take no course—and I hope I shall not say anything now—which will make it more difficult to him to carry out federation if he will only put his undoubted powers and abilities into the work which lies before him, and overcome the difficulties which stand now in the way. It is an unfortunate thing that not only have there been these numerous suggested amendments, but that the two houses have not been brought into agreement; and if it were not intended to take some steps so that the two houses might have consulted or interchanged their views in order to get a united expression of opinion—if that were not intended, then I cannot help thinking that the course which has been pursued of taking separate resolutions, without any attempt to bring the two houses into unison, has only multiplied the difficulties. I am not accusing the right hon. member of having deliberately taken steps to block federation. We have had our interchanges of opinion on that subject, and I do not think this is the time to deal with statements of that kind. I am going to assume that the hon. member has taken the course which seemed to him best for bringing about federation, and not delaying it. But all I can say then is this, that I do think it is an unfortunate thing that the present course has been pursued, because it seems calculated to lead to dissension rather than agreement. As to the conference it is his intention to hold, I think it is unavoidable that the right hon. member should have endeavoured to have a conference only of the premiers of the various colonies in the first instance. I do not think it could reasonably have been expected of this Government, or any other government, that they should, in the first instance, when the question was one of policy and procedure, have been forced into giving a representation to both sides of the House, and I do not ask for it. I am quite content that this should, in the first instance, be a conference of premiers; but I hope it will not

go beyond mere matters of procedure at the present time, for this reason: now that all these various resolutions have been debated and agreed to in the two houses, if there is any attempt made to reconcile the numerous conflicting propositions that will arise on the authority of the premiers without some body being created which will represent the people as a whole, then, I think, the difficulties will again loom large. The right hon. member has claimed great credit, as we know, for having passed the Enabling Act of 1895, by which, he has often stated, the question was taken out of the hands of the politicians, and placed in the hands of the people. What I want to know is this: whether some further consideration ought not to be given to this question; whether it will not be a retrograde step to go back and take the question again out of the hands of the people into the hands of the politicians; and, if that is not intended, then the course will be pursued of which the hon. member has boasted—and I am not for a moment trying to detract from the credit which attaches to him for passing the Enabling Act of 1895. The difficulty which would then arise is this: if it has been a right thing to place the question of federation in the hands of representatives elected by the people for that purpose, and that purpose alone; if that was the right principle—and the hon. member is bound to say that it is the right principle, because he has so often boasted that it is the right principle—in that case, what reason will there ever be for turning the whole course of dealing with this matter, and taking it back into such a convention as existed in 1891, when our strongest democrats have always argued that the fatal defect in the procedure of 1891 was that the delegates were elected by the parliaments, and not elected directly by the people? There seems to me to be such an obvious inconsistency that the right hon. member will find his difficulties multiplied if he does not when the time comes appeal directly to the people for the election of members to a federal convention representing the people without any trammels at all, and on that question alone. That was the course followed in the beginning of 1897. Although we have serious differences of opinion about the bill in this House, most hon. members will be fair-minded enough to admit this, that the con-

vention which was elected in consequence of the act of 1895 was able, at any rate, to surmount an enormous number of difficulties which up to then had stood in the way of federation. If that is so—and I think it is so—if a body so elected made such progress in the work of federation as that body made, it will be regarded, I am afraid, by a great many people out of doors as a retrograde and not a democratic step to turn round and say, "We will have no more such bodies; but we will return to the mode of election pursued in 1891—the election of a parliamentary convention." I am afraid the hon. member will find that that is an unpopular step, and not likely to be so effective a step as the one which he has the credit of putting into operation by passing the act of 1895.

Mr. REID: I am not expressing an opinion!

Mr. BARTON: I am not knowingly endeavouring to commit myself, nor asking popular approval to any opinions which might stand in the way of coming to an agreement. My only trouble is this: I do wish to see this thing carried out in the way that will be most satisfactory to the people at large, and I cannot divest my mind of the impression that the people will be best satisfied by having the election of delegates to the federal convention placed in their own hands, and not in the hands of Parliament. For the hon. member's suggestion with reference to the possibility of going beyond procedure and adopting the amendments in a conference of premiers, there is this to be said: that Sir George Turner had made some expressions of opinion which would tend to render it likely that a limited number of amendments might be agreed to in that way. But it must be recollected that Sir George Turner, in the famous correspondence by telegram which passed between the premiers, laid it down that inasmuch as his own people—the people of Victoria—had voted for the Convention Bill as it stood, he could not consent to a conference of any kind reviewing the work of the convention—reviewing the bill—except in matters which were not substantial or material. Reading what he said the other day in connection with what he said in those telegrams, the probable conclusion a reasonable mind would come to would be that Sir George Turner would be adverse to any

such course as would result in agreements being arrived at between premiers to review the work that the people carried out by their representatives for the purpose in a deliberate convention. Sir George Turner may be right or wrong about that.

Mr. REID: I cannot understand his observations in any other way!

Mr. BARTON: He has expressed a very deliberate opinion on the point in those telegrams, and if hon. members read the two things together, they will see that there is also a danger there which might well be avoided. The position of Sir George Turner, it must be recollected, is also the position of the premiers of two other colonies—South Australia and Tasmania. So that if this is a difficulty which is likely to crop up in the case of Victoria, it is a difficulty which will be multiplied by the same position arising in the other colonies. This will no doubt be a very serious question, and I do not wish in any way to limit the right hon. member by any remarks I may make. I do not wish to create any impression which would prevent him from getting over any difficulty which may exist in the way of federation. But I think what I have pointed out will serve to show hon. members that there is likely to be in the other colonies an indisposition to alter the terms of this bill, unless they are altered by some similar body to that which has already made the bill—that is, a body elected directly by the people. I think I have quite sufficiently trespassed upon the indulgence of the House. I thank hon. members for giving me the opportunity of saying one or two things on what might be regarded as matters of argument. The only trouble I feel in this matter is that the steps to be taken are so extremely important, and a matter of this kind is so very delicate, and so likely to come to a complete failure unless the steps taken are well-balanced and dictated by great skill and judgment, that it is only right that these considerations should be borne in mind before the hon. member should take any steps which may commit him to a position which might injure not only the federal movement, but federation under his leadership, and I am quite content he should retain that leadership so long as he takes those steps with which even by a stretch of opinion, I can conscientiously agree.

[*Mr. Barton.*]

THE ROCK TO GREEN'S GUNYAH RAILWAY BILL.

Bill returned from the Legislative Council with amendments.

ADJOURNMENT.

PRODUCE MARKET.

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I have to inform the House that I have received an intimation from the hon. member for Waterloo that he desires to move the adjournment of the House in order to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, "The necessity of providing the residents of Alexandria and Waterloo, and other business people, with the requisite accommodation for transacting the produce business of the country."

Mr. W. M. HUGHES: I rise to order. I submit that the matter referred to by the hon. member is not one of urgent public importance. I do not think, sir, you could have understood what it was about.

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The motion is in order.

Mr. LYNE: On two previous occasions the question was raised before Mr. Speaker Abbott as to the subject-matter of a motion of adjournment being one of urgent public importance, and Mr. Speaker Abbott said, on both occasions, that he would leave the House to decide whether the matter was one of urgent public importance. On this occasion, considering that this is almost the last night of the session, I ask that you will allow it to remain in the hands of the House to say whether this is a matter of urgent public importance.

Mr. YOUNG: Mr. Speaker Abbott ruled that it was in the hands of the five members who rose to support the mover!

Mr. LYNE: My own opinion is that this is not a matter of urgent public importance. But I do not want to waste time when it is so valuable, and there are two or three measures to be proceeded with to-night. If it is possible, I desire to move a motion which will deal with this matter at once.

Mr. YOUNG: I think the hon. member for The Hume is under a misapprehension. My recollection of Mr. Speaker's ruling is to this effect: that it rested, not with the Chair, but with the five members to decide the point!

Mr. LYNE: My recollection of the ruling is: that it was not for the five members to decide the matter of urgency!

Mr. YOUNG: I will put my recollection of the ruling against the recollection of the hon. member. I am quite satisfied that my recollection is right. I have no doubt that the Clerk will be able to find a precedent such as the hon. member speaks of, if it exists. That ruling was given before Mr. Speaker Abbott's time, and it was also given in the House of Commons!

Mr. BARTON: Did not this point arise while the hon. member was Speaker?

Mr. YOUNG: It did; and, if I remember aright, I decided that it was left to the Speaker to determine; but the House carried a motion of dissent from my ruling. I acted on the decision of the House, as Mr. Speaker Abbott has loyally done. I left the determination of the matter to the five hon. members who rose with the hon. member wishing to move the adjournment of the House!

Mr. BARTON: I think the hon. member for The Manning will recollect that he and I had a friendly consultation, and that we both came to the same conclusion—namely, that it was for the Speaker to decide whether the matter was one of urgent public importance, subject to being corrected by the House in a particular case. That opinion I have always held. It does seem, perhaps, what people call a large order, to ask you, sir, to reverse a previous decision from the Chair!

Mr. YOUNG: A decision of the House, not of the Chair!

Mr. BARTON: I cannot conceive that the words "definite matter of urgent public importance" would have been placed in the standing order unless it was intended that the constituted authority of the House should decide the matter, subject to correction by the House. I am sure that all reason and all judgment point to that conclusion. I hope, whether the House deals with the matter to-night or not, it will certainly deal with this matter in the interests of a proper determination before much time elapses. I think the course which has arisen has been one destructive of the order of business, and led to obstructive motions of adjournment. But at this time of the session, when we all think that public business should be despatched with all reasonable expedition, I think it would be almost a fair thing, sir, if you

would take it in your hands to say that this decision was not a correct one, and ask the House to support you in coming to that conclusion.

Mr. A. CHAPMAN: I wish to point out to you, sir, that the notice of the hon. member is not in order, because he does not say that it is a "definite" matter of urgent public importance upon which he wishes to move the adjournment of the House. According to the wording of the standing order it must be stated in the notice that it is a "definite matter of urgent public importance." It is well known to every hon. member, who has moved the adjournment of the House, to discuss grievances, that that fact must be stated in the notice. In this case it is not so stated, and who is to say that it is a definite matter? I submit, sir, that on that point alone the motion is not in order.

Mr. W. M. HUGHES: The motion is not in order for another reason. Under no conceivable set of circumstances do the residents of Redfern, Alexandria, and Waterloo want extra accommodation for this purpose. It is not the residents, but the produce merchants, of those districts who require this extra accommodation; but the hon. member uses the word "residents" in his motion. How can the hon. member, as a resident of Alexandria or Botany, say that he desires extra facilities to transact the produce business of the country? I submit, sir, that the motion is out of order—first, because it is not a matter of public importance, inasmuch as it relates only to the produce merchants; and, secondly, because it cannot be a matter of urgency to the residents, inasmuch as they are not engaged in the produce business.

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: With regard to the matter of urgency, Mr. Speaker Young gave a ruling on this point. The purport of the ruling was that the Speaker had power to decide whether a matter was or was not urgent; and, thereupon, Mr. Want moved the following motion:—

That this House dissents from the ruling of Mr. Speaker as to the construction to be placed upon No. 1 of the new rules, wherein Mr. Speaker considers that such rule places upon him the responsibility, in the first instance, of deciding upon the question of the urgency or otherwise of any motion on which it is sought to move the adjournment of the House.

Debate ensued.

Question put and passed.

The House dissented from the ruling of Mr. Speaker, and said that the Chair had not the power to decide the question of urgency—that the determination of that question rested with the five hon. members who rose in their places in support of the motion.

Mr. REID : I should like to point out to hon. members that the procedure in this matter is settled specially and precisely by Standing Order No. 49 :

When a motion is proposed "That this House do now adjourn," such a motion shall be openly proposed without any words from the mover in support, and shall only be proceeded with on five other members rising in their places to support.

The House by its practice has universally accepted the position that, if there is no other reason, on five members rising there is no power in the House to stop the motion for adjournment.

Mr. BARTON : What nonsense !

Mr. REID : Just consider, if it were so, how often hon. members would have tried to block most meaningless attempts to waste time under these motions; how often I should have invited the interference of the House when manifest obstruction was going on in past parliaments; how soon the leader of the House would move a motion, supported by his followers, that the matter was not one of urgent public importance.

Mr. McLAUGHLIN : I rise to order. I understand, sir, that a point of order was raised and argued, and that you decided that the motion was in order.

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : I decided so far as the question of urgency is concerned.

Mr. McLAUGHLIN : It has been decided by the Chair, that the question of urgency is a matter for the House to determine.

Mr. REID : It is on the statement of the Chair, that it is a matter for the House to decide, that I wish to speak !

Mr. McLAUGHLIN : Unless the Premier is prepared to conclude with a motion, he is entirely out of order. No hon. member, after the ruling from the Chair, is entitled to debate the matter unless he intends to conclude with a motion. If it is the intention of the Premier to ask the House to decide on this point one way or the other, he is in order; but as the matter now stands, the hon. member for Waterloo is entitled to proceed with his motion for adjournment, and if it is frivolous or other-

wise, hon. members have their remedy in their power to move that he be no longer heard, or to appeal to the House from the decision of the Chair. I submit, sir, that after the ruling you gave this debate is out of order.

Mr. REID : I want to point out, sir, in reply to the hon. member for Raleigh, that I am not rising to question your decision on the point of order which you have just settled; but in settling that point of order, you made an observation on another matter, which I do not wish should be taken as a ruling from you, sir, because the point may arise presently, and then it may be said that you have already ruled. I take it, sir, your present ruling, although you made an observation, is on the point of order raised by the hon. member. It is a distinct point of order as to whether this is a matter of urgent public importance.

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : I ruled in accordance with former rulings that the decision as to its being a matter of urgency rests with the five hon. members who rise.

Mr. A. CHAPMAN : I submit, as a point of order, that this is not a definite matter. The hon. member himself has recognised that by omitting the word "urgent" from his notice of adjournment. The standing order distinctly states that it must be a definite matter of urgent public importance. The hon. member himself appears to have recognised that, and on the face of it it is not a definite matter. Mr. Speaker Abbott, and other speakers, have always insisted that it must be a definite matter, and I am surprised that the hon. member should have fallen into this mistake, seeing that it is said that the notice was written out by a minister who prides himself upon his experience in these matters. If it were not insisted upon that the matter should be a definite one, it can be easily recognised that great confusion would arise, because the debate might take place on a hundred different subjects.

Mr. REID : I would point out that the standing order says nothing about the necessity of putting in the word "definite" in the motion, but it has, as a matter of fact, to be definite, and you, sir, have decided it is not a matter for you to say whether or not the motion is definite. The motion is definite enough. If the standing orders said that an hon. member shall state

[*Mr. Deputy-Speaker.*]

in his notice that the matter is definite, the point taken by the hon. member would be a good one.

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I do not think I should be called upon to say whether the motion is definite.

Mr. CRICK: There is another question of order to be considered. In my opinion your ruling is quite right, following previous rulings in this Chamber, to the effect that when five members rise they represent the decision of the House, and the Speaker has really no option; but I would like to call your attention, sir, to the fact that the motion of the hon. member for Waterloo is entirely out of order, on a very well known ground. If you look at No. 53 on the business-paper you will see that the hon. member for Condoublin has given notice of his intention to move:

That, in the opinion of this House, in order to cheapen and facilitate the handling and storage of wheat and other grain products, a large central grain-elevator should be erected at Darling Harbour terminus forthwith, and grain elevators should be erected at local wheat centres, and this system of grain-handling, &c., made auxiliary to the railways.

That motion is not in precisely the same words as the motion of the hon. member for Waterloo, but if that is not the same thing as is sought to be raised by this motion I cannot understand the English language. It is exactly the same thing, and following the ruling given by Mr. Speaker the other evening, until that ruling is set aside it stands the law of this House. This motion must be ruled out of order.

[Mr. Deputy-Speaker left the chair at 6.8 p.m. The House resumed at 7.5 p.m.]

Mr. REID: With reference to motion No. 53, I contend that it is substantially different from the question which the hon. member for Waterloo proposes to discuss. Motion No. 53 refers to the erection of a grain-elevator at Darling Harbour, and at certain wheat centres. It refers only to grain. Grain is not lifted into the air to be sold to the people of Sydney. It is lifted into the air to be put into a ship's hold or a truck. Wherever the elevator may be it is a grain elevator. How could we discuss under that head the hundred and one different articles of colonial produce? The lesser matter can be discussed under the greater, but it is impossible to discuss the greater under the less.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: This is too serious a matter to be discussed lightly. It is impossible to discuss the hon. member's notice of motion without trenching upon notice of motion No. 53, which deals with the storage of wheat and other grain products. I submit that the words of resolution No. 53 deal with transactions in the produce business of the country.

Mr. HAYNES: The question of the storage of produce is a very important question in the west, but that is an entirely different question from the question which at present is agitating the district of Waterloo. The produce in the district of Waterloo is totally dissimilar to that which will be dealt with by elevators.

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The motion of the hon. member for Condoublin, as far as I can see, deals with the erection of a large central elevator and with elevators at the chief wheat centres. The hon. member for Waterloo's motion deals with an altogether different description of produce. I do not think, therefore, it is out of order.

Mr. ANDERSON (Waterloo) [7.10]:

Mr. W. M. HUGHES: I desire to move the suspension of the standing orders!

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot interrupt the speech of another hon. member in order to do that.

Mr. CRICK: I was a member of the Standing Orders Committee which gave a great deal of consideration to these matters, and I know that the object of this particular order was to meet a case which might crop up suddenly without any notice, and with which it might be desirable to deal at once. The standing order—I have not read it since, and I am speaking entirely from recollection—was to this effect: that an hon. member might make a motion at any time.

Mr. YOUNG: Not when a question is before the House, and an hon. member is speaking!

Mr. CRICK: The object of the standing order was to deal with a case which might arise suddenly, as a question of privilege sometimes arises. An hon. member is allowed ten minutes in which to put before the House reasons why every other business should be set aside.

Mr. HAYNES: Mr. Deputy-Speaker ruled the other day that the motion could not be put until other business had been finished!

Mr. CRICK : The standing order says that the question of urgency is to be decided by the House on motion, without notice or debate, except a statement by the mover limited to ten minutes. It will be in the recollection of hon. members that Mr. Schey, on a Government night, when under the sessional order Government business should take precedence, carried a motion of this kind.

Mr. YOUNG : Moved when there was no other question before the House !

Mr. CRICK : Although it was a Government night, and there was Government business on the paper, the hon. gentleman had the right to address the House under that standing order, and he did address the House, and the House carried the motion, and the bill was brought on—I think it was the Eight-hour Bill. I submit that the hon. member for Lang Division, even although the hon. member for Waterloo is in possession of the chair, has the right, as a matter of urgency, to move a motion, just as it is the right of an hon. member to interrupt a speech for the purpose of bringing a matter of privilege before the House. Any member has a right at any time to get up in the House and demand that on a matter of urgent importance the standing orders should be set aside, while he explains to the House in a ten-minutes' speech why he asks that the matter should be taken at once. It is true that this right might be abused ; but the Committee, in framing the rule, assumed that hon. members would do what they believed to be right. If the responsibility were cast upon me of ruling, I should rule without the slightest hesitation that the hon. member for Lang Division has an absolute right to express within the ten minutes' limit the grounds upon which he would ask the House to take his motion.

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The hon. member for Waterloo was in possession of the chair when the hon. member for Lang Division rose to move the suspension of the standing orders. All that the hon. member for West Macquarie has said with regard to the standing orders may be true. But I would call the attention of the House to standing order 156, which says :

No member shall interrupt another member whilst speaking, unless (1) to request that his
[Mr. Anderson.

words be taken down, (2) to call attention to a point of order, or (3) to call attention to a want of a quorum, or (4) as provided by rule 142.

Rule 142 says that a motion without notice can be made that a member who is speaking "be not further heard." Therefore, the hon. member for Waterloo being in possession of the Chair, he cannot be interrupted by a motion to suspend the standing orders.

Mr. CRICK : I do not wish to carry the matter further, sir, but I may tell you that a later part always overrules an earlier part. The standing order referred to is a later one than that just quoted.

Mr. ANDERSON : I give hon. members who are opposing me on this occasion credit for doing what they consider right, and I trust they will give me credit for bringing this matter forward as one of urgent public importance in the interests of a large section of the people. It is a noticeable fact and a very painful one that losses are sustained by the various persons transmitting goods into the city owing to the want of sufficient accommodation at Redfern.

Mr. CRICK : I move :

That the hon. member be not further heard.

Question put, and there being no second teller on the side of the ayes,

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr. ANDERSON : Complaints have been brought under my notice from time to time that goods have perished for want of sufficient accommodation. Any one who has watched the progress and requirements of the city and the demands of the country, must acknowledge that there is a necessity for additional accommodation in respect of railway trucks and other conveniences.

Mr. W. M. HUGHES : I submit that the hon. member has now exceeded his time.

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The hon. member is still entitled to proceed.

Mr. ANDERSON : It is a very common thing to see a number of vehicles waiting at the railway station, with their loads on, sometimes for two or three hours before being able to get on to the weigh-bridge. The consequence of this congestion is that goods have to be stored in the auxiliary stores, and on the sidings at country platforms. Furthermore, there is no opportunity for purchasers to examine the goods, by reason of their being so far

away from the city. The Government should at once urge upon the Railway Commissioners the necessity of providing for the requirements of the public in this matter. The accommodation for the general public in connection with the railway goods traffic has not kept pace with the advancement of the country and its requirements. The consequence is that goods of a perishable nature are transmitted to Darling Harbour and other sidings. I have noticed some thousands of sheepskins being carried in a green condition. There are some acres of ground which have been purchased by the Government, and in respect of which they have been paying interest for a number of years, which the Railway Commissioners might utilise for the purposes of a market. This ground extends from Erskineville to the Alexandria siding. If the commissioners would put this ground in a proper condition to receive goods, the convenience of the public would be served, while the state would be putting to profitable use an asset of some value. I think the House will give me credit for urging the Government at this late period of the session to meet these very reasonable requirements in the interests of the producer as well as the purchaser. Hon. members who have been endeavouring to oppose my effort should support me in this attempt to get the requirements of the public attended to by the Government.

Mr. CRICK (West Macquarie) [7-36]: On behalf of the Government I am bound to say that the hon. member has not made out a case. I cannot entertain his request; he simply talked about a depôt at Erskineville. It will cost a good deal more to cart the produce from Erskineville to the various centres. The hon. member does not know what he is talking about. And speaking on behalf of the Government I feel that we cannot entertain this matter at all. I quite admit that the hon. member may feel a bit sore that his request to the House has not been met in a proper spirit. We use the hon. member —

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. T. FITZPATRICK: The hon. member has no authority to talk like that!

Mr. HAYNES: Don't give up cabinet secrets!

Mr. MOLESWORTH: Is the hon. member speaking on behalf of the Government?

Mr. CRICK: I am speaking on behalf of the Government.

Mr. KIDD: Will the hon. member take it as a vote of censure if the motion is carried?

Mr. CRICK: Certainly not; nothing will drag us from off these benches. We will stop here whatever you do.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: Is the hon. member in order in making a burlesque of the proceedings?

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I hope the hon. member for West Macquarie will address himself to the question before the House?

Mr. CRICK: I am authorised to speak on behalf of the Government. The request of the hon. member is one which we cannot comply with. Had it been brought forward early in the session we might have considered the matter; but we cannot do so at this stage.

Mr. YOUNG: I rise to order. I ask your ruling, sir, whether the hon. member is in order in speaking as though he was a member of the Government, and in making a burlesque of the proceedings?

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I have already called the hon. member to order. I must again ask him to address himself to the question.

Mr. REID: ———

Mr. CRICK: I am just telling them what the right hon. member told me. I say without the slightest hesitation that we cannot accept the proposal of the hon. member. It has been brought forward too late in the session. Had it been brought forward at an earlier period, we might have considered it; but we cannot entertain it now.

Mr. REID: I promised it to the hon. member!

Mr. CRICK: I cannot help what my junior colleague has done; I must stick to my principles. I insist that this Government shall not be trifled with; and whatever our supporters behind may do, they have now to learn that, since I am here, they will have to fall behind me, and not I behind them.

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. CRICK: I caution the hon. member that he must not try to bounce this Government. I also caution the others. The Premier insists that I have no right

to speak on behalf of the Government, and that being so I decline to say any more.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr. W. M. HUGHES (Sydney—Lang) [7.40]: Under sub-section *d* of standing order 49, sir, which permits a second motion for adjournment to be moved on the same day, I beg to move:

That in accordance with the authority given in sub-section *d* of the 49th standing order a second motion for the adjournment of the House be now entertained.

Mr. CRICK: I think the hon. member is bound to state on what subject he proposes to move the adjournment of the House.

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: No; I have to draw another notice from the box.

Mr. CRICK: The standing order does not provide for the second notice being drawn from the box. I want to know what I am going to vote on. I ask you, sir, to rule that the hon. member for Lang Division must state the subject upon which he proposes to move the adjournment of the House. Why should we be called to vote that an hon. member has a right to move a second motion of adjournment, it may be to discuss the transit of Venus or some other subject?

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: In a similar case Mr. Nicholson moved:

That in accordance with the authority given in sub-section *d* of the 49th standing order, a second motion for the adjournment of the House be now entertained.

That motion was carried, and then Mr. Speaker intimated that he had received an intimation from the hon. member for The Lachlan that he desired to move the adjournment of the House, so that he must have taken the second notice out of the box.

Mr. CRICK: Was not the first notice ruled out of order, sir?

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: It was.

Mr. CRICK: Then that ruling does not apply, for there was no necessity for the hon. member for Woronora to ask leave to move the second notice. If the first notice was ruled out of order there was really no first notice, and there was no necessity for a motion asking leave.

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Under the standing order this question must be put to the House without debate.

Question put. The House divided:

Ayes, 27; noes, 39; majority, 12.

[Mr. Crick.

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|-----------------|----------------------|
| Barton, E. | Lyne, W. J. |
| Bennett, W. | Nelson, A. D. |
| Carroll, J. G. | O'Connor, B. B. |
| Chapman, A. | Perry, J. |
| Copeland, H. | Piddington, W. H. B. |
| Crick, W. P. | Quinn, P. E. |
| Dight, C. H. | See, J. |
| Donaldson, R. | Suttor, F. B. |
| Fitzpatrick, T. | Thomas, J. |
| Hughes, W. M. | Watson, J. C. |
| Hurley, W. F. | Wilks, W. H. |
| Kidd, J. | <i>Tellers,</i> |
| Law, S. J. | O'Sullivan, E. W. |
| Levien, R. H. | Waddell, T. |

NOES.

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|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Anderson, G. | Lee, C. A. |
| Archer, W. | Mahony, W. H. |
| Ashton, J. | McLaughlin, J. |
| Brunker, J. N. | Millard, W. |
| Campbell, Archibald | Molesworth, E. W. |
| Carruthers, J. H. | Morgan, W. |
| Clarke, H. | Nobbs, J. |
| Cohen, J. J. | Parkes, V. |
| Cook, J. | Phillips, S. |
| Dick, W. T. | Reid, G. H. |
| Fegan, J. L. | Rigg, W. |
| Fitzpatrick, J. C. L. | Sawers, W. |
| Garland, J. | Stevenson, R. |
| Griffith, A. H. | Storey, D. |
| Harris, M. | Terry, E. |
| Hassall, T. H. | Watkins, D. |
| Hawthorne, J. S. | Young, J. H. |
| Hogue, J. A. | <i>Tellers,</i> |
| Howarth, G. | Affleck, W. |
| Jessep, T. | Lees, S. E. |

Question so resolved in the negative.

WOLLONGONG WATER SUPPLY.

Mr. YOUNG (The Manning), Secretary for Public Works [7.52], rose to move:

That it be referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works to consider and report on the expediency of constructing water supply works for the borough of Wollongong.

He said: This is not the first time that a proposal to construct water works for Wollongong has been referred to the Public Works Committee. In 1892, such a proposal was made and recommended by the committee; but afterwards circumstances came to light which showed that it would be very unwise to carry out that particular scheme which proposed to obtain the water from Cataract Creek. It was afterwards found that Cataract Creek would not provide sufficient water, and it was also held that there would be considerable danger in consequence of the water flowing over some of the excavations made for the pur-

pose of extracting coal. The present proposal is shortly described as follows:—

For the purpose of providing a water supply for the town of Wollongong, and, if necessary, Port Kembla, and intermediate villages, it is proposed to tap the Cordeaux River near its source, and create a storage of about 167,000,000 gallons, by means of a concrete dam situated at the crossing of that stream by the Mount Kembla Road. The dividing range lying between the Cordeaux River and Wollongong will be pierced by a tunnel about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile in length; through this the supply will be conveyed by an 8-in cast-iron pipe, and from thence to service reservoir, a distance of about $5\frac{1}{4}$ miles, by means of a 6-inch welded steel pipe. The service reservoir, of 400,000 gallons capacity, will be situated on a conical hill on the outskirts of the town, and from it the supply will be distributed through the usual 6-inch, 4-inch, and 3-inch cast-iron pipes. The total estimated cost of the works for the supply of Wollongong, including provision to enable a supply to be subsequently drawn for Port Kembla, &c., is £24,500. The source of supply is exceptionally good, being part of the catchment area of the Sydney water supply, and free from contamination.

It may be asked why we should supply Port Kembla, too? The necessary provision for Wollongong alone is only a little over £20,400, and I know some of the Wollongong people thought we could squeeze it down to £20,000. But hon. members will remember that lately a bill has gone through this and the other House for the construction of a deep sea harbour at Port Kembla. In all probability a considerable town will spring up in that vicinity, and it would be very shortsighted now to have a scheme inquired into by the committee which did not take into consideration the supply of Port Kembla. I am sure hon. members will agree to the motion, because we cannot know the merits of the case until it is inquired into by the committee.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

DUBBO TO COONAMBLE RAILWAY.

Mr. YOUNG (The Manning), Secretary for Public Works [7·55], rose to move:

That it be referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works to consider and report on the expediency of constructing a line of railway from Dubbo to Coonamble.

He said: The Public Works Act makes it incumbent upon me to lay on the table a plan, and a book of reference, in connection with this railway, which I now do. It also makes it incumbent upon me to read a short description of the line, and

also the report of the Railway Commissioners. The short description is as follows:—

This proposal was included in the Government railway policy announced by Mr. Watson in the year 1881.

The survey was authorised on the 12th June, 1883, by the then Minister for Works (Mr. F. A. Wright), and completed during 1885. It was also amended in the year 1893.

Several deputations have waited upon the different ministers for works urging the construction of the line. Mr. Lyne, when waited upon, stated he had advocated this route, but thought the Dubbo to Werris Creek line should be constructed first.

Mr. Young also promised a deputation which waited on him in August, 1896, that he would endeavour to ascertain which was the best way of connecting Coonamble with the railway system, and he would have that route submitted to the Public Works Committee.

The Public Works Committee, who recently reported on the proposal from Warren to Coonamble, were of opinion that it was not expedient to construct that line, but recommended the survey of a line from Dubbo to Coonamble.

The Engineer-in-Chief for Railway Construction, who recently went over the route with the Railway Commissioners, Messrs. Fehon and Kirkcaldie, and the Chief Traffic Manager, Mr. Harper, stated in a report to the Minister, dated 8th December, 1898, that without expressing any opinion as to whether preference is to be given to the Warren to Coonamble or Dubbo-Coonamble route, the latter is very satisfactory. Whilst traversing it, large quantities of wool were coming down from the Coonamble district, and beyond. The preference to this route during the present season, however, seems to be due to the fact that grass is more abundant than along the Warren to Coonamble. The rainfall, also, between Dubbo and Gilgandra, and along the Castlereagh River, seems to be somewhat in excess of that on the Warren-Coonamble route. This superiority of climate has, during the present season, enabled some very good crops of wheat to be produced.

As it is desirable to keep the railway in the best possible position for receiving produce, Mr. Deane is of opinion that the line, instead of being moved westward, as recommended by the Works Committee, should, if possible, be kept nearer to the Castlereagh, between Gilgandra and Gulargambone, so as to make the carriage as short as possible from the districts on the east side of the river; at the same time such a position would equally suit the west side. The line as laid down seems to be the cheapest possible. Length, 93 miles 45 chains; estimated cost, £207,285, or £2,215 per mile, exclusive of land and compensation.

This proposed light railway begins at the east end of Dubbo Station, at 277 miles 49·54 chains from Sydney, and takes a generally northerly course, crossing the Talbragar River at 281 miles 65 chains, this direction being maintained generally to 307 miles. From this point the line is nearly parallel to the general direction of the Castlereagh River, at a distance of from 2 to 4

miles from it, the township of Gilgandra on the river being passed at about 317½ miles. At 355 miles the river is closely approached, and following its course the line ends at 371 miles 14.42 chains at a suitable place for station purposes and for future extension, situate about half a mile from the bridge across the river leading into Coonamble.

The greater part of the land passed through is alienated. The works are light, and the ruling grade is 1 in 75 with easy curvature.

I have for a considerable time been of opinion that Coonamble ought to be connected with the railway system of the country. Hon. members will recollect that I asked the House to refer a proposed line from Warren to Coonamble to the Public Works Committee twelve months ago. The committee decided against that proposal. I only suggested Warren because, a line having been taken to Warren from Nevertire, it seemed to me to be the best approach. However, the committee reported against that proposal, and suggested in its place that Dubbo would be a better point of connection. The Railway Commissioners' report is as follows:—

In accordance with the provisions of the Public Works Act of 1888, section 13, we beg to report as under:

Cost of Construction.—The Engineer-in-Chief for Construction estimates the cost of construction of a single line of light railway, exclusive of land and compensation, at about £207,285.

Annual Cost.—

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| Capital expenditure at 3 per cent. | £6,218 |
| Estimated cost of maintaining permanent way, and for traffic and locomotive expenses | £7,219 |

Total annual cost.....£13,437

Traffic Estimate.—

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|----------------------------------|--------|
| Merchandise and live stock | £8,526 |
| Passenger traffic | 1,975 |
| Mails | 1,116 |
| Parcels, &c. | 250 |

Total annual traffic.....£11,867

It will be observed that the estimated traffic, which is based on the circumstances as at present existing and local rates for merchandise, falls short of the sum required to pay the annual interest on capital and working expenses (which latter only provide for a tri-weekly service), but it is reasonable to assume that the construction of the line would lead to a development of the country and subsequent increase of business.

Coonamble and the surrounding district is entitled to railway facilities; and as the previously proposed connection from Warren has been rejected by the Public Works Committee, we think the route at present under review is worthy of consideration.

The location of the line, if constructed, should be as near as possible to the west bank of the Castlereagh River. The east bank would be preferable, but the cost of construction would be considerably greater.

[Mr. Young.

Reading between the lines, one would think that the Railway Commissioners preferred the route from Warren to Coonamble, but inasmuch as the committee decided against that proposal, they think this one is worthy of consideration. Hon. members who know the country will, no doubt, agree with this recommendation. Every one who knows the district of Coonamble must be of opinion that that town, and exceedingly rich district, ought to be connected with our railway system.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN (Queanbeyan) [8.3]: I do not desire to oppose this proposal, but I wish to make a suggestion which I hope will reach the Public Works Committee. Fifteen or sixteen years ago we constructed a line of railway from Wallerawang to Mudgee. Ever since it has been a heavy loss to the country. The only way to make that line profitable is to carry it from Mudgee to Coonamble, and into the far west. Some time ago I had an opportunity of inquiring into the question as to whether we should extend the line from Mudgee to Gulgong, along to Coonamble. There is strong evidence in favour of it. If it were carried on from Mudgee it would serve the great and at one time prosperous goldfield of Gulgong. It should then go on to Talbragar Creek, and then on to Coonamble itself. The only way to make the Mudgee railway pay is to extend it west, so that the farmers of Mudgee, who raise large quantities of cereals and vegetables, may be able to find a market. Otherwise we shall have to go on for all time losing a large amount of money in the shape of interest on the cost of construction. The line must be extended further west, and there is only one direction in which it can go, that is to Coonamble, *via* Gulgong. I throw out this suggestion to the committee so that during their investigations they may pay attention to the subject, in order to see if they cannot get a better route for a railway to Coonamble.

Mr. WILLIS (The Barwon) [8.5]: I rise to support this proposition, and I am glad to see that the Minister is making some attempt to do justice, not only to the town of Coonamble, but to all the selectors on the road between that place and Dubbo. Any man who is acquainted with that part of the country must know that there are hundreds of thousands of acres of unalienated land there, land as good for wheat-

growing purposes as any we have. This land is to be found after you leave Talbragar until you reach the town boundaries of Coonamble. There are thousands of acres there belonging to the Crown. It might have been better, as the hon. member for Queanbeyan has said, to take the line from Mudgee to Coonamble, but for this fact, which is staring us in the face : that the Mudgee line is absolutely not safe, and to make it safe would cost a mint of money. The late Mr. Eddy, who was an authority on railway construction and permanent way, expressed a very decided opinion that the Mudgee line was unsafe, and that, if it were extended, a large expenditure would be necessary to put the line in a safe condition. I hope the Public Works Committee will investigate this matter, and that next session we shall have a bill before us. The bane of many people in the west—at Coonamble, Walgett, and Collarenebri—is that we have had so many conflicting routes proposed—one from Mudgee, one from Narrabri, and one from Warren. Between these different conflicting routes they have been left out in the cold for a number of years. I hope the Committee will present a report which will enable the bill to be passed into law next session.

Mr. HASSALL (Moree) [8·7] : I trust the House will have no hesitation in sending this proposal to the Public Works Committee. As the Minister stated, the Railway Commissioners were in favour of an extension from Warren ; but, the Public Works Committee having inquired into that proposal, and having consideration for the country between Warren and Coonamble, Dubbo and Coonamble, and Mudgee and Coonamble, came to the conclusion that Dubbo was the best point of departure for any line down the Castlereagh. The line from Dubbo to Coonamble would first of all traverse the great ironbark forest, of which so much has been heard, and from which an enormous timber supply can be obtained for many years to come. This line will go through the heart of that country. The land upon the Castlereagh is agricultural land, and will carry a large population. It is admirably situated for wheat-growing along the banks of the river, and further back it is suitable for pastoral purposes. As to the line from Mudgee, from that point to Gulgong, and

thence to Cobbora, it would travel mountainous country, involving expensive construction ; whereas, on the route from Dubbo to Coonamble, there are few engineering difficulties. The people of Coonamble for many years past have looked upon Dubbo as their business centre, and all the residents along the valley of the Castlereagh do their land, banking, and other business in Dubbo. It has been the centre of their operations for many years. Their desire is to get a connection with that centre. Had the connection with Warren been sanctioned, the people of Coonamble would have had to travel an extra 40 miles in order to reach Sydney. The country between Warren and Coonamble is also pastoral country, and will not be put under agriculture for many years—if, indeed, it is ever under the plough. The whole of the land between Dubbo and Coonamble, on the other hand, is admirably suited for agriculture. I commend the Minister for submitting it to the House, and I am sure the Public Works Committee will bear out the opinion formed by the previous committee. Another point in favour of the line is that the country out towards Walgett and Coonamble would be well served by a light line, such as the Moree line, keeping down the expense of construction as much as possible. I hope that not only will the proposal be submitted to the committee, but that the committee will recommend the construction of the line.

Mr. HAYNES (Wellington) [8·11] : There can be no doubt that the Minister has taken a wise course in submitting this line of railway. It will open up a large area of country throughout its entire length, with the exception of the forest belts which it traverses. The great objection to the proposal that it would interfere with the Mudgee line, is answered by the fact that nothing can shut out continually the extension of that line. The last speaker was quite correct in what he says as to the country towards Cobbora. The land there is no doubt rugged. The country from Mudgee to Gulgong, on the whole, is enormously rich. There is also some magnificent land round about Cobbora. No doubt the extension would get rid of the present loss of £36,000 upon the Mudgee line. If a line is taken from Wellington to Spicer's Creek, it can be intercepted by a line run-

ning from Mudgee. The country round about Dubbo is also very rich country, and is open to the plough in all directions. Some of the most magnificent wheat returns in the southern hemisphere have been announced from those districts, and I do not believe there will be a better paying line in the colony than this extension. If I thought that it would shut out for all time the extension of the Mudgee line, I should be opposed to it; but I do not think that can be the case, because the extension of the Mudgee line is a national question. The people of Dubbo have exhibited enormous enterprise, and have established practically a city. I have the assurance of the Minister that he will, next session, consider the question of a line from Wellington to Spicer's Creek. That line, taken in conjunction with the present proposal, will lead to the settlement on the soil of hundreds of families. I am glad that the Minister has found time at this late period of the session to submit this proposal. At every opportunity I have endeavoured to lessen the importance of the decisions of the Public Works Committee as regards great projects, because I hold that the Government are responsible for them. We should keep ministers up to their responsibilities in these matters. The Public Works Committee is of assistance to this Chamber and the Minister, but to make it supreme is opposed to well tested principles of parliamentary government. I therefore take every opportunity to emphasise the point I have alluded to. I have no doubt the line will be found to be of as paying a character as the extension from Narrabri to Moree.

Mr. AFFLECK (Yass) [8.18]: Personally I do not agree with the proposal to send this work on to the Public Works Committee. I am not opposed to the construction of the railway, because I do not know anything about the country, but I am opposed to sending any more works to the Public Works Committee at the present time. Only yesterday morning we passed a loan bill, authorising the borrowing of over £2,250,000 of money, on which interest will have to be paid.

Mr. WILLIS: I rise to order. Is the hon. member in order in referring to a loan bill passed at yesterday's sitting?

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I do not think the hon. member is out of order.

[Mr. Haynes.

Mr. AFFLECK: There are plenty of hon. members who want to put the gag upon me. I am at perfect liberty, I submit, to put forward arguments why the line should not be submitted to the Public Works Committee. Before sending this proposal to the Public Works Committee, with the possible result of adding considerably to loan expenditure, we should remember that on every million by which we increase the debt of the country we have to pay interest. Then, again, there are plenty of public works to go on with at the present time. What is the good of inquiring into others before it is absolutely necessary? Everything is against the view of referring further works to the Public Works Committee at the present time. Next session will be quite soon enough to do so. If the House does its duty to the country, it will decline to send any more works to the Public Works Committee in the present state of affairs.

Mr. SEE: They have not anything to go on with!

Mr. AFFLECK: It is not necessary that they should go on with anything; there are already sufficient public works in hand, and we have no right to incur more expenditure under present conditions. On looking over the book of reference, I find that the land through which this line will go is nearly all private property. It will go through very little of Crown lands. When the land resumption is taken into consideration, the line will be a very expensive one.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK (Rylstone) [8.23]: I do not know whether the Secretary for Public Works has agreed to refer to the Public Works Committee the alternative line from Mudgee to Coonamble. If he has not done so, I would suggest that that course should be followed. It has been objected that the line from Mudgee to Coonamble would be a much longer one than that from Dubbo; but the total distance from the terminus at Coonamble to the metropolis will be much less than the distance *vid* Dubbo. I understand that in other cases the Public Works Committee have considered alternative schemes, and, if possible, the same course should be followed in regard to the proposed railway. As pointed out by the hon. member for Queanbeyan, the Mudgee railway was constructed at a time when it cost a great

amount of money to complete it, and it is now running at a loss of £30,000 per annum. The only rational way by which that annual loss can be minimised is by the extension of the Mudgee line through Gulgong, across the Talbragar, and through all that country where the land is very rich, on to Coonamble, and eventually probably to Walgett. It is impossible to expect the Mudgee line to pay until some such extension is made. The original route for the Mudgee railway was altogether different from that eventually selected. The latter was chosen in order to serve the purpose of a few score of individuals who owned land along that line of country. Is it possible for the Minister to ask the Public Works Committee to report also on the line from Mudgee to Coonamble?

MR. YOUNG: It is not in my power to do that!

MR. FEGAN: I may tell the hon. member that the last committee adopted that course!

MR. YOUNG: They did not do it at my instance!

MR. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: The new committee, knowing that there is a great difference of opinion in regard to the merits of the two proposed lines, will, I hope, make some inquiry, and report with regard to the Mudgee line while they are dealing with the line from Dubbo to Coonamble. It would be of assistance to the Public Works Committee if the Railway Commissioners were instructed to furnish an estimate of the cost of this alternative scheme together with a return of the probable revenue. The committee could then place the two lines in juxtaposition as regards revenue and expenditure, and be in a better position to come to a conclusion as between the two lines.

MR. PHILLIPS (Dubbo) [8:28]: There seems to be a general feeling in the House that this line should go to the Public Works Committee. I am not at all surprised at that, seeing that the proposal of the Minister is not a new one, for twenty years ago a proposal to construct a line from Dubbo to Coonamble was included in the Governor's speech. With regard to the remarks of the hon. member for Rylstone, who desires the Minister to submit an alternative scheme to the committee, I may say that the last Public Works Committee considered the three rival routes—

the one from Mudgee, the one from Dubbo, and the one from Warren. By reference to the report of the last Public Works Committee the hon. member will see what a line from Mudgee would cost. I will read, for his information, what the committee said in reference to the extension from Mudgee:

The line from Mudgee to Coonamble did not commend itself to the sectional committee. Only very strong local reasons could justify the construction of a railway so costly as this would be, and these the sectional committee did not find. The mining returns from Gulgong, which is about 18 miles from Mudgee, are likely to improve, and the land in the vicinity and further west furnishes a considerable quantity of agricultural produce; but neither mining nor agricultural prospects appear to be sufficient to recommend the route from Mudgee to Coonamble as that which should be chosen.

The estimated cost of the line from Mudgee is £478,936 as against £207,285, the estimated cost of the Dubbo to Coonamble line. So that as far as the alternative scheme is concerned the hon. member for Rylstone will see that it has already been fully considered by the Public Works Committee.

MR. HAYNES: The hon. member must not forget that a railway from Mudgee would open up Gulgong, one of the richest centres in that part of the country!

MR. PHILLIPS: That is another matter. I am not saying anything with regard to the ultimate extension of the railway beyond Mudgee. Although the line from Dubbo to Coonamble shows an annual loss, according to the estimate of the Railway Commissioners, of £2,000 at the start, I have not the least doubt that the great developments which will take place both on the Coonamble side and the Dubbo side will be such that it will not be long after the railway has started operations before it will become a good paying line. The hon. member for Yass objects to any works going to the Public Works Committee; it is hardly worth my while to answer that objection. In one breath the hon. member said he was against any works going to the Public Works Committee, and in the next breath he said it would be time enough if the works were proposed during the next session of Parliament. I do not see any reason in that. The House has appointed a body to consider public works proposals, and so long as a work is of a reproductive character, or is likely to prove

reproductive in a reasonable time, we are justified in undertaking its construction as soon as possible. As I have already shown, this railway has been promised for the last twenty-five years, and it has only been owing to the intervention of two or three political crises that it has not been undertaken long ago, for strangely enough it was included by Mr. Watson in his financial statement in 1881. The Stuart Government, of which Mr. Wright was Secretary for Public Works, proposed a line from Mudgee, and that proposal was lost by a large majority. When Mr. Lyne became Secretary for Public Works he proposed a line from Dubbo to Coonamble, but his Government left office before that proposal could be carried out. I am quite sure, from the tone of this debate, that the House is in favour of the motion to refer this line to the Public Works Committee, and I feel quite satisfied that if the Public Works Committee think it worth while to go very much into detail—seeing that the late Public Works Committee have reported fully on the proposal—they will report favourably of the line, and the House, on the receipt of their report, will authorise the construction of this very necessary work.

Mr. KIDD (Camden) [8·35]: I do not blame the hon. member for Yass for the position he has taken up against the expenditure of loan money. I think he is taking an over-cautious view. I think it is a very good thing to refer this proposal to the Public Works Committee. I am against the reference of alternate routes to the committee. I am also against the Railway Commissioners being asked for any reports in regard to projected lines. I think the Minister should have all the responsibility of initiating and carrying out public works of any character. To ask the Public Works Committee to report on alternate routes is, I think, to waste time, and to go outside the provisions of the Public Works Act. If it had been a proposal to construct a line from Mudgee to Coonamble, I should have had serious misgivings about sending it on to the committee, in view of the enormous cost of the line from Mudgee to Coonamble, and the annual loss of £36,000 on the Mudgee line. Are we going to lose another sum of £30,000 or £40,000 a year for the sake of carrying an extension from Mudgee to Coonamble? I am quite sure, from the reports which have come

[*Mr. Phillips.*

to hand, that it would increase the loss on the existing line considerably to take an extension from Mudgee to Coonamble? We cannot invest too much loan money in the construction of judicious public works such as railways which will open up vast areas of reproductive country and bring about closer settlement. I have not a great knowledge of the country between Dubbo and Coonamble, but I have not the slightest doubt but that within a year or two of its construction there will be a profit on this railway. There cannot possibly be a loss where the land served is of such enormous value, and where every acre is closely settled.

Mr. ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL (Illawarra) [8·38]: As the representative of a coastal electorate, I have very great pleasure in supporting a proposal to open up a very important part of the interior of this colony. Coonamble has been a very important centre for a very long time. Wherever the people have formed centres of population in the early days, as well as in later days, you may depend upon it that it is a safe rule to provide means of communication to those centres. Another phase of this question of opening up the interior is rarely put forward in the House when railway proposals are submitted: There are large portions of this country, particularly on the coast, where the population is very dense. The population on the coast is continually increasing, and the overflow requires an outlet and a means to reach the markets when men do migrate. The district of Illawarra has been populating other parts of the colony for a generation past. It is to the advantage of the people of Illawarra and Maitland, and of Sydney and its suburbs, to have these rich lands in the interior opened up in order that they may be able to go there, take up farms, and cultivate the soil, not only with profit to themselves, but with advantage to the country. The argument put forward by the hon. member for Yass, that this line will pass through a great deal of private land, is, to my mind, a strong argument in its favour, because it shows that there are people in the district.

Mr. T. BROWN (Condoumlin) [8·40]: I do not think the opposition to this proposal is very strong, and, therefore, there is very little need to meet the arguments which have been advanced against it. I

am the representative of a somewhat similar country, and this country to which the Minister proposes to take this railway is of that character of agricultural country which I have been strongly urging the department and the Parliament to develop by this kind of railway. I am perfectly satisfied that if this line is sanctioned the developments which will ensue from its construction will be such that it will be placed on a paying basis in a very short time. I do not think there need be any apprehension on that score on the part of the House in constructing this line. At the same time I think it is only fair to the House that the best possible scheme should be adopted, and that, therefore, the inquiries of the Public Works Committee should not be confined exclusively to this proposal, to the exclusion of other schemes; and I would be prepared to say that the extension from Mudgee to Coonamble, advocated by the hon. member for Rylstone, should come under review by the committee. I feel satisfied that if a comparison is drawn between the two lines his proposal has advantages far and away superior to those which the other offers. There is another alternative scheme which might be considered, namely, from Coonamble to Narromine, pretty well on the same lines as this. It is only a question of cheapness of construction as to which line should be adopted. I think all these alternative schemes should come under the notice of the Committee, so that the House may be placed in the position to fairly judge between the alternative schemes, and adopt that which is in the best interests of the country generally. As far as a connection between the railway system and Coonamble is concerned, I am satisfied that the character of the country is such as to warrant the construction of that line right away.

Mr. YOUNG (The Manning), Secretary for Public Works [8·43], in reply: I have only a few words to say in reply. Every hon. member seems inclined to think this line should be constructed, except the hon. member for Yass. He appears to hold such pessimistic views as to the prosperity and future prospects of the colony as to cause him to vote against almost anything which to most members seems likely to lift the country into a state of prosperity. If a railway can be constructed, and it

will pay interest on the outlay, what does it matter how many of such lines are constructed? I can understand the hon. member opposing the construction of some lines—for instance, the next line I propose to submit, perhaps, he will oppose with a little more reason than he opposes this proposal. But this line from Dubbo to Coonamble, to connect that rich fertile district of Coonamble and all the surrounding country with the railway system, it seems to me the hon. member should approve, the only question being what is the point of connection. As to the point of connection, I have tried already Warren, and I am obliged to come back on Dubbo. Any hon. gentleman looking only at the map not knowing anything of the nature of the country, and not knowing that the line to Mudgee is not paying, would say that the connection should be from Mudgee. I confess at once that when I came into office, and the deputations urged me to propose a line from Mudgee, I was very strongly of that opinion; but the more I looked into the matter, and became acquainted with the country—the more information I gained, the more it showed me that if I had to wait for the construction of a line from Mudgee to Coonamble it would be a long time before Coonamble was connected with the railway system.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

COBAR-WILCANNIA RAILWAY.

Mr. YOUNG (The Manning), Secretary for Public Works [8·47], rose to move:

That it be referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works to consider and report on the expediency of constructing a line of railway from Cobar to Wilcannia.

He said: I have led hon. members to expect that this line is of an entirely new character from the line which I proposed a moment ago. It may be considered perhaps more of a national line than the line to Coonamble. Unfortunately it is not so likely to pay, and I do not suppose it would be considered right to refer the proposal to the Public Works Committee except for the fact that we have a vast extent of country out beyond Cobar, and although it is not perhaps so rich and fertile from one point of view as the country about Coonamble, yet I have great reason to believe, and I know a great many hon.

members believe, that there is an immensity of wealth out in that direction. Although it is more of a mineral character perhaps than of an agricultural character, still the wealth is there. And when we consider that a great deal of this western country, so long as it remains untapped by railways from Sydney, although within the territory of New South Wales, practically belongs to another colony, I think hon. members will be inclined to stretch a point and allow me to refer this proposal to the Public Works Committee. I will now read what I am obliged to read under the Public Works Act. I lay upon the table the plans and books of reference. It is a long and expensive line. Its length is 156 miles 45 chains. I need not read the whole of the report. I will read only the following passages :—

This surveyed line leaves the end of the present terminus, Nyngan to Cobar railway, at about 459 miles 36 chains, and, proceeding in a westerly direction, follows the main road to Wilcannia through the counties of Robinson and part of Booroodena to 501 miles 50 chains; thence in a slightly south-westerly direction past Brockmetta Lake up to 533 miles; thence it bears north-westerly to 538 miles; thence due west through the county of Rankine to Lake Poopeloe, crossing and recrossing the main road at 569 and 572 miles; thence bearing south-westerly through the county of Werunda to 587 miles; thence north-westerly to Wilcannia, crossing the Darling River at about 619 miles 60 chains; thence through the town of Wilcannia, running between and parallel to Murray and Broughton Streets, and terminating at about 621 miles 36 chains.

This line is laid out with 1 in 75 grades, to get rid of which, by contouring, an extra length of line of $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles is considered necessary. The estimated cost, £497,000, covers this additional distance, but the estimate includes the cost of altering the grades to 1 in 100.

Sharpest curve, 14 chains radius.

Wilcannia, which is to be served by this line, is the centre of a very large district, and from evidence given before the Public Works Committee it was ascertained that the annual freight earned inwards and outwards at this town was at least £80,000.

That sufficiently explains the line. I will now read the report of the Railway Commissioners. I am sorry to say that that report is not so brilliant as one would hope in proposing a line like this; but I have already asked hon. members not to consider this as a line which will pay at present or in the near future, but it is necessary in order to bring the outlying parts of this province into communication with

[Mr. Young.

the seaboard and metropolis. The Railway Commissioners' report is as follows :—

In accordance with the provisions of the Public Works Act of 1888, section 13, we beg to report as under :—

Cost of construction.—The Engineer-in-Chief for Construction estimates the cost of construction of a single line of light railway, exclusive of land and compensation, at about £497,000.

Annual Cost.—

| | |
|--|---------|
| Capital expenditure at 3 per cent. | £14,910 |
| Estimated cost of maintaining permanent way, and for traffic and locomotive expenses | £12,400 |

| | |
|-------------------------|---------|
| Total annual cost | £27,310 |
|-------------------------|---------|

Traffic Estimate.—

| | |
|----------------------------------|--------|
| Merchandise and live stock | £1,000 |
| Passenger traffic | 800 |
| Mails | 1,000 |
| Parcels, &c. | 4,000 |

| | |
|----------------------------|--------|
| Total annual traffic | £6,800 |
|----------------------------|--------|

In connection with the above railway proposal, we desire to say that, having on previous occasions traversed the districts through which the proposed railway line would pass, and being acquainted with their resources, we have not deemed it necessary to make another visit of inspection. It is not our usual practice when dealing with extensions referred to us by the Government to enter into the merits of alternate routes; but the circumstances surrounding the proposal under review are exceptional, and necessitate some reference being made to other proposals for dealing with the traffic in the Darling River district. We have already reported on proposals for railway extension from Cobar to Wilcannia and Silverton, and from Condobolin to Menindie and Broken Hill. The one recommendation in favour of the line Cobar to Wilcannia is the fact that it will require the construction of considerably less new line, and consequently, in the first instance, involve less capital outlay. It will, however, be the longest in length from the metropolis. From a traffic point of view it is, however, not so desirable as the route *via* Condobolin. The latter route would better bisect the country lying between the western and south-western lines; it would open up for development a better class of country, and would enable New South Wales to conserve a great deal of traffic from the centre of the colony which is now drawn to the adjoining colonies. It is presumed that if that extension to Wilcannia is made, the line would eventually be taken on to Broken Hill. When this project was under consideration some years ago, the prospects of Broken Hill were exceptionally good, and quite different to what they are to-day. Then a very large traffic in coke, fuel, and ores was anticipated which cannot now be hoped for, as the ores are not now locally treated. In view of the very small prospect of the line to Wilcannia proving other than a large burden on the railway system, the commissioners cannot recommend its construction.

I am bound to put the whole case before hon. members, and I think the Railway Commissioners' report puts it in the worst possible light. It is only reasonable that the

Railway Commissioners should take that view, because they naturally look with alarm at an increase of non-paying lines. Hon. members, however, will look at it from a somewhat different point of view, and they will be justified in referring this proposal to the Public Works Committee. There is another point of view which I would like hon. members to consider, and that is with regard to the public lands of the colony. At my request, I have been furnished by the Lands Department with a return of the lands 20 miles on each side of the proposed line. In leasehold areas expiring in 1918 there is no less an area than 1,995,000 acres. Then there are occupation licenses liable to be taken up from year to year; the area is 1,433,000 acres; untenanted, 25,000 acres; and there is alienated land, 51,000 acres; settlement and homestead leases, 381,000 acres; reserves, 476,000 acres; area of Crown lands in these different holdings, 3,453,000 acres; total, 3,929,000 acres. Looked at from that point of view, the hon. member for Yass cannot raise the same objection to this line as he did to the Dubbo-Coonamble railway. If his argument is worth anything, we should be developing land still belonging to the Crown by constructing this railway. I do not think it is necessary to say anything more about this proposal now. I admit that there is very slight chance of the line paying directly for a considerable number of years; but I think hon. members are justified in passing the motion when we look at the fact that this large outlying part of New South Wales is at present, and until this line is constructed will be, cut off from all connection either with reference to the carrying on of business or even having any sympathy with what takes place in the metropolis. The only way in which we can expect these people to feel that they are denizens and inhabitants of New South Wales is to construct a line of railway, and bring them into close touch with the metropolis of this great colony.

Question proposed.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN (Queanbeyan) [8.58]: Personally, I am strongly in favour of this line; but I would like to know what the Minister means by asking permission to send this line to the Public Works Committee when that body has already strongly reported in favour of the railway?

Mr. YOUNG: Many years ago!

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: That has nothing to do with it. Years ago this committee reported strongly in favour of the line, and on the strength of that report the first section from Nyngan to Cobar was constructed. The Minister has power to go on with line at once.

Mr. YOUNG: Not without an act of Parliament!

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: An act of Parliament has already been passed authorising the construction of the first section from Nyngan to Cobar. That line would never have been constructed if it was not intended to carry on the railway to Wilcannia and Broken Hill.

An HON. MEMBER: The Minister has no authority to go beyond Cobar!

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: He had authority then to go on to Wilcannia and Broken Hill. All that he has to do now is to introduce a bill to construct the railway to Wilcannia.

Mr. YOUNG: Not without inquiry!

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: The committee reported strongly in favour of constructing the whole line, and the first section has been constructed. Now, we find the Minister going so far as to send it on again to the committee, wasting valuable time and more money in the shape of fees, with a view to making a recommendation already made. The Minister has only to act upon the recommendation of the committee, come down with a bill, and go on with the construction of the railway from Cobar to Broken Hill. While the project is well worthy of support, we are merely wasting time and money by referring it again to the Public Works Committee. I cannot understand the Minister forgetting this fact; but he has power at present to bring in a bill to construct any other section of this line he chooses. The section already constructed is paying handsomely; it has led largely to the development of the Cobar mining fields. The minister of the day, who authorised the construction of that section, did his duty, and now it only remains for the present Minister to come down with a bill authorising him to carry out another section from Cobar to Wilcannia, without referring it to the committee. We are only throwing valuable money away by paying fees of £2 2s. a day to go over exactly the same work as was done in 1891, and, more than

that, we are losing valuable time. I will give a few reasons why the line should be constructed. In the first place, it is another section of a line between Sydney and Broken Hill, which ought to have been carried out eight or ten years ago. If it had been, we should have had a very large portion of the trade between Broken Hill and Alma. Because we omitted to do our duty in that day in this Parliament we have lost that trade, and the result is that although, geographically, we own the country on the other side of the Darling, the whole trade goes to Adelaide and Melbourne. By taking this line to Wilcannia, you will give us a chance of tapping that trade. Wilcannia will be, and is now, one of the most important centres of inland trade in Australia.

Mr. SLEATH : It is all rich mineral land that the railway will go over !

Mr. O'SULLIVAN : There is no reason why another Broken Hill or two will not be found there. All the silver does not lie in one particular spot. There is no reason why other great treasures may not be found in the same region. Already we have seen the development of the opal mines. We have seen the development of Mount Browne, and Tibooburra, which have already given very good returns. Wilcannia is the natural entrepot for all the trade in that district, as well as from the Paroo and the western portion of Queensland. The Wilcannia trade is now done with Adelaide and Melbourne by steamer, but if this line is constructed I venture to say that three-fourths of it will be done with Sydney. A storekeeper at Wilcannia now has to get about six months' stores in advance because the river goes down and navigation ceases. Upon these stores they have to pay interest and insurance. All those charges would be avoided if we had direct railway communication between Wilcannia and Sydney, because the storekeeper at Wilcannia could get his goods up in forty-eight hours, and would have no interest and insurance charges. Another argument in favour of the line is that it will conquer a province lost, commercially, to New South Wales through the supineness of governments ten or fifteen years ago. When the Broken Hill field was being developed we ought to have carried out a railway there. The hon. member for The Hume proposed to do

[*Mr. O'Sullivan.*

so, but was prevented by the Opposition led by Sir Henry Parkes. That was one of the greatest mistakes of that veteran's political career, because, if that line had been carried out we should have had today a large proportion of the Broken Hill trade.

Mr. MOLESWORTH : No ; it would be water-borne !

Mr. O'SULLIVAN : Steamers cannot get up to Wilcannia all the year round.

Mr. MOLESWORTH : I am talking of the ocean traffic !

Mr. O'SULLIVAN : When the Dibbs protective duties were on, there was no thought of getting goods from Adelaide or Melbourne. If there had been a line from Sydney when those duties were on, and if there had been no railway to get the goods from Adelaide there would have been a very different state of things. By this line we can conquer a whole province lost to us in a commercial sense. Another reason why I support the line is that it opens up a large area of splendid land. Hon. members talk of the western country as though it were only fit to run rabbits. They look upon the place as a wild desert, but most of it consists of rich chocolate soil, and in spring-time you may go there and see grass 3 or 4 feet in height, with a quantity of flowers and shrubs in full bloom. When I was there the place looked like a garden. There seemed to be a continuous garden from Nyngan to within 40 miles of Wilcannia. If there were only a fair rainfall the land would grow almost anything. I have seen splendid wheat crops grown within 50 miles of Wilcannia, and I have also seen wheat grown 70 or 80 miles beyond Cobar ; you may also see grown there vegetables and citrus fruits of all kinds.

An HON. MEMBER : You must have the rainfall !

Mr. O'SULLIVAN : The provision of water is not beyond the reach of science. Hon. members, when they speak of the far west, must not speak as if of a desert. There is ample room for settlement there, and I do not believe the day is far distant when, if we can obtain water by artesian wells and other means, all this rich chocolate soil will be under profitable occupation. The whole of the land between Cobar and Wilcannia is also Crown land, and that is another argument in favour of the

line. Another point is, that it will give us, some day, communication with the transcontinental system of railway. There is already a line of railway as far as Hergott's Springs, in Adelaide, and it is in contemplation to extend that line to Port Darwin. There is also a proposal to make a line from Alice Springs to Coolgardie, and thence on to Perth. This line to Wilcannia will connect us indirectly with this great continental system of the future. We shall some day see a line of railway from Port Darwin through to Broken Hill, thence to Wilcannia and Cobar, and on to Werris Creek and Queensland. This line will eventually form part of a great network of transcontinental railways, and we must have some regard for that aspect of the question. I am a strong supporter of the project itself; but I call attention to the absurdity of sending the proposal back to the Public Works Committee. That committee has already reported upon it. It was almost unanimously in favour of its construction, and so much attention was bestowed upon the report that Parliament determined to carry out the first section of the railway as far as Cobar. We have, up to that point, a line giving a handsome return to the state in full operation. Why, then, should the Minister waste public time and money in sending this proposal back to the Public Works Committee? He has power to-day to bring in a bill to make this section of railway, and in the following year he might take the section between Wilcannia and Broken Hill. The hon. gentleman should be told by Parliament to proceed with the bill at once, without going through the farce of paying the Public Works Committee a large sum to go over the work which was done in 1891.

Mr. MOLESWORTH (Newtown—Erskine) [9-11]: The last speaker said, in the first instance, that all that was required was that the Minister should have the courage to call for tenders in order that this line might be constructed; but even under the old report of the Public Works Committee, which has been laid aside as obsolete, the hon. gentleman would have to bring in a bill before a contract could be let. This question was discussed two or three years ago, and it was held by a majority of the House that it would be wise to lay the old report of the Public

Works Committee aside. That report was made in boom-time, when money was not thought so much of, and when there was not such a fear of annual losses on our railways. We were in a very different position financially. According to the report then presented, the line was estimated to cost something like £1,500,000, and the loss upon that expenditure would be considerable. Besides, the traffic arrangements then were very different from what they now are. At that time the Broken Hill ores were treated at Broken Hill itself; they are now treated at Port Pirie. I do not agree with the hon. member for Queanbeyan that this line would secure that traffic, and now that works have been established at Port Pirie, and that ores or metal can be shipped there for transshipment to ocean-going steamers at other ports, it is not likely that people would go to the expense of bringing the ores and metal such a long distance overland. I shall not object to the line going to the Public Works Committee. On the contrary, I think people in distant parts of the colony are entitled to some consideration. Before we refuse a work of this description it should be fully inquired into. I do not think it is right to rely upon the Broken Hill traffic, and I look upon the line solely in so far as it concerns Wilcannia. If the report of the Public Works Committee is favourable, I shall vote for the line later on. If it appears that the anticipated loss is of such a serious character as not to warrant the construction of the railway, I shall reserve to myself the right to vote against it.

Mr. LYNE (The Hume) [9-18]: This is not a new matter before this House. It has been before us on perhaps two or three occasions. On the first occasion, in 1886, I was Secretary for Public Works. I then made up my mind that this was a proper direction in which to take a railway to Broken Hill, and had I remained in office, I intended to make that proposal. I am am sure that if the railway had been constructed at that time it would not have been a losing line, but a line earning something to support those lines that are losing. I have heard hon. members say that this line will never pay; but it was said that the line to Cobar would not pay. When that line was constructed Cobar was a very different town from what it is to-day. The

mines were closed down, and business was almost at a standstill, and as far as one could judge there was very little to make a railway pay; but the construction of a line gave the place fresh life. I do not know how much the line is paying, but it is paying fairly well. The line has led to the investment of capital at Cobar, and has induced a number of people to go there who otherwise would not have gone. It has enabled low grade ores to be utilised and turned to good account. A great quantity of ore produced at Cobar, and which is now bringing in a good return, could not be utilised at all but for the existence of a railway. Hon. members can see, therefore, what a revolution can be effected by railway construction. Hon. members who know anything about the country from Cobar to Wilcannia, must know that it is a great mineral centre. Beyond Cobar, a little to the south of the proposed route, 70 or 80 miles past Cobar, there is an immense mineral deposit. I happen to know something about it. If there were railway communication, I have not the slightest doubt that there would be another Cobar in that direction. When we know that the construction of a railway will advance the prosperity of the colony, we are acting in a very short-sighted way in withholding its construction. It is said that when this line reaches Wilcannia it will take trade from New South Wales to the other colonies. If that were so, it would be a reason why the line should not be constructed. But it is not so. If the line tapped the river at Wilcannia, and if the collateral scheme of locking the Darling were carried out, it would be a centre to which produce, which now goes to the other colonies, would be sent. Even though they have smelting works at Port Pirie—very little smelting is done at Broken Hill at the present time—we know that this line connects with the Lithgow Valley, where you have every mineral required to be utilised at Cobar and Broken Hill. It may be that, if you constructed a railway to Wilcannia, and from there to Broken Hill, a good deal of ore that now goes in the other direction would go to the Darling at Wilcannia, and meet there the coal, the timber, the coke, the limestone, and other things that can be found at the other side of the mountains. Then it must not be forgotten that the line would pass through forest coun-

[*Mr. Lyne.*

try, from which the mines at Broken Hill would be able to get large quantities of timber; at present jarrah and Norway pine are used to a great extent. Between Cobar and Wilcannia there is a great deal of good land, which would be turned to better account if the railway were constructed, though the seasons there may be variable. I regret that, years ago, we did not establish direct communication with Broken Hill, and I consider the present a good opportunity of doing so. I think the Minister is right in submitting this to the Public Works Committee again, instead of going upon the old report of ten or twelve years ago. If the hon. gentleman submitted a proposal based upon the old report, the House would justly say that the circumstances were changed, that the conditions might not be the same as they were when evidence was obtained by the former committee, and that a report obtained now might be entirely different from one based on the former evidence. Therefore, I think the Minister is quite right in the course he is taking. Even those hon. members who are at present opposed to the proposal should have no objection to sending it to the Public Works Committee, because they will have an opportunity of dealing with the matter later on, when they will have fuller and better information than is available at the present time.

Mr. AFFLECK (Yass) [9-25]: I take something of the same view of this line as that taken by the hon. member for Queanbeyan. I believe this must be one of the main lines of the colony in time to come; but I have the same objection to this as to the last proposal. I object to its being referred to the Public Works Committee. As the hon. member for Queanbeyan has told us, there is a report already before us.

Mr. YOUNG: I find, on looking into the matter, that this line from Cobar to Wilcannia, or a line reaching Wilcannia in any way, was never referred to the Public Works Committee. The line was referred to the committee as far as Cobar, and in their report upon that reference the committee said they approved of a line being constructed as far as Cobar, as the first section of a line to go to Wilcannia; but, as a matter of fact, the line to Wilcannia was never referred to the Public Works Committee.

Mr. LYNE: Here is the report of the Public Works Committee on the line from Cobar to Wilcannia, referred to them in 1891!

Mr. AFFLECK: On the 1st July, 1896, I spoke on a proposal to construct a line in this direction, and I spoke upon it favourably; because I had been to Broken Hill, and while there I made use of my eyes, and I also got answers to certain questions. I put down some information to show what would be the result if this railway were constructed. I had a conversation with the manager of the Proprietary Mine, and he gave me some figures showing what his company had paid to the Silverton Tramway Company and the South Australian Government for trainage for six months. The amount was averaged, and the expenditure for one month amounted to £20,256, made up as follows:—Bullion, £2,859; timber, £944; coke, £5,791; coal, £3,574; ore, £6,564; general goods, £525. The manager also told me that if the line were constructed it was probable that the company would remove their works from Port Pirie to Newcastle, because they had land at the latter place. I am favourable to this line, notwithstanding that, according to the report of the Railway Commissioners, it would involve a considerable loss. But I am against sending it to the Public Works Committee. We have already had one report from the committee; and what is to prevent the Minister, if he wants to go on with this work, from getting the House to pass an opinion upon it? If the House then says it will not authorise the work unless another report is made, then he can easily submit it to the Public Works Committee. It is unjustifiable to put the country to the expense of another inquiry by the committee if the House is prepared to accept the report made some years ago.

Mr. MOORE (Bingara) [9:31]: I rise to support the view put forward by those hon. members who contend that this work ought not to go to the Public Works Committee. A proposal to construct the line from Cobar to Cockburn was referred to a former Public Works Committee. That committee reported in favour of that line as far as Broken Hill, and in due course the Minister submitted to the House the resolution required under the Public Works Act that it was expedient to carry out the

work, and Parliament passed that resolution. That was on the 20th June, 1895, only three years ago. The passing of that resolution imposed a statutory obligation on the Minister to carry the work out, and I want to point out that somebody has set the law at defiance. The law says that once that resolution is passed the Minister has no option but to introduce a bill.

Mr. BRUNKER: What was the work reported on by the committee?

Mr. MOORE: A railway from Cobar to Cockburn *via* Wilcannia. The Minister now asks the House to submit a portion of that line to the Public Works Committee again—for what purpose?

Mr. AFFLECK: To incur a lot more expense!

Mr. MOORE: Exactly; to incur unnecessary expense. What more information does the House want in regard to this line than that collected by the former Public Works Committee?

An Hon. MEMBER: What was the date of their report?

Mr. MOORE: It was in 1891. Every requirement of the law has been fulfilled in regard to this line. Parliament is in possession of all the information required, and is well able to come to a decision without going through the circuitous process of again referring it to the Public Works Committee and sending these gentleman away on a tour of inspection, to take evidence all through that country during the recess. There is work for the committee to do in getting information in regard to other proposals. The Minister does not require this resolution, he ought simply to introduce a bill authorising him to go straight on with the work.

Mr. SEE (Grafton) [9:35]: I am quite sure that if the Minister brought down a bill to sanction the construction of the line, those hon. members who have spoken as they have done, would not have supported him, but would have told the hon. gentleman that it was his clear duty with a new Parliament to refer the proposal to the Public Works Committee for further inquiry. I think the Minister is adopting the right course. I think he would not have been justified in acting upon a report which was made in 1891, and that the House would not have sanctioned the construction of a line of this magnitude unless

it was furnished with fresh evidence, and with a fresh report. I think all public works ought to be referred to the Public Works Committee before a new Parliament is asked to decide on them. In view of the magnitude of this particular proposal, and in view of the fact that the House will be furnished with later information, I think it should be referred to the Public Works Committee for inquiry and report. I hope the House will pass the motion.

Mr. WILLIS (The Barwon) [9:37]: I rise to support the motion. I think that if a bill had been brought down a great deal of objection would have been taken, and probably it would not have been carried. I have known this line for a great many years. As I was one of those who were directly concerned in getting the Government to construct the first section of the line, I take some pride in supporting the construction of the second section of what must ultimately be a great line from the metropolis to tap that great silver-field at Broken Hill. Some hon. members, like the hon. member for Yass, who objects to everything and anything, allege that this line will not pay.

Mr. AFFLECK: I said nothing of the kind!

Mr. WILLIS: I do not take that view of the subject. When the Cobar line was first proposed, we were met with a similar reply, and a refusal to construct the line. Although the line is only just beginning to pay, it must be admitted that it has opened up a vast mineral field, and set many thousands of persons in a healthful and profitable prosperity. But for its construction, I doubt very much whether one of the greatest mines in the southern hemisphere—the Great Cobar Mine—would have been reopened and given the employment it has to hundreds, if not thousands, of men. The line has been the means of opening not only that mine, but a great mineral field within a radius of 10 or 12 miles of Cobar. It has given the people in and about that district the means to deal with low-grade ores. It may surprise some hon. members to know that mines are paying there, and paying well, and employing a great many men—I do not know the number—at full union rate of wages on 3 dwt. to the ton. If we had not a railway to Cobar, these

mines could not have been opened. Now they have worked into that state of perfection that they are not only paying good wages, but starting to pay dividends. All this great march on towards progress is attributable mainly to the construction of the railway to Cobar, because when we had no railway, when we had to go to Nyngan, through bog, slush, and muck in a rainy season, I have known us to pay £8, £10, and £12 a ton for carriage, and, more than that, to be four, five, and six months on the road from Nevertire to Cobar. I have known mines to be hung up. I was one of the early shareholders in nearly every mine there, bar the Great Cobar Mine, and I know the difficulties we had—some mines were absolutely thrown up. Nearly twenty years I was a shareholder in the Occidental Mine, which has a fifty-head stamper going night and day, giving healthy employment to a large number of men, and paying dividends—nearly twenty years ago I was a shareholder in this mine, and we had to run away from it as you would run from a mad dog, simply because we had not money to bring machinery and timber, and other necessaries to work the low grade ores from the railway terminus at Nevertire. We want to go on with the second section of the Cobar line. In my opinion it will open up a dozen mines through that Boorandara country. I have had samples taken from Mount Billygo line of reefs which have assayed 3, 4, 5, and up to 7 dwts. of free gold. There are mountains of mineral land there. You can do nothing 50 or 60 miles from a railway. The people find that they can do nothing without a railway. It is only a fair business project to take a railway line into a vast territory which is known to contain mineral in abundance, and it is a fair project for the Government to take a line into their own territory. Only a few thousand acres of this land are alienated, and the people will simply be building a line through their own territory to improve their own property. Outside the minerals, we have to consider how much will accrue to the Treasury by improving the capacity of the land for pastoral pursuits. I know this country well, and I know that once they get a railway there, there are tens of thousands of acres of rich alluvial flats, and the chocolate soil on those flats will grow, in certain sea-

[*Mr. See.*

sons, nearly anything. I have seen wheat there as strong, as prolific, and as healthy as any wheat I have seen in more favoured portions of the colony. These flats will grow wheat, lucerne, and so on. Until a system of agriculture, in a fair season, and wool-growing are combined, that country will never be the success we hope to see it. But if you combine the two, if you give people a railway to their door, so that if they do put 500, 600, or 1,000 acres in wheat they can get their produce away, it will simply induce settlement. Look at Narromine, look at all these spots in and about Nevertire, Nyngan, and all those places. If you were to tell a man a few years ago that he could grow wheat at Nevertire, Narromine, or Nyngan you would be laughed at, and regarded as a fit subject for a lunatic asylum. But now the finest crops which are grown in the colony are grown in and about Narromine, Nyngan, and Trangie, and all those places which were looked upon as a stretch of desert a few years ago. The land out here is just as rich. It will grow crops just as prolific as the land about Cobar, Nyngan, or Narromine. The finest crop I ever saw in my life was grown within a few miles of Cobar. A lamented old pioneer, Mr. O'Neill, had a little farm on the hill a little over from Cobar—it is now turned, I think, into a park—and the finest crops I ever saw were grown there. Of course he had bad seasons, but they have failures about Orange and Wellington, where the land, I suppose, has the finest rainfall for agriculture. They have failures in all these places. I maintain that the main objects of this railway are to open the vast mineral fields, to be the second section of a great railway line which will bring us in touch with Broken Hill, and bring a lot of the Broken Hill trade to us. It will open up big areas of agricultural land, which will be used for agriculture in good seasons, and sheep-farming in fair seasons, and it will solve the question of dealing with all that pine country. You will not find pine growing on bad country. These big flats, which are overrun with pine, show the richness of the soil which will grow such vegetation. The only way to deal with these big, rich flats, which are partly overrun with pine, is to deal with them from a mineral standpoint as well as from a wool-growing standpoint. It is the duty of hon. mem-

bers to make themselves acquainted with this part of the country. When you want a couple of hundred thousand pounds to run a tramway from King-street to Potts' Point, it is voted and no quibble is made; when you want a tramway to run down George-street to give the people at Glebe Point an extra tramline, £200,000 or £300,000 is voted and no quibble is made, though some point may be raised as to whether it will be opened in May or June; but when it comes to opening up a vast territory, which is too big, too mighty, and too important for hon. members to understand or think about, then all sorts of quibbles are raised. Now, the greatest offenders in taking these points are the Railway Commissioners and their servants. It is positively shameful to see the reports which these people have the impertinence to send down to this House. What do they take us for? Are they the only people who know anything? Are we a lot of noodles, sent in here by the votes of the people after going through the fire of several political contests—are we noodles, and do those people know everything? Here is the report they send down. It is not only a lying report, but an absolutely shameful report to submit to an intelligent body of men who have to decide on this question. Here is a great line of railway going across a continent which supports 1,000,000 sheep—to be well within the mark—and goodness knows how many stations, yet they come down here and say that from the merchandise and live stock to be carried on this line, they expect a return of £1,000 per annum. The thing is absurd. I know carriers who could earn nearly half that sum with two or three teams. Then there is the great town of Wilcannia, with settlement all along the route. Yet the commissioners have the impertinence to say, and to expect us to believe, that the traffic will only amount to £1,000. Then passenger traffic, they say, will amount to £800, and mails £1,000. Then we have parcels. The commissioners only allow £1,000 a year for all the fat stock and merchandise along that line, and yet they estimate that the parcels traffic will give £4,000 a year. They have shown so much bias against certain lines, and have tried in such a high-handed way to intrude their opinions on this House, that they now stop at nothing. What did they

do at Walgett? They got in there at 2 o'clock, and the first thing they asked for was champagne on ice. They were told that there was no ice, and there would be none until the railway was made. They then demanded champagne, as cool as it could be got, with some boiled chicken. They got a very good feed, and when they had two or three bottles of wine they said, "We have come all this way to investigate this railway line. Wake up somebody to give us information." Five or six men were got into a room, and over a friendly glass they argued the question with Messrs. Eddy, Oliver, and Fehon. They then rang the bell, ordered their coach, and went away. They were not there two hours. Yet they went away and made a damning report on the proposed railway. So it is with other railway lines. They simply put their opinions above that of Parliament. The sooner we give up taking any notice of their opinions the better it will be. Members in another place say, "What is the Railway Commissioners' report about it?" They seem to take the commissioners opinion as Holy Writ. Those people who have had railway lines to their doors for many years stand in the way of the people who want new railways, and when they do agree to pass a new railway they insert a penal clause and they say, "We will impose a new tax; you can take it or leave it." Let hon. members compare the report of the Railway Commissioners on this line with their report on the Narrabri-Moree line. They reported most hostilely against the Narrabri-Moree line; they said everything bad about it. Now, however, that that line is working, we find that they knew nothing whatever about it, because it is paying 8 or 9 per cent. on the outlay. The idea of the commissioners is to get railways as close as they can to the borders so that they can take away the trade of other colonies. But when a great national undertaking is proposed, which will open up great pastoral and mineral fields, they report dead against it. It is our duty to do with their report what such a report deserves, that is, to throw it into the waste-paper basket. I am in favour of the proposal, and I do not support the contention that the Minister should have come down with a bill without submitting it to the Public Works

[*Mr. Willis.*

Committee. I believe that he would be in a minority if he took that course, because he would have been met with all sorts of quibbles. Now, however, we have got a new committee, with keen sense of responsibility, and reduced fees, and I am sure that they will make a thorough investigation which will be favourable to the line.

Mr. WADDELL (Cowra) [9-55]: I agree with the remarks of the hon. member for The Barwon with regard to taking very little notice of the report of the Railway Commissioners. My experience is that they have only one object, that is, to have a railway system which will be sure to pay a handsome profit, rightly or wrongly, no matter whether the rates are high, or the train service is bad. They only wish to have a railway system which will suit themselves, so that they can bring up an annual report showing a profit, and so that they may be regarded as Heaven-born administrators. From my observation in the past, I shall, in future, be very little guided by anything they say upon these matters. I do not think there is much weight to be attached to what was urged by the hon. member for Bingara. It was only a short time since the Government had a report from the Public Works Committee with regard to railway extension to the city, and they did not see fit to carry out that recommendation. At the same time, I think, according to the Public Works Act, the Government should have done so. I cannot agree with the hon. member that the Government ought to have submitted a bill on the report of the committee in favour of this railway seven or eight years ago. Great changes have taken place since then, which make it an absolute necessity that this very important proposal should be reconsidered by the Public Works Committee before being sanctioned by Parliament. This is a proposal almost unique in its character, and it should be dealt with in a special way, for the simple reason that the residents of Wilcannia and that district ever since railway construction has been carried out, have had as a section of the taxpayers to help to make good the losses on the working of our railway system. They have had to contribute their quota of the losses, although from their isolated position they have received no benefit. Owing to their

being so far removed from the capital of the colony, their trade has almost entirely been with another colony, and they have received no benefit whatever from the railway expenditure. Another reason for constructing this railway is the fact that it will enable the producers of Dubbo, Narromine, and Nyngan, to send their produce out to the far west in time of drought, such as it is now suffering from. As matters now stand, in times of drought the people of that district have to get produce from South Australia if they can get it at all. It is very hard for them to get hay to feed their stock in bad seasons. That ought to form a very powerful argument with members of Parliament in sanctioning proposals which they do not expect to pay for some years. Another matter which should be borne in mind by hon. members when dealing with the question is that this will be one step forward in connecting our railway system with South Australia, by way of Broken Hill. I believe that this colony has been extremely lax and neglectful of its true interests in not having a railway constructed to Broken Hill, and owing to that fact we have lost all that trade, which has gone to another colony. If we make the railway I do not suppose we will be able to get the whole trade, but we ought to secure a large portion of it. It is rather a pity that the Government did not submit a proposal for making the railway to Broken Hill at once. Coke and coal could then be sent from Lithgow to Broken Hill, or, if that was not found suitable, ore might be sent to Lithgow. It pays very well to send it from Cobar to Lithgow, and I have no doubt it would pay to send ore from Broken Hill to Lithgow once the railway is made. There is another matter which may seem to be of not much importance, but I think it is an argument in favour of the railway which is worth considering. We expect to be federated at a very early date, and the idea of having the capital in this colony and close to Sydney is of considerable interest to many people, although I do not believe it is of so much importance as some people would make it out to be. If we had railway communication with South Australia, by way of Broken Hill, it would operate very favourably in the minds of the South Australian and West Australian people in deciding the question as to

whether the capital should be near Sydney, because this railway would provide a more direct route for them to Sydney. I do not know that there would be much difference in the distance on that line as compared with the line running *via* Melbourne, but there is no doubt that it would have an influence on the minds of the representatives of those colonies. So that in view of the whole circumstances of the case, and the unique position in which this proposal stands, and from the fact that it will tap a part of the colony which has not had the benefit of railway construction, while it has been taxed to make good losses on the railway system—in view of all these facts, the House would not act wisely if it refused to send this proposal to the Public Works Committee. I hope the Committee will not take a narrow-minded view of the question, but will regard the work a great national work.

Mr. SLEATH (Wilcannia) [10·7]: There seems to be some difference of opinion as to the carrying of the resolution authorising the Minister to bring in a bill, and I have just turned up *Hansard*. I find that the sum of £250,000 was put upon the loan estimates in 1895 for this work. The Minister in withdrawing the item said that he understood that a point of order was going to be taken—I forget what the point was now, but I think I had some resolution on the business-paper at the time. The Minister said:

At the same time, the House having agreed to the recommendation of the Public Works Committee being carried out, it has become a statutory duty that I should bring forward a motion.

Later on he said:

Although I have moved the omission of this item, the statutory obligation has been imposed on me to proceed with the bill.

That was three years ago. Much as I should like to have seen the work proceeded with, I do not object to its being referred to the Public Works Committee, because I think the conditions out there are now much more favourable to the construction of a railway than when the evidence was taken in 1891. I will instance the case of White Cliff mining field. There are something like 1,000 male adults employed there now, whereas there was not one in 1891. Altogether the conditions are more favourable now than they were in 1891. There has also been some prospecting

done since then, and it has been proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that all the country between Cobar and Broken Hill to the north is highly mineralised. There are rich patches of mineral deposits there, and these can only be discovered by proper prospecting. I am quite satisfied to refer the work to the Public Works Committee, and I hope they will report upon the merits of the case.

Mr. YOUNG (The Manning), Secretary for Public Works [10-9], in reply: I must ask hon. members to believe, and I am sure they will, that I have taken the wisest course in not assuming that this House will pass this line upon an inquiry made some eight years ago. I know that I did pass a resolution, but a great many hon. members complained even then that the report was a great deal too ancient for the House to act upon. I had passed the resolution, but it was borne in upon me that I had not the slightest chance of carrying a bill had I chosen to go on with it at that time. Hon. members will also recollect that that resolution was passed within a fortnight of the dissolution of Parliament, so that it was quite out of my power to proceed further. I am sure the general opinion will be that it would be absolutely unwise for me to expect this or the other House to pass a bill for the construction of this railway on a report of the Public Works Committee made in 1891. It is all very well to say that this reference involves an increased expense. Every reference to the Public Works Committee involves some expense. It is much better that the House should have a report which is, so to speak, up to date, bringing forward all the evidence which can be adduced, than that it should act in the dark, as it were, and possibly make a mistake. The whole intention of the Public Works Committee is to put information before hon. members enabling them to use their discretion as they could not otherwise do. The old system was to take the word of the Minister and his officials as a word which could not be denied or departed from. The new system is that every proposal should be thoroughly inquired into by a committee, and it is only reasonable for any member of any House insisting upon the information that is gathered by the Public Works Committee being brought up to date as far as possible, more especially in the case of a large

[*Mr. Sleath.*

national undertaking such as this. I admit at once that if the bill were brought forward without a thorough investigation by the Public Works Committee, I could not expect this House or the other House to pass it. I hope, therefore, that the fullest inquiry will be made, and that information will be forthcoming which will lead hon. members to pass this line. I do not care about the statement contained in the report of the officers of the Railway Department in regard to the probable traffic. It is impossible that we could make a railway 162 miles in length in any part of the country without attracting a larger proportion of traffic than that estimated.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

RAILWAY : GRENFELL TO WYALONG.

Mr. YOUNG (The Manning), Secretary for Public Works [10-14], rose to move:

That it be referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works to consider and report on the expediency of constructing a line of railway from Grenfell to Wyalong.

He said: I have here the plans and book of reference, and a short description of the line, which I will read to hon. members:

This proposed railway commences at the end of the permanently staked line, Koorawatha to Grenfell, at 309 miles 35 chains from Sydney *via* Harden, thence curving round to the left it bears in a westerly direction, crossing a spur of the Weddin Mountain range at 310 miles 40 chains; thence it runs parallel to the Forbes-road, which crosses at 313 miles 70 chains; thence in a southerly direction to the travelling stock route 530, which it crosses at 315 miles 40 chains, and bearing due west Weddin Creek is crossed at 318 miles 20 chains, and a main spur of the Weddin Mountain at 320 miles. Here the line takes a south-westerly direction, crossing Caragabel or Blind Creek at 332 miles 65 chains, and the road from Bimbi to Marsden at 335 miles 35 chains; thence it runs nearly due west up to 342 miles; thence bearing south-westerly travelling stock route 2,332 is crossed at 343 miles 60 chains, travelling stock route 574, at 374 miles 30 chains, Bland Creek at 348 miles 70 chains, and Back Creek at 353 miles 50 chains. Thence running a little more westerly up to Wyalong, where it crosses the permanently-staked line, Temora to Wyalong, at 365 miles 60 chains, and running due west parallel to the township alignment, it ends at 368 miles 35 chains. The ruling grade on this line will be 1 in 100, and the sharpest curve 14 chains radius. The works will be fairly light.

The Railway Commissioners' report upon line runs as follows:—

The Engineer-in-chief for Construction estimates at the cost of construction of a single line of light railway, exclusive of land and compensa-

tion, at about £142,292. Capital expenditure at 3 per cent., £4,269; estimated cost of maintaining permanent way, and for traffic and locomotive expenses, £4,843. Total annual cost, £9,112. The traffic estimate is as follows:—Merchandise and live stock, £2,589; passenger traffic, £2,054; mails, £720; parcels, £500. Total annual traffic, £5,863. From the information which is obtainable after careful inquiry, the estimated revenue cannot be stated at a larger sum than is mentioned above. Comparing this sum with the annual working expenses, and interest on capital, it will be observed that there will be a considerable shortage until the traffic largely develops. No doubt the district has considerable prospects, but it is not a matter of certainty that the time has arrived for Wyalong to have the benefit of railway connection. If, however, it is decided that the railway should be extended to Wyalong, the extension, in the opinion of the commissioners, should be from the proposed Grenfell line.

I would point out to hon. members that the estimate of cost is made by the Construction Branch of the Public Works Department, so that if hon. members think it is a bad estimate, they must put the blame on the right shoulders. The Engineer-in-Chief for Railways is an officer in whom I have the fullest confidence. His estimates are generally found to be very exact indeed.

Mr. J. C. WATSON: What is the estimated loss per annum?

Mr. YOUNG: About £3,500; but the Railway Commissioners expect a considerable development upon the line. They seem to consider that the claims of Wyalong to railway connection are not very great even now. I entirely differ from them. I have been to Wyalong, and I know something about the enormous amount of money which we have had to expend to keep a decent road between Temora and Wyalong. I am quite satisfied that it would have been advantageous to the country to have railway communication to Wyalong from Temora or Grenfell, I do not care which. It would have been much better had that connection been made five or six years ago instead of now.

Mr. T. BROWN (Condoulin) [10-20]: I am not prepared to oppose the reference of this matter to the Public Works Committee, though I do not agree with the Minister that this is the best route by which to reach the country aimed at. This matter came incidentally under review when the extension to Grenfell was being discussed. I pointed out on that

occasion that there were particular local formations of country that should be considered in the construction of these lines, and that there was a belt of mineral country extending from Wyalong through Condobolin, practically out to Cobar, and that the line should be so constructed as to serve this particular feature of the country. An alternative route has been suggested that runs parallel with this auriferous country, going from Temora through Wyalong to Condobolin, and extending on to Nymagee. This country has also proved to be a first-class agricultural country, and it should be developed by railway extension. I disagree with the Minister that the extension now proposed is the one best calculated to open up that country. I hope when the matter goes before the Public Works Committee every facility will be given to place the merits of this alternative route before the committee, so that at a later stage the House may be able to judge of the respective merits of the two lines.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

RIVER DARLING.

Mr. YOUNG (The Manning), Secretary for Public Works [10-23], rose to move:

That it be referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works to consider and report on the expediency of constructing locks and weirs on the river Darling.

He said: This motion is different to the one on which the reference was made in 1897. On that occasion the motion submitted was as follows:—

That it be referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works to consider and report upon the expediency of constructing weirs on the river Darling between Bourke and Wilcannia.

That motion was passed towards the end of last year; but the department was not able to submit the necessary data to the Public Works Committee to enable them to proceed with the inquiry, and therefore it is necessary that the matter should be again referred to them. It may be considered by some hon. members that the proposal to construct locks and weirs on the Darling is antagonistic to proposals for reaching that river by railway.

Mr. WADDELL: Not at all!

Mr. YOUNG: I do not think it is; but some hon. members may take that view. I think it probable that the majority

of hon. members will take the larger view, and say that both these things are necessary. The other night some hon. member, with reference to the improvement of harbours, said that a railway taken above the river would have the same effect as river navigation. I pointed out that one work was entirely independent of the other. To a large extent it will be the same in connection with the locking of the Darling. I know it has been considered that one great reason for locking the Darling is, not for the purpose of navigation, but for the conservation of water. There are some people who think that the locking of the river is more necessary for the conservation of water than for purposes of navigation. It is difficult to say which is the more important; but I think that for both reasons it is advisable and necessary to construct locks and weirs on the Darling. We know that frequently communication between the upper and lower parts of the river is completely closed for want of water. The navigation of the river is often entirely stopped, and great loss is occasioned to those living in the neighbourhood. This is a somewhat wide reference; at the same time I feel sure the committee will be able to give us such a vast amount of information, and such reliable information as will set at rest the question of whether or not it is advisable for the colony of New South Wales to construct locks and weirs on the river Darling.

Question proposed.

Mr. MOORE (Bingara) [10-28]: The hon. gentleman has just said that this is rather a wide reference. I think it is too wide altogether, and I question very much whether it complies with the Public Works Act. To ask the committee to inquire into the whole question of constructing locks and weirs on the river Darling is to refer to it rather an extensive inquiry. I do not think such a roving commission as that ought to be given to the committee.

Mr. LYNE: What was the former reference?

Mr. MOORE: To construct locks and weirs between Bourke and Wilcannia. I propose to move an amendment to add to the resolutions the words "between Bourke and Menindie." That will be a wide enough reference in all conscience, and it would be one that would bring the resolution

[*Mr. Young.*

within the spirit, if not the letter, of the act. I hold that the motion now submitted is not in compliance with the law, the Public Works Act being specific in its terms. We might as well refer to the Public Works Committee the question of constructing railways in New South Wales. I beg to move:

That the following words be added to the motion:—"between Bourke and Menindie."

Mr. HASSALL (Moree) [10-31]: I am strongly of opinion that the House should reject this proposal altogether. Some time ago a proposal was referred to the Public Works Committee, to construct locks and weirs on the Darling between Bourke and Brewarrina. There is a proposal now to construct a railway from Cobar to Wilcannia. With respect to this particular work, I would ask the Committee to listen to the concluding words of the report of the Public Works Committee, of which I was a member. We came to the conclusion that a work of this magnitude should be carried out under the federal government. With federation within a reasonable distance, and, as the whole of the colonies will participate in the benefit which may accrue from the locking of the Darling, those colonies should bear their proportion of the share of the cost. The committee concluded its report with these words:

If it be the intention eventually to carry out a scheme of inland navigation, then the whole length of the Darling must be locked, and the proposed work can only be regarded as the initial step towards rendering the river navigable for about 1,300 miles, at a cost which the committee have been informed would amount to nearly £1,200,000. The benefits resulting from this expenditure would, however, accrue principally to Victoria and South Australia, —

The whole of the trade on the Darling, if the river were made navigable from Walgett right down to the Murray, would practically gravitate to Victoria and South Australia.

while the trade of New South Wales (the colony undertaking the expenditure) and the earnings of her railways would suffer considerably by the increased competition of her southern and western neighbours, which the improvement of the Darling would facilitate. The committee are therefore of opinion that it would be unwise for this colony to engage in so lavish and disinterested an outlay until, upon the federation of the whole of the colonies, the question can be comprehensively dealt with by a federal parliament, and the expense of the undertaking fairly apportioned.

That is a sensible conclusion to come to in the present state of affairs. Federation is the burning question of the hour. This Parliament was practically elected to carry it into effect if possible, and a question of such magnitude as this must be dealt with, not by the Parliament of New South Wales or by the Parliament of Victoria or South Australia, but by the federal parliament, because the work is essentially a federal one. The object is a good one. The conservation of water in the great Darling watershed is itself a good project. The navigation of that great inland river is a great project also. But, as the whole of the colonies will derive substantial benefit from the work, they should bear their proportionate share of the cost. Why should New South Wales be saddled with an expenditure of £1,250,000 for this work to take trade elsewhere, which must be the inevitable result? If you lock the river from Bourke to Menindie, you practically throw open the waterway to the other colonies, in exactly the direction pointed out by the Public Works Committee. The river is practically navigable to Menindie in nearly all seasons. It is between Menindie and Bourke, and between Bourke and the higher reaches of the river where navigation is suspended in seasons like the present. If you construct locks and weirs between Bourke and Menindie, you make navigable the portion of the river which, while it is within our own boundaries, would be thrown open to Victoria and South Australia. It stands to reason that if you make the river navigable for that distance you bring the river into competition with the railway. It stands to reason that if you make the river navigable for that distance all the year round the traffic will gradually drift down the river from the railway constructed at enormous cost to bring the produce to Sydney, and find its way to either Victoria or South Australia at the expense of the taxpayers of New South Wales. The time has not yet arrived when this colony is justified in entering upon such an enormous expenditure, and firmly believing that the result of a reference to the Public Works Committee will be futile, that the time has not yet arrived when a work of this magnitude should be undertaken, I am reluctantly compelled to vote against the amendment and the motion.

Mr. QUINN (Sydney—Bligh) [10:37]: I must also register my protest against the reference of this work to the Public Works Committee. I cannot see why a work of this character should be proposed at all, in view of the fact, if it is a fact, that the Government intend to proceed with the work of federation. The hon. member for Moree took a point which struck me when the motion was moved, namely, that the work of making the Darling River navigable is essentially a federal work. One of the most important and protracted debates we had on the federal resolutions was on the very question of making the Darling navigable, and it was held by the party to which the Minister belongs, that this colony could not consent to the federal government making the Darling navigable if the navigability of the river involved an infraction of the irrigation rights on the banks of the river. If you propose to make the Darling navigable, then you are granting the very contention of the federal parliament that the river should be made navigable. To me this seems to be an idle proposition altogether. The work is one of a continental character. It is a work which will confer superior advantages on other colonies, and besides costing an enormous sum to this colony, it will compete with expensive railways, whose only chance of becoming reproductive is that they will gather in all the trade of that district which they will tap. The work is very well from the point of view of a House which does not intend to proceed with the railway to the Darling. If we are in earnest in proceeding with the railway to Menindie, we should leave the question of the navigability of the Darling, and leave the cost of that work to the colonies which will be most directly interested, namely, Victoria and South Australia. I was rather surprised at the remark by the hon. member for Tamworth that we could stem the tide of commerce on the river by levying tolls. What would be the object of making a river navigable for the purpose of encouraging commerce, and then levying tolls for the purpose of stopping that commerce?

Mr. SAWERS: Why don't you run railways for nothing? You want to earn the interest on the railway expenditure!

Mr. QUINN: If the hon. member argues against expending public money to

make a rival channel of communication to the railways, his logical position is to oppose this motion. If the railways are to pay, they must gather in all the trade. In view of the imminence of federation, I, for one, shall oppose this motion and the amendment. I believe this work is one of the largest works which it will be the function of the federal government to undertake.

Mr. SAWERS (Tamworth) [10:42]: It would appear from the manner in which these motions have been discussed to-night that the House was asked to pass a motion authorising the construction of the works. It would seem from the speeches on this motion as if we were asked to approve of a scheme to lock the Darling, whereas we are simply asked to refer the matter to the Public Works Committee for inquiry and report. I scarcely care what proposal the Government bring down. I shall be quite content to refer any proposal which a responsible government bring down to the Public Works Committee. While I admit that I am theoretically opposed to the locking of the Darling, why should we fear an inquiry into the matter? I court the fullest inquiry. I feel quite certain that when we get the report of the committee we will find that it will not be to the advantage of this colony to lock the Darling from Bourke to Menindie, and for this simple reason, that the trade will be carried to a large extent into the other colonies. If we are sincere federalists, as most of us are, why should we force this matter on at the present time? There is no harm in getting information on the question. If the Government are sincere in their proposal to extend the railway from Cobar to strike the Darling at Wilcannia, if they carry on the locking of the river further down to Menindie, how are they going to feed this railway? Most of the traffic, unless tolls are charged on the locks, will be carried to the other colonies. My hon. friend sneers at the suggestion that tolls should be charged. Why should a government expend large sums in locking the river to carry the trade to other colonies? Are they going to make a present of the expenditure to the steamboat companies? Why should settlers be asked to pay a sufficient freight on the railways to meet the interest on the capital account and working expenses? It is seemingly pro-

[Mr. Quinn.

posed to spend large sums on locking the river, and yet no tolls are to be charged to defray the interest. It would be far better to run the railway for nothing than to do this. This is not a proper time to discuss this question; we are only asking the committee to get information. I, for one, have no hesitation in agreeing to this motion whatever our opinions may be, and let the committee furnish Parliament with full and authentic information.

Mr. WADDELL (Cowra) [10:46]: I quite agree that the remarks made by the hon. member for Bligh Division are well worthy of consideration; but if he had lived out in that district as some of us have done, and known the tremendous hardships which people have to contend with, he would have viewed much more favourably this proposition. The hon. member for Tamworth has spoken of this work not being reproductive unless tolls are charged. May I remind the hon. member that we spend £600,000 a year on roads without getting any direct return.

Mr. SLEATH: They spend nothing on roads out there!

Mr. WADDELL: No. If hon. members could only realise the hardships which the people living in the districts from Bourke to Wilcannia, a distance of over 200 miles, have to contend with in a season like the present one—a common thing there—in getting produce to keep their stock alive, they would see that this project is well worthy the attention of Parliament. Most terrible losses occur in that district amongst the graziers. Large numbers of valuable horses and other valuable stock, which it would pay to feed with hay and chaff, are lost because they cannot get a supply for love or money. The greatest possible difficulty is now experienced in getting hay and chaff down the Darling from Bourke to keep valuable stock alive. The teamsters are unable to feed their stock. There is no feed in the shape of grass, and the cost of taking feed all the way down and back is so expensive as to be almost prohibitory. Men have to quietly stand by and see their stock die of starvation. It is impossible to feed sheep in large numbers; but valuable cattle and horses would be fed if people could get produce down in seasons like this to feed them with. From some accounts I had from Bourke a few days ago, I know that

it is almost impossible to get produce down the river, and stock are dying in large numbers on the Darling which would be kept alive if the river were locked, as they could then get the produce down in the steamers. These are facts of very great importance to the settlers on that long road from Bourke to Wilcannia. If hon. members only realised, as the hon. member for The Barwon, the hon. member for Wilcannia, and I realise, the enormous importance of making the Darling a permanent waterway, so that people could be sure of getting produce in all seasons, they would very cordially vote for this motion.

Mr. QUINN: Would it not be better to conserve water to grow that produce?

Mr. WADDELL: That would be one of the things which would follow to a large extent. A matter which is well worthy of our consideration is the fact that the weir which has been made at Bourke has been a very great success. About eighteen months ago there was a flood. For some weeks, there was 20 feet or more running over the weir, and when the water had subsided, the weir was found not to have suffered in any way. A number of people living close to the lock and weir, and the caretaker informed me that from the experience of the flood which occurred they had the fullest confidence that weirs could be made all the way down the river with the greatest success. The Government, therefore, will not be making an experiment. The experiment has been tried, and it has been a signal success. A great mistake will be made if Parliament does not sanction this motion.

Mr. SLEATH (Wilcannia) [10:51]: I agree with the remark of the hon. member for Tamworth that it would be inadvisable to argue the merits and demerits of the case when we are only asked to refer the proposal to the Public Works Committee. The hon. member for Bligh Division, speaking no doubt in good faith, but with a want of information, had got somewhat astray. He was sure the hon. member would not be averse to getting information with regard to this particular work and the country which he evidently required. That is what this reference to the committee means. They were to take evidence and present the House with such information as would enable hon. members to deal with it in a

proper spirit, and in the best interests of the colony. I agree with the amendment, which I intend to support; that is, that the inquiry should be with regard to locking the river from Bourke to Menindie, a distance of about 300 miles by road. As some hon. members know, there is very little fall in the whole of that country, and it will require very few locks. The hon. member for Tamworth was somewhat astray when he said that if the river were locked as far as Menindie it would be the means of shooting produce into the neighbouring colonies. If it were locked as far as Wentworth, about 300 miles further south, there would be a tendency to carry the trade by water into South Australia and Victoria.

Mr. QUINN: Would not the settlers lower down than Menindie to Wentworth have reasonable ground of complaint if the river were not locked lower than Menindie?

Mr. SLEATH: They might complain. But while a few people might complain if the river were not locked below Menindie, a much larger number of people now have cause of complaint because it is not done at all. Although the hon. member for Tamworth has a fairly good knowledge of this country, he is mistaken in believing that if the river were locked as far as Menindie it would drive trade to South Australia. Now, let us look at the question from a federal standpoint. If New South Wales locks the river from Bourke to Menindie, there is about twice the distance still to be attended to. If New South Wales pays the expense from Bourke to Menindie, it would fall to the other colonies interested—South Australia and Victoria—to pay for the balance which has to be done. As to the cost and advisability of carrying out the work, that will be a fair matter for discussion when the report of the committee is presented. The hon. member for Moree spoke in favour of locking the Darling from Bourke upwards. Nobody knows better than the hon. member that that is a very different thing altogether. That is a question on which I am somewhat inclined to agree with the report of the Public Works Committee. The conditions are altogether different. The hon. member for Moree has a very good experience of the outlying portions of the colony; but I am afraid his experience of the Darling River from Bourke to Wentworth is

limited, because I heard him, not long ago, say that there was no land available in and around Wilcannia which was suitable for irrigation.

Mr. HASSALL: The hon. member never heard me say anything of the kind, because I never speak of a place which I have not seen. What I said was that there was very little land suitable for cultivation between Bourke and Brewarrina.

Mr. SLEATH: I was talking about the country between Bourke and Wilcannia. Between those places there is some of the finest soil in the world.

Mr. HASSALL: Not about Menindie!

Mr. SLEATH: The hon. member only paid a flying visit there, and if he had travelled up and down the river he would have seen some excellent soil. This work is highly important.

Mr. HASSALL: I do not object to the work itself, but it should be carried out conjointly by the colonies!

Mr. SLEATH: I will not say anything with regard to that, but there should be very little objection to our getting the information the committee will supply.

Mr. HASSALL: All that information can be obtained from the inquiry already held!

Mr. SLEATH: That report was presented to Parliament by the committee last session. In the meantime the officers of the Works Department have been collecting the necessary data to submit to the committee. The great bulk of the necessary expenditure has now been incurred, and it is only a question of obtaining the evidence of experts.

Mr. QUINN: All that information is to be obtained in the report of the royal commission!

Mr. SLEATH: The hon. member is mistaken. That commission which sat years ago could not give information which is contained in the reports of engineers made during the last eight or twelve months. If the hon. member for Bligh Division waited until we could get the most recent information, he would be in a much better position to judge as to the advisability of the work. The expense of taking the evidence will be a mere nothing. When the report of the Committee is before the House hon. members can argue from their different standpoints, and I will attempt

[*Mr. Sleath.*

to meet their arguments. If they can convince me that it is against the best interests of the colony to carry out this work I shall vote with them. I hope hon. members, until then, will keep an open mind, and not be affected by prejudice.

Mr. WILLIS (The Barwon) [11'3]: I do not object to inquiry, or to locking the river from Bourke to Menindie; but I should be sorry to hand over a roving commission to the committee to go all over the country.

Mr. YOUNG: I will accept the amendment!

Mr. WILLIS: Then I have nothing more to say. I think the investigation ought to be confined within the limits of Bourke and Menindie, and not from Bourke to Mungundi, or any of those places. If we get the information a case may be made out which would warrant us going on with some of the proposed work in order to act as a feeder to the Bourke railway. Below Bourke the channel is deeper and the bank is better, and it is more like a river there than further up. As the Minister accepts the amendment, I will vote for the motion, and I shall be glad to get more information on the subject.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN (Queanbeyan) [11'5]: The House has agreed to a proposal to construct a railway from Brewarrina to tap the Barwon, which is virtually the Darling. We have also a railway to Bourke tapping the river there, and it is proposed to construct a railway from Cobar to Wilcannia. It does seem to me to be a waste of public money, after having carried three proposals to tap the river Darling for the purposes of trade, to construct weirs, which are largely a federal work, and which might very well be postponed until the federal parliament came into existence.

Mr. YOUNG (The Manning), Secretary for Public Works [11'6], in reply: I am quite prepared to accept the amendment, and for this reason: as a matter of fact this proposal had not been prepared before the railway from Byrock to Brewarrina was sanctioned by this House. Otherwise we might have had, as an alternative scheme, a proposal to expend a certain sum of money in keeping the river always open between Byrock and Brewarrina. If we can make the river always navigable from Bourke to Wilcannia, and, perhaps, on to Menindie—although I shall not be

surprised if the Public Works Committee are in favour of weirs only as far as Wilcannia—we shall have done a very useful work. If we construct a line from Cobar to Wilcannia, and have lines also to Bre-warrina and Bourke, we shall be tapping the river at all the necessary spots, and the locking of the river would enable all the traffic, both up and down from the locks for a certain distance, to concentrate at those spots. I am quite satisfied to accept the amendment.

Amendment agreed to.

Question, as amended, put. The House divided :

Ayes, 52 ; noes, 4 ; majority, 48.

AYES.

| | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Anderson, G. | Moore, S. W. |
| Archer, W. | Nobbs, J. |
| Brown, T. | O'Connor, B. B. |
| Brunker, J. N. | Phillips, S. |
| Campbell, Archibald | Price, R. A. |
| Carroll, J. G. | Reid, G. H. |
| Carruthers, J. H. | Rigg, W. |
| Clarke, T. | Ross, H. |
| Cohen, J. J. | Sawers, W. |
| Cook, J. | See, J. |
| Fegan, J. L. | Sleath, R. |
| Ferguson, W. J. | Smith, Samuel |
| Fitzpatrick, J. C. L. | Spence, W. G. |
| Garland, J. | Spruson, W. J. |
| Graham, Dr. J. | Stevenson, R. |
| Hawthorne, J. S. | Storey, D. |
| Hogue, J. A. | Suttor, F. B. |
| Holman, W. A. | Waddell, T. |
| Hughes, W. M. | Watkins, D. |
| Jessep, T. | Wilks, W. H. |
| Law, S. J. | Willis, W. N. |
| Lee, C. A. | Wilson, C. G. |
| Lees, S. E. | Young, J. H. |
| Lyne, W. J. | |
| Mahony, W. H. | <i>Tellers,</i> |
| McLean, F. E. | Piddington, W. H. B. |
| Meagher, R. D. | Watson, J. C. |

NOES.

| | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| | <i>Tellers,</i> |
| Hassall, T. H. | Bennett, W. |
| Nelson, A. D. | Quinn, P. E. |

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

PUBLIC OFFICES : BRIDGE, YOUNG, AND PHILLIP STREETS.

Mr. YOUNG (The Manning), Secretary for Public Works [11'9], rose to move :

That it be referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works to consider and report on the expediency of erecting public offices on land with frontages to Phillip, Bridge, and Young streets, Sydney.

He said : Hon. members are probably aware that the Government have had in its possession for a number of years a valuable piece of land just opposite the Public Works Department, in Phillip-street, and running down to Young-street. It has been an eyesore for a long time ; not only that, but it is found that more room is required for public offices, and the Government has, therefore, come to the conclusion that the time has arrived when it should be utilised for public buildings. I will read the description, and it will also show to what purpose it is proposed to put the buildings :

The site proposed for this building is that abutting on the junction of the three streets abovementioned, and upon a portion of which now stands Nos. 36 to 42, Young-street, the property of, and in the occupation of, the Government.

It is proposed to erect a building six storeys in height, and containing 70,727 superficial feet of floor space available for office accommodation, to be occupied by the Departments of Mines and Agriculture and of Public Instruction.

The Department of Mines and Agriculture is now partly housed in the building of the Lands Office and partly in the old Naval Depot, while its museum is in the temporary building erected for technological purposes in the Domain, and several small branches have had to find accommodation elsewhere. It is very strongly desired, for the efficient working of the department, and for economy of control, to centralise the whole of the department under one roof, and in such a building as can also contain the Technical Museum attached to the department. This is accomplished in the accompanying plans, by which the larger half of the proposed building, including the whole of the basement and the western side of the upper floors, with a distinct entrance at the corner of Young and Bridge streets, is apportioned to this department.

The accommodation in the Lands Office that would be thus vacated is urgently required for the natural expansion of the Lands Department, and for the housing of a number of sub-branches of various departments whom it was intended to accommodate in this proposed building, but for whom no room could be found. These sub-branches are as follows :—Charitable Institutions, Fisheries Department, Electoral Registrar, Friendly Societies, Medical and Pharmacy Boards, Government Statistician.

The erection of the proposed new building will also admit of the removal of the unsightly temporary buildings in the Domain now used for museum purposes.

The Department of Public Instruction it is proposed to provide for in the eastern and smaller half of the building, with a distinct entrance at the corner of Phillip and Bridge streets. Its present quarters are inadequate for the proper administration of the department, and must sooner or later be demolished in view of general public improvements. Part of the staff is also accommodated in rented premises.

The minimum accommodation required by these two departments and the amount provided in the proposed new building are as follows :—

| Department. | Minimum required. | Amount provided. |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Department of Mines and Agriculture. | 45,777 | 47,941 |
| Department of Public Instruction. | 19,776 | 22,786 |

The estimated cost of the building with floors of fire-proof construction, inclusive of lifts, is approximately, £83,000. The sum of £18,500 has been voted on loans, 1895, towards its erection.

This report is accompanied by preliminary plans, Nos. 1 to 9 inclusive.

Mr. SEE : Does the hon. member know what the land cost ?

Mr. YOUNG : I cannot say. It has been in the possession of the Government for a long time. I dare say it has been eating itself up in the way of interest, and I would remind hon. members that an inquiry of this kind is not particularly costly. It is not like sending the Public Works Committee all over the country to look into matters that require a very long time to consider. An inquiry of this kind will cost comparatively little, and I think the information to be obtained is well worth the expenditure.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

PUBLIC OFFICES IN PHILLIP AND HUNTER STREETS.

Mr. YOUNG (The Manning), Secretary for Public Works [11·21], rose to move :

That it be referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works to consider and report on the expediency of erecting public offices on land with frontages to Phillip and Hunter Streets, Sydney.

He said : This land has also been the property of the country for a considerable time, and it is now proposed to put up buildings there to accommodate the Inspector-General of Police, the Comptroller-General of Prisons, the Public Service Board, and the Auditor-General.

HON. MEMBERS : Hear, hear ; we are all with you !

Mr. YOUNG : If hon. members are satisfied, I will not say anything more.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

[*Mr. Young.*

PENITENTIARY AND PRISON FOR FEMALES.

Mr. YOUNG (The Manning), Secretary for Public Works [11·22], rose to move :

That it be referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works to consider and report on the expediency of erecting a penitentiary and prison for females, Randwick.

He said : I do not know that hon. members will be satisfied to let this go without debate, because I understand there is some objection on the part of the representative of Randwick to having the penitentiary at that place. However, I am sure hon. members will recognise the necessity of building a prison for this purpose. The matter is put very concisely in the report I have before me, although of course the moving spirits in this matter will be the Minister of Justice and his officers, the Public Works Office being only the medium for carrying out the work. If the matter should require explaining more particularly, it would therefore be in the province of the Minister of Justice to do that. But I think this report will be quite sufficient for hon. members. I should like to emphasise one particular part of the report, and that is that when this prison is constructed it will lead to the disestablishment of the gaol at Biloela. At Cockatoo Island the works in connection with the dock are growing considerably, and it is extremely inconvenient to have a large portion of the property taken up with a gaol for female prisoners.

Mr. SEE : Why does not the hon. member put it in the Government domain !

Mr. YOUNG : I do not know whether the hon. member objects to it being placed at Randwick, but I do not suppose his objection will lead him to vote against the present proposal. The people at Randwick will have full opportunities, if they desire, to give evidence before the Public Works Committee against the proposal. Any argument they choose to adduce will appear in the evidence taken before the committee, and will have full consideration when the matter comes again before the House.

Question proposed.

Mr. STOREY (Randwick) [11·27] : I do not know what I have done to the Premier or the present Government that they should want to make such a Christmas-box.

to the people of Randwick as the erection of a gaol there. I quite agree that there is a necessity for increased accommodation for criminals, but I have a strong objection to a gaol being erected in Randwick. The proposed site for the gaol is practically in the centre of Randwick. The building is intended to accommodate 420 males and 334 females. There is sufficient unoccupied land in the country for the purpose of a gaol without going to a place like Randwick. As a resident of Randwick I have a strong objection to seeing the police vans that convey criminals to gaol going along the street as I take a walk with my children. Again, when these male and female criminals are discharged from gaol they will naturally settle down in and around Randwick. I am surprised at the Minister bringing forward such a proposal. I intend to ask hon. members to vote against it at its initiation. There is plenty of unoccupied land elsewhere, and the gaols should be taken right away from the centres of population—30 miles from Sydney; in fact I would go further and say it would be a good thing if Darlinghurst were utilised for some other purpose and the gaol removed. The building should be removed, and land in some outlying district utilised for the erection of a gaol. The Government own a good deal of church and school land in Randwick adjacent to the proposed site for a gaol, and the value of these lands will be much depreciated by the proximity of a gaol. If the Government own this land, would it not be much better to sell it for residential sites, and devote the proceeds towards the erection of the proposed gaol in some more suitable locality? Randwick is one of the first suburbs of the city. We might as well propose to erect a gaol at Darling Point. Randwick is at present a very attractive place. It is a pleasure resort for a great number of people around Sydney. People driving along the Randwick road, either going to the Centennial Park, to the race-course, to Kensington, or to Coogee Beach would not care to be confronted all along the road by prison vans containing a lot of criminals going to and from the gaol. The Government ought not to bring such a proposal forward. It is a scandalous proceeding on their part. I agree with the Minister that increased gaol accommodation should be provided if it is neces-

sary, and I believe it is necessary. At the same time I beg to move this amendment:

That the motion be amended by the omission of the word "Randwick."

Mr. YOUNG: I submit that the amendment is not in order. It takes away the definiteness of the proposal. If it were carried the Public Works Committee would undertake a rambling excursion wherever they choose. In fact it would be impossible to make such a reference under the Public Works Act.

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I do not think the amendment is in order. It leaves the motion quite indefinite!

Mr. O'SULLIVAN (Queanbeyan) [11:30]: I hope every hon. member will oppose this proposal. This waste of public money is a scandal. We have had a gaol at Glen Innes for many years past, and it has never been used at all. It was constructed at a cost of about £12,000 or £15,000, and to this day there has never been a prisoner inside of it. Why cannot that gaol be utilised for prisoners of this class? It stands in the middle of a healthy district. Then, again, we have another one at Cooma, in the Monaro district, where the climate is also good. We have also other gaols in the country not fully occupied; and yet we are asked to vote for this motion, which means committing the House to a very large expenditure for the erection of another gaol when we have so many of these institutions lying idle.

Mr. YOUNG: It is only for inquiry!

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: That is the stereotyped, delusive cry—only for inquiry—on which hon. members are asked to vote away money uselessly. This is one of those cases which proves the necessity for our at once opposing any lavish expenditure of this kind. So long as we have gaols in New South Wales unoccupied, we are not justified in constructing fresh ones merely for the purpose of carrying out some fad of those who propose to have the female prisoners at Randwick. That is altogether apart from the question raised by the hon. member for Randwick, who opposes the motion from a local standpoint. Nevertheless, it is a fact that Randwick is not at all a suitable place for a gaol of this character. It is a residential suburb, and the people who bought property there ought not to have it depreciated by the proximity of a gaol. If it

is absolutely necessary to erect a new gaol, we have a number of decaying towns in the country, each one of which, I dare say, would be very glad to have a gaol erected there for the sake of the extra expenditure such an institution would bring. I could name half a dozen such places within very easy distance of Sydney. It seems to me that, from whatever standpoint you look at it, this proposal is one that ought to be rejected; and I think the Government ought to give better consideration to their proposals before submitting them to the House. I appeal to every hon. member who desires to see anything like retrenchment carried out to veto this proposal. It is of no use for us night after night to vote down £50 here and £100 there, if, on the other hand we are going to swallow in a wholesale way sums which may amount to £15,000 or £20,000. If we are going to have a retrenchment party, let us keep our eyes well fixed on items of this character, and by voting them down, show that we are not going to allow the public money to be squandered.

Mr. WILLIS (The Barwon) [11:36]: I am not going into the question whether a penitentiary is or is not required, because it is for the Government to determine that point. What I object to, is that this site at Randwick should be used for such a purpose. The land is too valuable to be so used. Considering all the suburban lands in the possession of the Government, no one in full possession of his senses would attempt to use land worth from £6 to £8 or £9 a foot for such a purpose. Why does not the Minister go out 3 or 5 miles further to La Perouse, and select a good site? The Government own nearly all the land out there. They own thousands of acres of church and school lands between Randwick and La Perouse.

Mr. CARRUTHERS: 5,000 acres of Crown land!

Mr. WILLIS: If you want a site for this prison, go out a bit further. Go away from the beautiful and populous suburb of Randwick. This site is right in the centre of Randwick, and a penitentiary on that site will deteriorate the value of property, and do a serious amount of injury. Besides, sir, what provision is made for carrying on the very good work of the state schools? The youngsters have a fine play-ground, and why should you cramp them up or

[*Mr. O'Sullivan.*

destroy the good work which is being done there? The work which is done at the Randwick Asylum is a credit to the country, and to everyone concerned. Why should you destroy the home which these youngsters have and the very fine park in which they engage in healthy exercise?

Mr. HOGUE: Its day has gone past!

Mr. WILLIS: The hon. member would not say that its day has gone past if he knew anything about the Randwick Asylum. If he saw the crowds of little children marching on a Sunday to the various churches, a picture of health, vigour, and cleanliness, he would not say that the Randwick Asylum is a thing of the past. A great deal of good work has been done in that institution. But outside that altogether this land is too valuable to be used as a site for a penitentiary. Between Randwick and La Perouse the Government have 5,000 acres of Crown lands which they cannot sell. I guarantee that if they put the site of this asylum up for sale to-morrow they would get from £5 to £8 a foot for the land, as it has a double frontage. Quite recently some land almost adjoining the asylum has been sold up to £10 a foot. If they were to sell this site they would have a good sum in hand towards putting up this penitentiary if it is necessary. If it is necessary, why build it in a residential suburb like Randwick, to which people return after their day's work to get a little rest, and breathe the fresh air? Why crowd up a suburb like Randwick with this penitentiary? I understand that the Government are going to take a tram towards the Little Bay Hospital very shortly. By the time this building is erected the tramway will be completed. Put this building on land which is worth only £100 an acre. Do not use valuable land for erecting a building which will ultimately destroy the usefulness of the most beautiful suburb we have.

Mr. SEE (Grafton) [11:40]: I hope the House will reject this motion. The modern idea is not to erect a gaol in a town. It is most objectionable to select Randwick as a site for this building. I do not dispute the fact that it may be necessary to erect a penitentiary. The Minister says that the Government propose to take 50 acres for the purpose of this penitentiary, and the Secretary for Lands says that the

Government own several thousands of acres of land between Randwick and La Perouse.

Mr. CARRUTHERS: It is all in Randwick, though!

Mr. SEE: I would not have a penitentiary put in the neighbourhood of that asylum at all. We ought not to erect a penitentiary on that site when we have adjacent to railway lines, thousands of acres of Crown lands which are practically of no value, but which would be useful for this purpose. Far removed from the city, instead of having 50 acres you could have 500 acres contiguous to a railway line, where you could utilise the services of these offenders without interfering with the labour market. But for these offenders to reach a penitentiary in Randwick they will have to go through the Centennial Park, which is the people's park. Again, Coogee is a place to which thousands of persons who are not residents of Randwick resort to get the benefit of the ocean air. If a penitentiary is erected on the site of the asylum it will depreciate the value of the land to an enormous extent. If you put up a building ever so handsome, and enclose that building with a huge wall, no one for choice will pitch his tent opposite to a huge establishment to which these unfortunate people are being taken at every hour of the day.

Mr. CARRUTHERS: Look at Darlinghurst Gaol!

Mr. SEE: It was erected at a time when Sydney was a very small place, and when Darlinghurst was practically out of town. If we were building a gaol to-day would the Government take Darlinghurst as a site for the gaol? No, they would have a lock-up in the neighbourhood to accommodate so many prisoners, but they would not dream of putting a large gaol in the very heart of the city. It is well known that the presence of that gaol depreciates the value of the properties in the neighbourhood.

Mr. CARRUTHERS: It is the most valuable part of the city!

Mr. SEE: There is no accounting for tastes. If the hon. gentleman desires to look at the wall round Darlinghurst Gaol there is no reason why he should not gratify his taste, but the majority of people would object to imitate his example. These Crown lands between Randwick and La

Perouse will become very valuable in the course of years, and instead of being worth £50 or £100 an acre they will be worth very much more than that sum. A penitentiary to contain 800 inmates will be a colony in itself, and the presence of that objectionable class will depreciate the value of Randwick, both as a residential suburb and as a pleasure resort. There are many other places in the colony which are more suitable than is Randwick for this purpose. Why should we put up on this site a huge penitentiary to be seen from every vessel which passes along the coast? This site of 50 acres is worth at the lowest estimate £200 to £300 an acre. It is a bad site to drain, and it is not suitable for the purposes of a penitentiary.

Mr. CARRUTHERS: Go and give evidence to the Public Works Committee!

Mr. SEE: No; I will ask the House to vote against the motion. I am going to ask the House not to vote against the desirability of constructing a penitentiary, but to vote to affirm the non-desirability of erecting a huge building in the heart of the city. We have plenty of Crown land along the southern line, the western line, and the northern line, where the Government can select a site. I trust that the House will negative this proposal, and give the Minister a chance to come down with a proposal of a more satisfactory character. It will be a most objectionable thing for the residents of Randwick to see these people going to and from the penitentiary in a van. I protest against the erection of a building of this description in the heart of the city. I object to this site being used for the purpose. In the course of years a large population will be located on the Crown lands at Randwick, Maroubra Bay, and Little Bay, right away to La Perouse, and all along the shores of Botany Bay. Any one who knows how valuable these lands are, as I do, would never allow that magnificent country to be disfigured by a building of this description, beautiful as it may be. I ask the House, in all seriousness, to reject the proposal.

Mr. JESSEP (Waverley) [11.50]: I hope the House will reject this absurd proposal. The Minister should be blamed for suggesting that a penitentiary should be planted in the centre of one of our most beautiful and attractive suburbs. The hon. member for Queanbeyan has

clearly indicated the uselessness of the House passing a proposal like this, involving the expenditure of a large amount of money. The hon. member for Grafton pointed out that this marine suburb is one of attraction and beauty, which not only the residents, but the citizens generally, desire to see preserved. The Secretary for Lands has suggested to me that it would be a very good thing to have a large expenditure of money on a work of this kind in that suburb; but I think it would be far better to take some Crown lands in the electorate of the Minister himself—that is, St. George—and put the penitentiary there. For instance, let it be placed where the sewage farm is. That is a cool and suitable place for this gloomy penitentiary. It has been suggested that the erection of large public buildings like this one does not depreciate property, and Darlinghurst has been instanced. Any one going near Darlinghurst will know that at the present time the houses about there are not very valuable. Any one who knows anything about the penitentiary in Melbourne knows that property about Coburg has depreciated considerably. I do not understand how the Minister has the hardihood of proposing to plant this penitentiary in the very centre of Randwick. If this building is erected in a magnificent part of the suburb of Randwick, visitors going there will see its walls indicating the crime of our people. It has been suggested to me as an alternative that Waverley should be substituted for Randwick. I should like to see any member attempt to do such a thing; but I am as careful of the interests of the adjoining electorate of Randwick as I am of my own electorate. I ask hon. members to signify their disapproval of this proposal by rejecting it.

Mr. CARROLL (The Lachlan) [11.56]: I must compliment the Minister for starting this great work. We have small gaols all over the country which are very expensive to maintain, and the prisoners cannot obtain the attention which is necessary. Hon. members living at Randwick have spoken of the beauties of the place, and the disaster that will result if this magnificent building is erected there. They say it will cost no end of money, and I am sure the architect we have here will erect a castle which will beautify the place. I

[*Mr. Jessep.*

am sure that if the local people do not say anything about it, visitors to Randwick will think that it is the mayor's residence; they will never think it is a gaol. I hope that what happened a few years ago will not happen again. I refer to the time when some of our own members retired into seclusion for a short period. In view of those facts, it might be as well to have a decent building. We will do no harm by sending this proposal to the Public Works Committee. They may report against it, and they may suggest a more suitable site. Hon. members have spoken about the respectability of Randwick; they say, "Just imagine seeing all the rogues and vagabonds who belong to the poorer classes being brought there." Do we not know that there is such a thing as bank managers, who are never classed among the poor people, embezzling money. I believe that, proportionately, more of the upper ten are sent to gaol than members of the poorer classes. Why should hon. members recommend places like Botany, Waterloo, and Balmain for a building of this kind simply because artisans live there? Why should respectable poor working people be saddled with this eyesore, as they call it. Because these people are well-dressed today, and may be insolvent to-morrow, they talk about the depreciation of property. How do we know that it is their property—it may be the property of the banks? The Government have a right to put a gaol wherever they please. This proposal, like everything else, can be sent to the Public Works Committee, and if they report against it the Government need not go on. But if Randwick is the proper place, we must put the gaol there. We have heard the hon. member for Randwick talking about the people out there dying of typhoid owing to the cemetery not being closed. It is to be hoped that this gaol is not going to be erected near the cemetery, where the prisoners might catch contagious diseases. With the healthy influence and good example set by the people of Randwick, when the prisoners come out they will be reformed and become good citizens.

Mr. FEGAN (Wickham) [12.2 a.m.]: A certain amount of sentiment has been uttered to-night, and if I lived in the neighbourhood of Randwick I might express similar sentiments to those I have heard uttered to-night. But to me there

is a higher sentiment than that expressed by the hon. member for Grafton with regard to beautiful suburbs. This is the first experience in the government of this country when a building of this description has been set apart entirely for women. No matter what we may say, it depends entirely upon the education, training, and treatment of our women what our future generations will be. It does not matter so much when we go bad ourselves sometimes; but when our women go bad, it is a terrible thing for the nation. Shall we act in the future as we have done in the past, and erect gloomy dungeons and dark buildings for these unfortunate people? It is the duty of the state to do its utmost to reform those who find their way to prison. I admit that the existence of these institutions is a satire on the classes who object to have them in their midst. It is a satire on them that these unfortunate women should be inmates of these prisons. It is perfectly true that people living in the lap of luxury do not like to be reminded that these buildings have been erected simply on account of their sports and pastimes, and when we come to consider that hon. members like the hon. member for Waverley, who is quite willing to vote large sums of money for all sorts of purposes, early in the morning, petitioning the Government to give so much to rescue homes here and there, when the Government propose to erect a building suitable for the reception of these unfortunate people, and when we find the hon. member's Christianity all vanishing in the face of such a proposition, what are we to think of his principles? He does not want us to take up such a beautiful site for these unfortunate creatures.

AN HON. MEMBER: Why not put them in Hyde Park?

MR. FEGAN: We want to take them away from the city, and to make their surroundings such as to conduce to their reformation. We have no right to put them in a building, such as the hon. member has suggested, at Broken Hill. A number of persons at Broken Hill to-day would not be there if circumstances admitted of their working elsewhere at the same rate of wage. We want as good a place as we can select for our hospitals, penitentiaries, and asylums, and for that reason alone this proposal should receive the support of hon.

members. Let us not consider the palatial residences erected in this suburb. Let us rather think of the human beings to whom it is our duty to afford every facility for reformation. I showed my approval of this proposal when the Minister gave notice of it last night, and I should be unworthy of the trust of the people if I did not support it. We ought to do better in the future than we have done in the past for these unfortunate people. It is all very well to say that Randwick and Coogee are pleasure resorts.

MR. CARRUTHERS: They do not object to the racecourse being there!

MR. FEGAN: There is not the slightest doubt that that is a breeding-ground for a great number of people who fill our gaols and other institutions. We have the hon. member for Waverley, the hon. member for Grafton, and the hon. member for Randwick asking the House to vote against this proposal, and they would have us erect a prison in some dark gloomy out-of-the-way place, from which the inmates will emerge a physical and moral wreck. I hope the arguments of these hon. members will not be seriously entertained. This is only a proposal for inquiry. Parliament will have afterwards to deal with the matter.

MR. FERGUSON (Sturt) [12·8 a.m.] : There is a good deal of force in the arguments of the last speaker as to why this building should be erected in the place suggested by the Minister. Any one who knows anything of our prison system at all knows that the unfortunate part of it is this: that all short-sentenced prisoners have to intermix with criminals who are in gaol, perhaps, for the terms of their lives. It is natural from this intercourse that they should become considerably worse when they come out. It is very necessary we should have some system under which we could classify prisoners, male and female. You cannot do this unless you have particular buildings for the purpose. The only argument used to-night why this particular building should not be erected at Randwick is that it would be an eyesore to persons who own property there. The hon. member for Randwick, the hon. member for Grafton, and other hon. members have all used that argument—that if this building were erected there, it would have a tendency to depreciate the value of their

property. I have not the slightest objection to this building being in a suburb away from crowded centres of population. We are told that Randwick is a healthy suburb, and I believe that that is one of the strongest reasons why this building should be erected. If we are to erect buildings of this kind, they should certainly be erected in healthy situations. They should also be erected in places where every person can see them. There is no necessity for any country to put these things out of sight. If there be a cancer in the community, let the community know it. If you are going to manufacture criminals, let every one see that you are doing so. Let them awaken people to a sense of their duty. Persons have no objection to the racecourse at Randwick, which breeds a number of these criminals; but an establishment of this kind is regarded as an eyesore. We want it to be an eyesore. We want people to see it, and then, perhaps, they may take steps to get it out of the road. It is a silly argument for hon. members to use, that because they have property in Randwick this building should not be there. What about my property? Surely I have as much claim to the protection of the state as have these hon. members. If this building would depreciate property, it would do so, whether it be in the suburbs or in the city. My contention is that the building should be in a good healthy spot.

Mr. JESSEP: The hon. member is not serious!

Mr. FERGUSON: The hon. member ought not to complain. The Waverley cemetery has boomed Waverley. Several industries, such as the making of tombstones and iron railings, would never have been there but for the cemetery. I know of no place in the colony which would be better for this building than Randwick. It is a fine healthy locality, and it is easily got at, and if you are going to have buildings of this sort, they should be in places where everyone can see them. Why should they be put aside? Why not expose them? When a doctor wants to heal a wound he exposes it, so that he can see every part of it; he does not try to cover it up. If there is a certain amount of crime in this city; if there is a necessity for gaols, reformatories, and penitentiaries, the people should know it. They should be put

[*Mr. Ferguson.*

in the most fashionable part of the city, so that people may have their eyes opened. We object to criminals going free outside where they are at liberty to commit crime, and when we attempt to lock them up you object because the building depreciates the value of your property. Why do hon. members not exhibit more Christian charity? Why not think of the property of other people? The most healthy spot we can select in this city is the spot upon which we can have this institution.

Mr. PHILLIPS: Why not put it in the bush?

Mr. FERGUSON: Why should you put it out of sight? What is the good of telling people that there is a certain amount of crime when you are doing all you can to cover it up? We might just as well say that we will not publish statistics because it hurts the feelings of people to know that a certain number of people go wrong every year. If you want to diminish crime you will not do so by covering it up, and putting it out of sight. Whoever thinks of putting churches out of sight? You put them on the best spots you can select—in the most conspicuous places. Buildings of this sort should be similarly situated. You do not object to public-houses, race-courses, gambling-houses, and Chinese dens being at Randwick. Why should you object to this penitentiary? I shall vote for this proposal because it will put the building in one of the most fashionable parts of the city right under the eyes of the people who say that this sort of thing does not exist, and that there is no necessity for these buildings. If you speak to fashionable people in the city they tell you there is no necessity for this sort of thing. But they should know that there is. You should put these buildings under their eyes, so that they may take some steps to remedy the evil. I am surprised at any hon. member who owns property at Randwick saying that he will allow his private interest to influence him as against his public duty.

Mr. MOORE (Bingara) [12:17 a.m.]: The speeches of the two last hon. members have convinced me that this penitentiary ought not to be erected at Randwick. The idea of an hon. member using this argument: "We do not want to cover up crime; we want to expose it, so that people may know that crime exists. They say there is no crime; put this building in

a conspicuous place, so that they may know that there is." What sort of argument is that? And then the hon. member for Wickham says that we do not want to put people in dark dungeons. Does he want to put the penitentiary in such a position that its inmates would be exposed to the public gaze?

Mr. FERGUSON: Yes!

Mr. MOORE: I undertake to say that few persons will agree with the hon. member. Our best feelings should induce us not to expose these unfortunate persons to the public gaze, either for their sake or for the sake of the public.

Mr. O'CONNOR: If you followed up that argument you would have to allow public executions!

Mr. FERGUSON: If you had one public execution you would never have another execution!

Mr. MOORE: It seems to me that you do not want to put a building of this sort in such a conspicuous part of the city and suburbs as Randwick. It ought not to be in any populous district. The most sensible and the most humane thing to do is to put the gaol in an out-of-the-way place, where you can give the inmates some freedom, and expose them to the sunlight. If the gaol is surrounded with these palatial buildings that we hear about, it means that the inmates must be kept confined in dungeons so as to be kept from the public gaze. The weight of argument is against the erection of this place in a populous suburb.

Mr. YOUNG (The Manning), Secretary for Public Works [12.25 a.m.], in reply: Whatever hon. members may think of this proposal, and however much hon. members interested in Randwick may be opposed to it, there is surely no harm in letting the matter go for inquiry to the Public Works Committee.

Mr. STOREY: There will be a waste of public money!

Mr. YOUNG: The public money expended upon the inquiry will be very small. It will be open to hon. members interested in Randwick, and every man who lives in Randwick, and has property there, to give evidence before the committee, and bring forward reasons why in their opinion the building should not be erected on the site proposed. The design

is rather an ornamental one, and I believe a majority of the people of Randwick—not, perhaps, the curled darlings of the place, who live in the principal thoroughfares, and who look upon Randwick as a beau-ideal place for a residence for the wealthy classes—not these, but a great majority of the people of Randwick, I believe, will be in favour of this proposal, because it will lead to an immense extension of trade in the locality. Whether that be so or not, I ask hon. members to let the matter go to the Public Works Committee, where it will be inquired into and reported upon.

Mr. LYNE: Whose idea is it?

Mr. YOUNG: I presume it came from the Justice Department. I admit I have not looked into the question of the advisability or otherwise of the site; I did not look upon it as my duty to do so. I presume Captain Neitenstein and some of the officers of the Justice Department have been looking for a site which will be more easily overlooked by them as a matter of administration, and from that point of view it must be a very suitable site.

Question put. The House divided:

Ayes, 27; noes, 26; majority, 1.

AYES.

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Anderson, G. | Howarth, G. |
| Archer, W. | Lee, C. A. |
| Bennett, W. | Mahony, W. H. |
| Brunker, J. N. | Millard, W. |
| Campbell, Archibald | Phillips, S. |
| Carroll, J. G. | Price, R. A. |
| Carruthers, J. H. | Reid, G. H. |
| Cook, J. | Spence, W. G. |
| Fegan, J. L. | Stevenson, R. |
| Ferguson, W. J. | Watson, J. C. |
| Fitzpatrick, J. C. L. | Young, J. H. |
| Garland, J. | <i>Tellers,</i> |
| Hawthorne, J. S. | Brown, T. |
| Hogue, J. A. | Nobbs, J. |

NOES.

| | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| Barton, E. | Sawers, W. |
| Clarke, T. | See, J. |
| Holman, W. A. | Sleath, R. |
| Jessep, T. | Smith, Samuel |
| Lyne, W. J. | Spruson, W. J. |
| McLean, F. E. | Storey, D. |
| Meagher, R. D. | Thomas, J. |
| Moore, S. W. | Watkins, D. |
| Morgan, W. | Wilson, C. G. |
| Nelson, A. D. | Wood, W. H. |
| O'Connor, B. B. | |
| O'Sullivan, E. W. | <i>Tellers,</i> |
| Rigg, W. | Cohen, J. J. |
| Ross, H. | Griffith, A. H. |

Question so resolved in the affirmative.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Mr. MEAGHER: I was not in the Chamber this evening when the hon. member for Flinders Division referred to some newspaper paragraph. I see that the leaders of the House have taken no notice of the question, and I myself ignored it, seeing the putrid source from which the allegation emanated. But as the question has been referred to, I now take cognisance of it, and I unhesitatingly demand a royal commission.

Mr. O'CONNOR: I rise to order!

Mr. MEAGHER: A nice thing to gag a man on privilege. I am raising this as a matter of privilege.

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot do so. A period of five days has elapsed, and it is not a matter that is urgent, nor is it a matter that the House can take cognisance of. I rule the hon. member out of order.

Mr. PRICE: —————

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The matter is ruled out of order.

Mr. PRICE: Do I understand that a question has arisen this evening in the House?

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Will the hon. member be seated? There is no question of privilege.

Mr. BARTON: May I suggest, sir, that although the hon. member cannot raise this matter as a question of privilege, he will have the indulgence of the House to make a personal explanation.

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The hon. member was not referred to in any way.

Mr. J. C. L. FITZPATRICK: Distinctly.

Mr. MEAGHER: In the *Evening News* to-day.

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I do not think it is a matter which should be brought before the House. It is not a matter which can be made the subject of a personal explanation. If this sort of thing is allowed, then whenever any hon. member is attacked in a paper he can come here with the paragraph from the paper and bring it before the House. I do not think it is a proper thing to do, and therefore I will not allow it to be done.

Mr. THOMAS: May I remind you, sir, that you allowed the hon. member for Paddington to make a very lengthy statement a little while ago?

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I will not allow it to be done.

Mr. THOMAS: You allowed it to be done by the hon. member for Paddington a little while ago.

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The Clerk will now read the orders of the day.

Mr. J. C. WATSON: May I bring this point under your notice, sir, that the hon. member desires to refer to a paragraph which appeared in the *Evening News* to-night, not to what occurred some days ago? Perhaps, sir, if you had been aware that he intended to refer only to that paragraph, you might have been willing to hear him.

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I refuse to allow the matter to be referred to.

Mr. SLEATH: I wish to say this —

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I cannot allow any more discussion on this question. The Clerk will read the orders of the day.

Mr. SLEATH: I move, sir, that your ruling be disagreed to.

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The hon. member must give notice of that motion.

Mr. SLEATH: I will.

Mr. LYNE: I think that in a peculiar case of this kind the leader of the House should take some course. It is an extraordinary ruling that we have had, and I think the leader of the House should take some course.

Mr. REID: The leader of the House cannot take a course which the hon. member cannot take.

Mr. LYNE: Yes, he can.

Mr. SLEATH: I think, sir, it is a well-known parliamentary rule that when an hon. member is attacked he should have the right to make a personal explanation.

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I stopped the attack on the hon. member for The Tweed. I have already ruled that I will not allow this matter to be discussed.

Mr. SLEATH: In the press to-night the hon. member has been attacked, and it has always been ruled here, so far as I can recollect, that an hon. member who is attacked has the right to make an explanation to the House.

Mr. J. C. WATSON: Less than half an hour ago I read in the newspaper an attack on the hon. member for the Tweed. Where an attack has been made on an hon. member in the press he has always been allowed to explain to the House.

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I have already ruled that I will not permit it to be done.

Mr. BARTON: With the indulgence of the House, sir, may not a personal explanation be made?

Mr. MOORE: I move that the hon. member be heard. Is the motion in order?

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: It is not in order.

Mr. SLEATH: I second the motion.

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order in doing so.

Mr. STOREY: Mr. Speaker Abbott allowed the hon. member for Paddington to quote from a newspaper.

Mr. LYNE: This is a very serious matter.

Mr. REID: The order of the day has been called on.

Mr. LYNE: It has not been called on.

Mr. REID: The order of the day has been read.

Mr. LYNE: This is a very serious matter. I do not know anything about the matter, but if an hon. member is liable to be accused of anything and everything, and is not allowed to get up in his place in the House and explain, it is an extraordinary state of things.

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: When I ruled the hon. member for The Tweed out of order I thought he was raising as a matter of privilege, a question which had been raised here this evening in regard to something which was published in *Truth*; but I understand now that the hon. member rose to refer to something which appeared in a newspaper this afternoon, and not to something which appeared in *Truth*. Is that so?

Mr. MEAGHER: Incidentally it will.

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Under these circumstances I will allow the hon. member to refer to the paper.

Mr. MEAGHER: I do not want you, sir, to be under any misapprehension. The *Evening News* of this evening refers to a question of privilege; but, of course, my rising here will be valueless unless I can refer to what is incidentally alluded to in the *Evening News*, and, therefore, I ask permission, sir, to call your attention to this passage in "May," at page 266:

For instance, when 22nd July, 1861, a motion was proposed concerning the conduct of a member in connection with a joint stock company, such conduct being wholly unconnected with matters arising in the House, the Speaker said

it was doubtful whether the motion was properly a matter of privilege, but as it affected the character of a member it could be proceeded with if it was the pleasure of the House.

I do not want to labour the matter in any way, but I should like to move a resolution to the effect that it is the pleasure of the House to hear me on a matter to which some prominence has been given. That constitutional authority is very clear on the point. I wish you, sir, to take the sense of the House, and therefore I beg to move:

That it be the pleasure of the House to hear me.

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The hon. member need not make a motion.

Mr. MEAGHER: I beg to refer to a matter to which some prominence has been given, and that is a charge which has been made, or alleged against me, of a most heinous and villainous character, and is referred to in the *Evening News* this evening as quoted from a paper called *Truth*. The charge, to go right to the kernel or essence, is to the effect that I got two criminals to assassinate a man —

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The hon. member is now making a personal explanation I understand.

Mr. MEAGHER: I am making as full an explanation as the heinousness of the charge will entitle me in fairness to do. The charge is that I not only suggested, but deliberately proposed, that Sir Julian Salomons should be got rid of by two ex-convicts, whom I declared I had in waiting in Crick and Meagher's office ready to do the deed, and that I stated this fact to Mr. Crick:

"I have only to say the word and I have two criminals who will make cold meat of Salomons." Mr. Crick states that Mr. Levien was present; that they both scouted the murderous proposal with indignant scorn, and that they both denounced Meagher to his face for making it.

The paper says that Mr. Crick was considerably staggered at the thought of this, and some time subsequently communicated this fact to other people; and then it goes on to say:

It was at this time that Mr. Crick became aware that Meagher was engaged, in conjunction with another, in spiriting away a Crown witness in an abortion case in which he (Meagher) was retained for the defence; and that when the detective went with a warrant to Crick and Meagher's office to arrest one of Meagher's accomplices (probably in the hope of getting the said accomplice to "blab" about the Dean conspiracy), Meagher had the said accomplice con-

concealed behind the door of his office, and sent the detective off on a false scent by telling him that the said accomplice was somewhere down King-street, probably at Riley's Hotel. When the detective had gone, Meagher secreted his accomplice up in the garret at the top of the office, and afterwards got him concealed for several days in a certain house within pistol-shot of the detective headquarters. These facts and circumstances, occurring as they did concurrently with the Dean case disclosures, caused Mr. Crick to lose the last shred of his fast-vanishing faith and trust in his shady, shaky, shifty partner, Meagher, and determined him not to allow Meagher to drag him (Crick) down with him.

The last part is not relevant to the former part; but, in justice to the whole of the article, I do not want to suppress any single portion. I think it is just as well for hon. members to have the whole charge before them. The whole charge, as hon. members will see, consists of this: That I got two criminals, that I had them in my office, that, having arranged with them to assassinate Sir Julian Salomons, I then sought out my partner, Mr. Crick, who happened to be in conversation with Mr. Levien, that I there told him I had got two criminals who were prepared to make cold meat of Salomons when I said the word; that Mr. Crick repudiated the proposal, and denounced me to my face in the presence of Mr. Levien. Then Mr. Crick goes on to say that at about that time I had an accomplice in an abortion case, who was also in my office. I do not know whether he says or insinuates that this accomplice was one of the two criminals—at any rate that I had an accomplice whose name was not mentioned, but whose name I am going to mention to the House, with circumstances about which there will be no doubt. This accomplice was interested with me in spiriting a witness away. I may say that this charge is contained in a newspaper called *Truth*, that I had not read the newspaper for eight or nine weeks, but that my attention was called to the article a few days back, with the result that on Tuesday I cut out the article. When I heard of the article being in *Truth*, I entirely ignored it, and determined to ignore *Truth* and those connected with it. I considered Norton and Crick as beneath my unutterable contempt, and, therefore, I determined to take no notice of them—that if *Truth* said to-morrow that I was implicated in a scheme of pulling up a line of railway

[*Mr. Meagher.*

to wreck either Crick or Norton I would not bother my head about them. If they said about me to-morrow that I was manufacturing a bomb to blow up some house they were in, I would not bother my head about them. If any allegations appertaining in any way to them had appeared in any reputable or respectable paper, I should take very quick and appropriate action before this. Having determined to ignore their existence, and finding that reputable citizens not only scouted the idea as absolutely absurd and malicious; when I found that even Parliament paid no attention whatever to it, although the publication has been three or four days extant; when I found that the leaders of the House took no action, I came to the conclusion that they treated the quarter from which it emanated with the same contempt as I did. So it remained until an ordinary member of the House drew attention to it, and immediately I felt it incumbent upon me in personal explanation to deal with this charge, and I ask Parliament fearlessly, what I think this House will not refuse me, that is for a royal commission to inquire into this matter. I may say that as to the object of these attacks, as far as I am personally concerned, I have no doubt about it. One individual, hearing that some of my friends were anxious to take action, which would enable me to appear in court, said, "I will take care that he does not appear in court." Whether that is the object of this stirring up of the Dean business, I do not know, but I believe that is the reason. In speaking to this House I may say that I have been in a position which has fallen to the lot of very few men to be in. I have been in a position which happens to a man once in a lifetime. I have been in a position which happens to very few men who are born—that is in a great crisis to have, on one side, the liberty of a client depending on a professional communication, and, on the other side, having to divulge that professional communication. I have been in that delicate position in connection with the Dean matter. I found that Sir Julian Salomons had been guilty of an action which the late Chief Justice of Queensland openly denounced in the *Brisbane Courier* as a foul breach of professional confidence. So far as I was

concerned, I was fighting for a principle—that was the principle of a fair trial to which the humblest felon is entitled. If the humblest felon makes a professional communication, and if that communication is retailed in a professional way, it should be kept as secret as in the case of the man to whom it was given. When I found that Sir Julian Salomons had outraged that professional communication, I was placed in this position—either to yield up that professional communication or to deny it. But I am pleased to say this—that, although I did deny in this House under the circumstances I referred to, that I mentioned the matter to Sir Julian Salomons, seeing that it was mentioned professionally and confidentially, I am pleased to say that I found, even upon the trial, that one of the magistrates now upon the bench—Mr. Isaacs—not coming to give me a character, but incidentally as a Crown witness, stated that during the five years I had appeared before him he never once found me misleading the court. I am pleased to say that the same testimony is given by the leading members of the profession. My life, ever since I have been to college, has been an open book. Those associated with me at college and in the law as articulated clerk and professionally for six or seven years when I was practising, one and all can give me the highest character for veracity. I am pleased to find even Mr. Charles Bull stating openly in the box at the Water Police Court that no matter what the issue of the conspiracy case was the opinion which the profession had formed of me and which he had formed was that I had never deceived the members of my profession or the magisterial bench. That being the case, I do admit this isolated action under this tremendous stress, done not to benefit me, but to protect a client; and as Lord Brougham has said, a man should stand by his client through good and through ill. The whole of my life is an open book. Those who know me best are in Sydney and they can testify to it. The charge here disclosed is an infamous charge. To say that I suggested to Mr. Crick that we should kill Sir Julian Salomons was an infamous charge. As Mr. Levien's name was mentioned, I wrote to Mr. Levien asking him as to his recollection of what took place. When I find that

out of a harmless incident two people have put their heads together in a foul combination to down me at any price, who for three years I have withstood singly, and who for the last three or four months I have withstood when combined, I tell both of them that they will find me fighting with my back against the wall. To this foul combination my invitation is “come on.” When Mr. Levien's name had been mentioned I wrote this note to him. As I was sending this note to the paper in my electorate I was anxious that Mr. Levien should, if possible, give me a reply so that it might be published concurrently in the newspaper in my constituency. As I wish to deal with the matter in chronological order, it will, perhaps, be better for me to read my note to Mr. Levien. It is as follows:—

December 20, 1898.

Dear Harry,—I have read in Sunday's *Truth* a charge by Norton that I suggested to Mr. Crick the assassination of Sir Julian Salomons, and had two men ready to do it, and that you can corroborate it.

I ask you, in justice to myself, to say if such is the case.

I certainly remember some three years back a loafer coming to me, and with much earnestness offering, on behalf of himself and mate, to kill Sir Julian Salomons.

I retailed that fact to Mr. Crick and yourself in no secret way whatever, and most probably in an ironical way referred to its consummation.

In those days of excitement, and pestered with all kinds of cranks, I attached no serious importance to the communication, and certainly did not think either yourself or Mr. Crick did.

Kindly let me know your impression of the matter, as this attempt to distort a frothy incident into a revolting proposition is simply unbearable.

Mr. Levien has informed me that he certainly did not remember me referring to two men that I had in my office ready to kill Sir Julian Salomons, but he remembered me referring to the fact that an offer had been made to me to assassinate Sir Julian Salomons, and that I repeated that fact in his presence, but that he regarded it not in a serious way. In fact, to use his own expression, which I believe he has retailed unsolicited to the hon. member for Kahibah and the hon. member for Botany, he did not regard the matter in any serious light, and, in fact, he never gave the matter a thought afterwards. The hon. member has not written any reply at all. He said he would

prefer to speak in this House, but he has assured me that is not the construction he put upon it; he never gave the matter a thought. He never regarded it in any serious way whatsoever, and the allegation that I said I had two men in waiting to make cold meat of a man absolutely did not take place at all. But I say a proposition was made to me. Now to come to the statement of facts. They are shortly these. I suppose that at the time of the Dean trouble more cranks came to the surface than was ever the case under any other circumstances. Day after day we received notes, some in ink coloured red, threatening all kinds of vengeance against Judge Windeyer and other people. All sorts of cranks came prepared to prove anything. Oneman who came to me, a solicitor informs me—and Sir Julian Salomons corroborates it—certainly could not bleed me, and then he went to Sir Julian Salomons to tell him he could prove some most important things. When Sir Julian Salomons sent for the detectives he was not prepared to prove anything, but he wanted payment. There were all kinds of cranks floating on the surface. Upon this particular day, I remember, although I did not give any close attention to it, on coming up King-street, near Riley's old hotel, a man did come out after me whose face I knew well, seeing him round at the police court—he used to run messages for prisoners and do odd kinds of work. He said he wanted to speak to me privately. I asked him what he wanted. He said he wanted to know what I was going to do with Salomons—"on account of the way you stuck to our chaps I and my mate will kill the old so-an-so; all you have to do is to say the word." I said, "All right, old man." I went away across the street. He followed me, and said a shilling would be acceptable, and my opinion of him was that he would sooner assassinate a long beer with a head on it than Sir Julian Salomons. That was the proposition that was made. On the same day, I fancy it was in a hotel, I met the hon. member for Quirindi and the hon. member for West Macquarie, and I repeated that an offer had been made to kill Sir Julian Salomons. It might be in an ironical way that I referred to its consummation. I do not remember that, but certainly it was nothing in a serious manner. Strange to say the matter was never referred to again.

[*Mr. Meagher.*

Although as a matter of fact we have been on speaking terms all the time, the hon. member for Quirindi never referred to the matter during all those years. He informs me that he never regarded the matter in a serious way. I have never done so beyond referring to it with some social friends in my own house the same evening. Two of them I think I can locate. I referred to it there in a jocular sense, showing how loafers are prepared with much recklessness to kill men. I think it is needless for me to tell the House that in my most bloodthirsty moments the intention to kill Sir Julian Salomons or any one else never entered my head. I take it that if I were the worst criminal in the world, if such a thing was in my mind there would be only one person in it. It does seem strange that Mr. Crick, who has been so shocked that it has taken him three and a half years to come forward and speak about the matter—that this individual, who has been so shocked that he has had to keep his pent-up moral feelings down for three and a half years, when they could no longer rest upon his breast, and when he had to come forward and throw them off—should come and make this statement—this written statement—to John Norton, a gentleman to whose opinion of Mr. Crick for three years I shall casually refer. It may seem strange to hon. members that Mr. Crick should have isolated himself as he has done. I do not wish to deal with the Dean case extensively, but Mr. Crick has been in the position of the injured innocent in that case. Meagher never let him know anything of his plans. Meagher, for the sake of Dean, had to suffer a penalty which did not affect him in any way whatever. There was no word about Dean's guilt by Meagher when it came to a matter affecting his life; and it does seem a startling thing that Meagher, who was so anxious to preserve Dean's liberty that he would not mention to Crick anything that would give him any knowledge affecting the guilt of Dean, should come to Crick and tell him everything affecting the guilt of Meagher, and especially to make a statement in the presence of three other men in the country, leaving four swords of Damocles, so to speak, hanging in judgment over his unfortunate neck. The probabilities of that I leave to members

of this House themselves. But I wish to state this—that having given the statement my categorical denial as far as the intention may be presumed, having pointed out that this statement was made to me in such a way that I never regarded it in a serious light, and that it was retailed by me as it was told to me—having cleared up that particular portion of the affair, I should like to come to a little of what may be called the padding of an *alibi*. Crick states that shortly afterwards he spoke to some individuals, and said that Meagher had told him this thing. With laymen that might have some weight; but those of a legal turn of mind would recognise it to be a mode of faking evidence. For instance, if I were going to kill Mr. Price at 9 o'clock to-night, and had to walk a mile to do it, and if at 9 o'clock Mr. Price were murdered, and the next morning I went round to Mr. Fitzpatrick and said that I was playing dominoes with my wife from that time up to 11 o'clock, and that I did not go to bed until 11 o'clock, and that I won every game; and if I also went to Mr. Spence and told that gentleman that I was playing dominoes all the time, that does not make the foul lie that I was a mile away at 9 o'clock any truer. Crick going round to whomsoever he went and stating that Meagher told him that he wished to assassinate Sir Julian Salomons does not make it truer because he stated it to anyone. The question is, did Meagher say so? I hope hon. members will see that the point has no relevancy to the question at all. That Crick having gone round and stated to one or two people, whoever they were, that Meagher had spoken of this question does not surprise me at all, because now that I refer to the Dean case, I see quite distinctly that it accords with Mr. Crick's conduct all the time when he was isolating himself. To show that this statement, even if it had any warrant at all, should have been made in 1896, I may mention that shorthand reporters from the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Sydney Morning Herald*, and, I believe, also from the Crown Law Offices, reported verbatim every word I delivered at a mass meeting at the New Masonic Hall, on the 22nd July, 1896, in which I made a most damning denunciation of the whole of the Dean case—denunciations of so strong a

character that the Sydney press would not publish them, for fear, most probably, of libel actions. But 2,000 people heard them, and what is more, some of Mr. Crick's friends were present—sent there, so I understand, to hear what Meagher had to say. Meagher had a lot to say, with which I do not intend to weary this House. The tactics of Mr. Crick in going to someone else to try to hang a load round Meagher's neck are borne out by the facts. I have a verbatim shorthand transcript of every word I said to him. I have referred to it to refresh my memory. If Mr. Crick did go to persons as he alleges and said these things, it does not make the case one whit stronger, but it shows keen diplomacy and a determination to drown someone at any price so long as he could swim. I will refer to a portion of my speech which deals with Crick's action during the great debate on the Dean case in this House. I repeat the words now, and I will repeat them inside and outside to the end of time. There would have been no more light-hearted man in New South Wales on the morning following the 22nd July if Mr. Crick had sued me for one word I uttered. To come back to my point, I was referring to Mr. Crick's interviewing any one else to show that would be in accordance with the policy he pursued during the Dean case in regard to myself. I said that night at the New Masonic Hall:

When I found a paragraph in the papers on the morning of the 26th of September to the effect that the same afternoon the Attorney-General would lay a statement on the table of the House, I wired to my trusty friend, who was at Maitland, to this effect: "Am moving adjournment of the House this afternoon to reply to Salomons." That will show you what my idea was then, and this has been the greatest object-lesson to me—to always depend on my own judgment—(cheers)—and when I reflect, for four years standing in the front of my profession, meriting the highest encomiums of judges and magistrates, getting desperate criminals out of desperate situations, and rescuing innocent men from perilous positions by my own ingenuity; yet, when it came to my own case, I allowed myself to be manacled and butchered like a sheep at the shambles (cheers). Well, I knew pretty well what that statement would be like, so I had composed an anticipatory reply, which I elaborated in the leader of the Opposition's private room—Mr. Lyne placing it at my disposal the same afternoon when I told him I was replying to Sir Julian Salomons. Previous to going to the House I received a wire from my partner as follows:—"Don't move

adjournment of the House till you see me—coming down by this evening's train." Well, stupid people say that it is a peculiar wire to get from a man who did not know anything till fourteen days later on, October 8th (loud laughter). As a result, in place of being able to jump into the breach at 5 o'clock to reply to Sir Julian Salomons, I was compelled to see Mr. Perry, the Opposition whip, and at least half a dozen members to keep a debate going in case it should show signs of lapsing, in order that I should be able to move the adjournment of the House before Government business commenced. Every one knew I was going to speak; a *Herald* reporter met me in the lobby and asked me what about Sir Julian Salomons' statement, and I replied, "Oh, that is simply a tissue of romance woven out of a very small incident, a page from Balzac. You'll hear me in half an hour." The debate fortunately did not lapse, and I naturally thought my partner, being an older man—though he knew nothing about it (laughter)—might have some points to give me. Eventually he arrived before the House met at 7 o'clock and he said, "Don't speak to-night, Dick." I said, "What? Give a statement a minute's start it takes a week to overhaul it. This House rises till Tuesday. I am not going to give Salomons five days' start over the wires of this country." He said, "Now don't speak to-night; they have had two months to compose that statement, and it is pretty carefully worded and must be replied to guardedly." "But," I replied, "I'm ready to speak, and I want my speech column by column alongside of Salomons' in to-morrow's papers." However, to summarise, I yielded, and agreed not to speak till next Tuesday night, five days away, and thus disappointed a crowded House, who were expecting me to carry out my promise. I then wrote out a memo. for the daily press, which I gave a friend of mine to deliver. The memo. ran, "Mr. Meagher regrets the forms of the House preclude him from speaking until a late hour when he would not get full publication, and he regrets that he has trespassed so much on Sir Julian Salomons' credulity." That note was torn up by my friend, Mr. Crick, as he considered that I should give no intimation until I spoke on Tuesday next. About 9 o'clock that night, he invited me up to the refreshment-room, and, in the presence of two members of the House, urged me to catch my next tram home, and asked me to come in early and we would have a good talk before commencing business, and stating he also would catch his tram after a while. I went home and said to my wife: "Alice, the press will be down on me to-morrow morning; you know I told you I was going to reply to Salomons in reply to that statement which was to have been read according to this morning's paper. However, Crick has persuaded me not to speak. I feel I have made a terrible mistake in not giving this—referring to the speech which I had in my pocket." When I got up next morning I naturally looked to see what the papers had to say on my silence. Looking at the *Daily Telegraph*, it nearly dropped out of my hands when I saw a two-column violent speech by Mr. Crick, attacking Sir Julian Salo-

[*Mr. Meagher.*

mons, Mr. Want, and Mr. Justice Windeyer; and a member of Parliament, Alfred Edden, interjecting, "Where is Dick Meagher?" Considering that Dick Meagher, at half-past 4 that afternoon, was full of running, and actually had a speech prepared to reply to Sir Julian Salomons, considering the wire from his partner stopped him, and that he had asked members to prevent a debate from lapsing until his partner arrived, and he then dissuaded him, I might well say I was thunderstruck, and I might here say the speech I did deliver on the Tuesday was a far different one to that I had prepared that Thursday afternoon. (Cheers.) I ask you to put yourself in my place, full of running as a Derby colt, with a philippic against Sir Julian Salomons that would have dealt a death-blow to the whole affair, dissuaded and then induced to go home under false pretences, and next morning to find a speech attacking everyone stupidly and blackguardly, and laying down a line of campaign that I was obliged to follow. That was the greatest shock I ever got at such a critical juncture. (Cheers.)

I have a copy of a verbatim shorthand note of the speech, so that there is no doubt about it. This copy is from the report of Mr. Todd, a parliamentary reporter for the *Daily Telegraph*. I quite believe that Mr. Crick did go to someone else to say that Meagher had made the suggestion to him in order that he might dissociate himself from Meagher as much as possible, and down him in the same way that he did when he sent me a telegram, which deterred me from speaking—from delivering a speech which I had prepared,—when he afterwards took me up to the refreshment-room, and advised me to go home, on the condition that I would answer the charge on the next sitting day of Parliament; and when having got me out of the way in order to clear himself he made a speech, in which he was made to appear as the pure, suffering individual, and Meagher the man to be feared. That Crick should go to other persons and make these allegations is quite in accordance with his tactics, but it does not assist him legally one iota. To show that it is quite in accordance with his past conduct, I will just refer to another incident, and that is the declaration that was read here. I, the murderer, instead of standing at this table, if what Crick says is correct, should be in Darlinghurst Gaol, and every hon. member should be afraid of me. If what Crick has said is correct, it does seem strange that he should come here and weep hypocritical tears when he handed in a declaration by the "friend of his boy-

hood," and had to be handed gently out of the chamber on account of the deep emotion he showed over the man who ought to be in Darlinghurst Gaol for trying to kill a man. I refer to this incident to show that this attempt of Crick to speak with someone else is quite in accord with his action three years ago in the Dean case in connection with the declaration I signed. I might just as well, in order to make myself clear, refer to the words I actually used, as they will explain the matter more fully, and I shall have done with that particular point. I said :

On Tuesday morning my wife arrived at the office at the hour mentioned, and for fully three quarters of an hour all the arguments were brought to bear to show that if we were both sent on for trial we would both be what he termed "fitted"; whereas, as I told Salomons, I should do the right thing and shoulder the lot, and should not only get my half share of the business, but, as long as he carried it on, myself and wife would have an interest in it. I must say my wife blankly refused to accede to such a proposition. Now, this is a matter I have borne in silence for a long time, while ruthless criticism has assailed me; but I make it now no secret to this vast assemblage, and my trusty friend knows where he can bring me to test it. He then pointed out to my wife that if his view were taken, I would be dealt with under the First Offenders' Act, and consequently no imprisonment could take place; but that did not move her. He then said a friend of his connected with the bar was interviewing Sir Julian Salomons, who, he said, had advised our arrest, and that he expected some information. After a considerable time had gone by, my trusty partner went to the door, in answer to a knock, and came into the room with a memo., which he read, to this effect: "That Sir Julian Salomons says the Crown law authorities only want justice done; they only want the guilty man to be given up, and have no wish to injure Crick or Meagher, and if justice is done no harm comes to Crick or Meagher." I can see now why my wife was wanted that morning, but could not see it before. (Laughter and loud cheers.) That had no effect with me in this world. (Cheers.) But while pouring the argument into my wife's ear that no harm would come to Dick, there would not even be a prosecution, he suddenly remembered that if we went on for trial, there was such an outcry in the Rofe case about the First Offenders' Act, that the next man convicted for conspiracy would be sentenced, and my wife had certain imprisonment on one side or liberty and no prosecution on the other, and, as he remarked, if he had told Sir Julian Salomons he would have shouldered it. [A voice: "I'm sure he would."] (Loud laughter.) Well, every man has a heart, and I confessed I felt it when I saw my wife distracted and in tears. My wife said to me, "Dick, I don't care what happens as long as you don't go to prison." I said there was no chance

of prison for anyone, and that before they could get at us, they had to prove Dean guilty of attempted murder, and as Sir Julian Salomons acted in a cowardly way in connection with professional confidence, I would fight him to a bitter finish, and have the public standing at the back of me. My trusty friend interjecting that I grasped at every gleam of hope, my wife then implored me to do as Mr. Crick suggested, and not stand by a guilty man. "If," she said, "George Dean were innocent, I could see you go to gaol rather than an innocent man suffer." (Loud cheers.) My friend all the time impressing her, "Why should I be chained to a murderer?" After further heartrending scenes, I said, "Alice, do you wish me to admit Salomons is right, and do this?" She said, "I ask you to do anything, Dick, as long as you do not go to prison." I said, "Very well, I will state that George Dean is guilty and that Salomons is correct, on one condition: that as there is now to be no prosecution, that you leave this country for South Africa with me at first opportunity." Turning to Mr. Crick I said, "Bill, you have not acted to me in this as I would have acted to you." (Loud cheering.) My wife, through her tears, said she would go to any part of the world with me—anywhere, so long as I did not go to prison.

I go on to say that, after some further heartrending scenes, seeing that the charge, on Crick's guarantee, was to be withdrawn against us on the following day at court, I agreed to sign that statement. The result was that when it came on we were not discharged, or, in other words, the statement was obtained by false pretences. What I specially object to was not only that Crick trapped me by false pretences as regards the declaration, for I had made every arrangement to leave for South Africa. The reason I did not go to South Africa I think will be seen when I read what I said:

I then looked at the *Herald* and found that the steamship *Damascus* sailed for Capetown on the 30th October, 1895, and I determined to sail by her and leave Australia, not that I was ashamed of the promptings of my own heart, for if they had been followed there would have been no trouble for anyone; but because I felt in sacrificing myself I had lost my self-respect, and I determined to heave a sigh of relief when Sydney Heads faded out of sight. (Cheers.) I told several friends, who came and saw me that very night, I was going to South Africa, relying on the fact, of course, of no prosecution. I wrote out my resignation of my seat in Parliament at the same time as the declaration. Having a man bound hand and foot you would naturally think that my late partner, with a declaration so clear and comprehensive, would have handed it in like a man. But no; he makes a whining hypocritical speech, and poured another volley into the prostrate body of the man who sacrificed and saved him, and finished up by stating,

"That when the friend of his boyhood atoned to the laws of the country he would leave it for ever." Considering "the friend of his boyhood"—(laughter)—had taken upon himself an odium under the representation that no laws had to be atoned for, was rather good reading. Well, if Mr. Meagher had to remove offal at Glebe Island for 10s. a week, and had an offer of £10,000 a year to manage the gold mines in South Africa, rather than be away from the colony he would prefer the little job at Glebe Island. (Loud laughter and cheers.)

That bears out the view I had—that if Crick did go to anyone else, it is thoroughly in accordance with his tactics in connection with those two incidents during the Dean case, where his endeavour was to dissociate himself—where he got away from me as far as possible as a dangerous man—and yet extracted by all foul and heinous methods, a matter as to which perhaps his responsibility may some day be properly located. But leaving that particular question alone, I wish to say this, that in accordance with this policy of Mr. Crick's is a statement here that Meagher—and I say this in the hope that the press will give me fair publication. I am not one of those anxious to see my name in print. I notice that one paper especially has made a point, where I have taken part in debates in this Chamber, of eliminating my name from the report. I must say to the credit of the two morning papers and one of the evening papers, they do give me some fair play. I am not anxious. It does not trouble me much as to whether they put my name in or keep it out; but one paper has studiously kept my name out of print, for what reason I do not know. It does not offend me; but I hope, as this matter has been broadly made, they will at any rate, as far as they are concerned, give fair play in regard to this charge. Mr. Crick, in order to colour this affair, introduces extraneous matter by saying that Meagher had an accomplice in some abortion case. The reason I refer to it is this—it is rather peculiar—the accomplice in the abortion case referred to is no other than a young man named Daniel Green, and the House will bear with me while I refer to that abortion case later on to show to what a horrible length some people will go, not only after having discharged a volley into a man's body who had proved too faithful, but how far they will go, when he happens to be knocked down, to keep him down. But I am pleased to say that neither Mr.

[*Mr. Meagher.*

Crick nor Mr. Norton, nor the whole vile combination of pimps and parasites will keep me down. Mr. Daniel Green is the person referred to as "accomplice." It is true that Crick did not use the name of Daniel Green, because it would have made it more intelligible, and I mention Daniel Green's name at this stage to show that this policy of Crick to endeavour to dissociate himself as much as possible is borne out by an incident in connection with the Dean case. When we were arrested, Mr. Crick openly stated at the police court that Daniel Green was a man he would never have near him; that Daniel Green was a man who associated with Meagher, and that Daniel Green was a man whom he had kicked down the stairs of his office—in fact, I think he swore to it. As a matter of fact, Crick never kicked Daniel Green down the stairs of his office in his life, and his policy of repudiation is most strangely shown by the fact that immediately the Dean case was over, hardly were Crick and Green discharged—Green, the man he had kicked down the stairs of his office—than he has Green cheek by jowl with a large bottle of wine, in company with a newspaper reporter, down at the Metropolitan Hotel. From the day of the Dean case up to the present, Mr. Crick—and I had a hundred of witnesses in Sydney to prove it—has been daily in contact with Green, who has been up in his office day after day, in his private room day after day, out at Randwick to dinner at his private house, has put commissions on his horse upon the "tote" and with bookmakers, has been with him to dinner at the Metropolitan time after time, has been associated with Crick daily for the last three years. Daniel Green, the man who, at the time of the Dean trial he would never touch, who never went near his office, whom he kicked downstairs—the man whom he would not allow within the radius of his respectable presence—is the man with whom he was cheek-by-jowl, and whom he has been cuddling ever since the verdict was given in the Dean case, for reasons which may be obvious to most people, but which it is not necessary for me to dwell upon! I merely mention it at this stage to show that the accomplice referred to was none other than Mr. Crick's bosom daily friend and companion Daniel Green, who, as I say, has been

associated with him since the Dean trial up to the present time. Yet he would mislead the House and the people into the belief that Meagher had some criminal located as an accomplice in an abortion case. In regard to the charge made against me, this charge is made by Mr. Crick in company with Mr. Norton. Mr. Norton says he made friends with Mr. Crick for the purpose of having this matter investigated. It is a most extraordinary thing that Mr. Norton made friends with Mr. Crick at the time of the Federal Constitution some four or five months ago, and yet, while he made friends with him for this purpose, it is a most remarkable thing that Mr. Norton boomed me to the skies to two leading residents of the Tweed—Mr. Eastaughfee and Mr. Grime. After he had made friends with Crick, Mr. Norton booms me to the skies to these two gentlemen from Murwillumbah as a man whom they should have for their representative. And what is more, while I was in Brisbane, the Sunday after the polling, Mr. Norton had a complimentary paragraph about the "brilliant young Australian." I believe if I had steered a certain political course, and allowed myself to be hamstrung, I still would have been the "brilliant young Australian," and I would have saved myself all this worry and all this annoyance at the hands of Mr. Norton and Mr. Crick. But I am pleased to say that I value my political independence too dearly to submit to blackmailing, and so long as I am in public life no one will terrorise me in regard to the position I am going to take up. But to revert to Crick's conduct. We saw him weeping in Parliament here; we saw him weeping over the man who to-day he says attempted to commit murder. And he is so solicitous about the friend of his boyhood that it does seem strange that Mr. Crick has sent half a dozen overtures to me, not stating directly that he sent them, because every gentleman who has approached me has had this peculiar preface: "Now, look here, old man—of course, I don't come from Crick; you will understand that—but why don't you bury the hatchet? Shake hands, you two men." All this has been said half a dozen times by leading men in this Chamber. Always my reply has been the same, and I think in this I will be corroborated. I said, "I wish to do no injury to Mr. Crick.

All I ask for is for him to keep away from me. I am not going to work any vindictive malice on Mr. Crick, nor any one else. Let him go his way, I will go mine. But if he dare to come across my path, he will go down." That answer I have given to the half a dozen gentlemen who have approached me to make up friends with Mr. Crick. Now, I am going to refer to a most extraordinary thing, and I do not know but that I shall give it into the custody of some individual here, so that there will be no trouble about it. It is this: Mr. Crick, knowing that I was a man who actually ferreted out two malefactors to rob a human being of his life, that I must have been a detestable and loathsome individual, immediately my polluted presence came into the Chamber, he should have been terrified to see a man who in cold blood wanted to kill a fellow human being, and who had two villains ready to carry out his evil intentions—I say he should have trembled at the very sight of me in the Chamber, and my very presence should have almost made him sick, and for me to have the audacity to stand up in this Chamber and endeavour to take part in legislation, must have had a horri-fying effect upon him; for me to have the audacity to get up and move the second reading of a bill to amend the criminal law; or me, the arch criminal, the man who instigated murder, to have the impertinence, the brutal and, I may say, demoniacal impudence to stand up to move a bill to amend the criminal law, should have turned Mr. Crick absolutely into a state of paralysis. I cannot prove that he sent any of these politicians to make friends. I candidly admit that. All I can tell hon. members is, that it is a most extraordinary thing that they all opened with the same preface: "Now, understand Crick has not said it." Sometimes, as Hamlet says, "The lady doth protest too much." I think there was a little too much protesting here. I have here an envelope, which will not go out of my possession, bearing the post-mark of 8th September, and addressed in a disguised backhand. I introduced the bill to amend the criminal law in the month of August, and I got this note addressed to me at Parliament House on the 8th September. I opened it and I found on a copy of the bill I introduced to amend the criminal law five lines in

Mr. Crick's handwriting. I had been associated with Mr. Crick for six years as a partner and ought to know his handwriting, and this document I am going to preserve. When I got the note I was so incensed that I nearly tore it up, but by some act of providence I put it in my pocket. For the man who for three and a half years he has known as this infamous malefactor, who suggested murder, whose presence in this House must have acted as an absolute ulcer in his eyes, whose attempt to move a bill to amend the criminal law must, in his opinion, be really the *excelsis* of criminal audacity—when I introduced the bill I got a gentle reminder in Mr. Crick's handwriting:

Why not look at the recent bill as passed in the House of Commons. If the judge does not comment the Crown prosecutor might thus defeat your intention.

It does seem an extraordinary thing that the man who knew that I am a criminal should write me a note in his own handwriting; and I say now that this is Mr. Crick's handwriting and his banker will prove it, even though the envelope is addressed as it is. I can quite understand that it would look bad for Mr. Crick to address the envelope, because the parliamentary messengers, knowing that he and I were at daggers drawn, would say, "Crick is writing to Meagher." The writing on the envelope is disguised, but here, inside, I have this beautiful sympathetic advice given, why not consult certain authorities, in order to assist me in legislation? Why, if Crick knew that I was the man he has painted me—that I was this criminal—he should come and assist me in the public life of this country, to act as a legislator, I leave to hon. members own rational and common sense. But the sequel is a very simple one. I may say that Meagher is a very soft man so far as forgiveness is concerned, and I may say, with no sense of egotism, that I would sooner do a man a good turn any day than do him a bad turn. I never go out of my way to row, and if ever there is a quarrel I can say that from my boyhood up I have never yet had a quarrel which has not been forced upon me. I do not look for rows, but I can see the sequel. I got that note in the afternoon. Mr. Crick thought that Meagher, having got this advice and this assistance from Mr. Crick, might say,

[*Mr. Meagher.*

"Well, there is no doubt about it; here is poor old Bill, whom I have been associated with, actually taking pride in my rising in Parliament. He actually writes to me; he actually gives me assistance in framing legislation; actually takes an interest in taking me by the hand, and giving me a lift up the hill. Dash it all, I'll bury the hatchet, and when I see him I will shake hands and thank him for the kindly spirit in which he sent this note to me." I have often been in that state, and I think of all men in the world that would have hit me here, and I would have done it. On the following day, as I walked into the lavatory here, I brushed by him. He was facing me; he was walking towards me, and he practically stopped to look at me in a way as if to speak, knowing that I must have received that note, as I was in the House, and had got my letters. I brushed by him—ignoring him; clearly showing that this holding out of the olive branch to me, no matter in how kindly a spirit, would not make me shake hands with a man who had butchered me once, but who shall never have an opportunity to butcher me again. I walked by him, although he practically stopped. I think I pretty well know why that friendly attitude was assumed, and it does seem strange that Mr. Crick should adopt this attitude of helping me as a legislator and giving me good advice. If his charges are correct, he should have gone down to the police court, not weeks ago, but years ago, for the protection of society, and sworn an information against me. Does he think that there are a lot of mules in this House, that he can impose on the credulity of the humblest member here? Does he think he can impose on the credulity of the public by him and Norton joining heads and saying, "Here is a statement; now let Meagher take action?" Norton knows that if he were to say that I had attempted to blow up Parliament House I would ignore him. He is beneath my unutterable contempt, and no one knows better than Crick does that I pay no attention to Norton, and it does seem strange for Mr. Crick, whose high moral probity is influencing him no doubt, not to go and lay an information and vindicate justice, but to go to Mr. John Norton for the purpose of bespattering me with mud and trying to raise the eternal Dean case again against one

for whom, of all men in the world, he should have the most profound and deep gratitude. It does seem a strange thing that Mr. Crick should so far back as the month of September be actually holding out the olive branch of friendship to an arch-criminal and a murderer who, in place of moving legislation on the floor of this House, ought to be doing his turn in Darlinghurst Gaol. Now, leaving that rather peculiar thing out, I come to this matter, that Mr. Crick boasted himself in the hotels in the city that two men had been to him and offered to do the same thing as was offered to me. If a royal commission is appointed I will produce a well-known solicitor who was present—there was also a barrister present too, but he happens to be away from town—when Mr. Crick, in his braggadocio style, said that two men had been to him to “make cold meat of Salomons,” the very words he uses here. Crick has not told us a word about that; but I undertake, if a royal commission is appointed, to produce a well-known solicitor who informed me to-day when he said “Why, Dick, he is putting this down to you. Why, he told me in the presence of a certain gentleman who is a barrister that two men had actually been to him to do it.” If a royal commission is appointed I shall have much pleasure in calling these gentlemen to give evidence in regard to the question. I simply want to say, in conclusion, that Mr. Crick and Mr. Norton have concocted—I say advisedly—a diabolical conspiracy to injure me, a most diabolical conspiracy to throw dust in the eyes of the public; but they have overshot the mark. Let us see the combination. For three and a half years Mr. Norton has been giving his opinion of Mr. Crick, and as Mr. Norton says in the interests of the public he saw Mr. Crick in order to get a full statement from him upon this particular case. Let us see what the opinion of Mr. Norton is of Mr. Crick. In the issue of *Truth* so far back as June, 1897, Mr. Norton in an article called “A Gamblers’ Parliament,” thus gives his opinion of the reliability of his bosom friend and underground strategist, Mr. Crick. Mr. Crick moved the adjournment of the House, and Mr. Norton says:

Of the mover we wish to speak without bias or prejudice. It must be pointed out, however (especially in view of his reiterated outrageous attacks, under the safe cover of parliamentary privilege, upon better people than himself, who

cannot defend themselves), that he is not to be admitted as an impartial witness in his own cause. . . . Besides, his parliamentary record —

Mr. Norton has now found a new kind of moral Hercules. He has now discovered a cleanser of the Augean stables. Let us hear his opinion of this moral Hercules not twelve months ago—

Besides, his parliamentary record is not such as to induce the public at this stage of his chequered career to accept him in the role of a reformer at all. And even if the public had been in a mood to receive Mr. Crick in that capacity, his vile abuse, virulent vituperation of and abominably outrageous attacks on men whose lives are as clean, whose records as clear, and whose word or bond would be taken as readily as his own, deprived him of even the semblance of right to respectful consideration either by the people or Parliament. This *Hansard* conclusively shows.

Probably it is just as well for the public to understand the two men who now put their heads together to raise this charge against Meagher. It is interesting to know the opinion of Crick on Norton and the opinion of Norton on Crick. Now hear the opinion which Mr. Norton formed of Mr. Crick:

All this vituperation and wild assertion may or may not be true, but it is only right to point out that their mere utterance by Mr. Crick under cover of parliamentary privilege does not incline the public to believe them, for the very simple reason that Mr. Crick has too often abused public confidence by the abuse of parliamentary privilege in this wanton fashion. It cannot be forgotten that he has had a most peculiar, and, in certain respects, discreditable parliamentary career. Whilst in an alleged drunken fit he made charges of corruption against Mr. Speaker Abbott and Mr. Ninian Melville (then Chairman of Committees) in connection with the Broken Hill Water Supply. He was ignominiously expelled from Parliament, and sought and secured re-election mainly on a promise to make good his charges, if re-elected. He has never made good these charges, but virtually recanted them. Then he has frequently made gross attacks upon judges and other public as well as upon private persons under cover of privilege. In connection with his trial for conspiracy in the Dean case he declared in Parliament that either he or the Hon. J. H. Want would have to leave public life. Mr. Want is still in Parliament, so is Mr. Crick, and if the public had to choose between the two, it would not be hard to predict on whom its choice would fall. Besides, has not Mr. Crick boasted in his place in Parliament that he had often been drunk, and hoped or intended to be drunk as often again? Can the statements of such a man concerning others, though made under cover of parliamentary privilege, carry any weight even against “tote” men, some of whom declare that they would deem it no honor to be seen in Mr. Crick’s company

Well, Mr. Norton's opinion of Mr. Crick even in print is that he has made outrageous charges against the officials of this House and has recanted them, and that on account of his attitude here, and his drunken habits and conduct he is a man in whose company even a "tote" man would be ashamed to be seen. Mr. Norton at the conclusion of the Manders' case, in the Metropolitan Hotel, in the presence of Mr. Bull and others, publicly denounced the hon. member for West Macquarie as a swindling attorney, an adulterer, a wife-beater, and everything else. The hon. member for West Macquarie said he would get a policeman, but he took very good care when he went out to look for a policeman not to come back. Strange to say, Norton denounced him as a swindler, an adulterer, and a wife-beater, only four months ago in a public hotel; but now, for the purpose of destroying Meagher, the hon. member for West Macquarie and Norton are cheek by jowl to see how they can best work up a diabolical charge which may have some influence upon the public. Having given Norton's opinion of the hon. member for West Macquarie, now let us see what is the opinion of the hon. member for West Macquarie with regard to Norton. It is only fair to give the opinions of these Siamese twins with regard to each other. The hon. member for West Macquarie, in the presence of two members of this Chamber, denounced Norton in the vilest terms with regard to an incident in which Norton manufactured perjured evidence in a case in which the hon. member for West Macquarie was concerned. There is one gentleman in this Chamber who actually took part in the conversation. He is not a particular friend of mine, but as this matter was rumoured throughout the Chamber he has mentioned it, and when the hon. member for West Macquarie comes here to-morrow he can know who the man is. The hon. member for West Macquarie said the most dangerous man in New South Wales was Norton. He said that when Mrs. Leisner was suing George Black Norton came to him to defend him. The hon. member for West Macquarie said that in the absence of certain links of evidence the case would be lost. Norton said, "I will be able to get the evidence before the morning;" and then to show the diabolical prowess of Norton,

[*Mr. Meagher.*

the hon. member for West Macquarie boasted openly, "True enough, Norton was ready in the morning with the links of evidence provided. Of course I knew he faked them up during the night, but that was no business of mine." That is the opinion of the hon. member for West Macquarie as to Norton. As we are talking of Sir Julian Salomons, there is an opinion given by him which will weigh as much as the opinion of either of them, and that is Sir Julian Salomons' opinion of the hon. member for West Macquarie which is just as true to-day while this charge is made as it was true when he spoke in the Legislative Council in October, 1895. He said this, "Why I speak in this way of Mr. Meagher is because I do not believe he is altogether the man you might infer he is." Notwithstanding that that was in the depths of the Dean matter, I give Sir Julian Salomons this credit, that he publicly, as reported in page 1300 of *Hansard*, used these words:

But I was warned by a friend—as far-seeing a man as any in this country, that with a partner like Mr. Crick, if I were to write that letter it might be used as a weapon against me, and I did not write it. Why I speak in this way of Mr. Meagher is because I do not believe he is altogether the man you might infer he is from what he has done in this matter. I believe his association with Mr. Crick has been harmful to him, and that if he could have seen his way in the matter without absolute destruction to himself and his partner, both professionally, politically, and privately, he would have told the truth.

Therefore, Sir Julian Salomons was of opinion that the hon. member for West Macquarie was a dangerous man, and I believe his opinion is true to-day, notwithstanding this diabolical bogus charge endeavoured to be levelled against me. Having quoted these opinions, I will now ask the House to permit me to refer to another passage in this article. It has not much to do with the charge of assassinating Sir Julian Salomons. This abortion case is put in for the purpose of endeavouring to give colour to the impression that Meagher is a person who keeps a museum of criminals. Meagher's office seems to be like Fagin's den, and to comprise all the cut-throats of the community; that Meagher is a kind of president of the Carbonari or Mafia society, and that you can there get a man assassinated while

you wait. The position was this: About the time of the Dean case—just before we were arrested—there was an abortion case against a woman called Myra Heaven. There was a witness called Hill. As a matter of fact strong efforts were made to convict Myra Heaven, and this man Hill either went away or something happened to him. At any rate the police in charge of the case endeavoured to prejudice Myra Heaven's case by having Green arrested on account of Hill not being present at some portion of the trial. There was a warrant out for Green. As a matter of fact, Green was an outside clerk employed by Crick and Meagher, although Crick had said that he had kicked him downstairs. There was no conviction against him. His brothers stand high up in the Public Service, and he comes of one of the best families in the place. He has never been in gaol. He is a man about town; and as, in criminal trials, it is well to know the characters of people, in a semi-private detective way Green could give us information which was useful. The detective in charge of the Myra Heaven case attempted to prejudice the trial by taking out a warrant against Green. I was told of that, I think, by a member of the profession. Green, in the ordinary way, came into my office in the afternoon of that particular day. To show how correct I was in my information, I said to him, "Have you been doing anything in regard to this case of Myra Heaven? They have a warrant out against you and Hill." He said, "What had I better do?" I said, "Wait until she is tried first, and then come out and surrender to the warrant." While I was speaking to him, a detective called at the office and wanted to know if Green was there, and I said Green was not there, and told him to go down the street. Here was a case of a man against whom an information had been charged. It was afterwards proved without foundation by the Crown prosecutor himself. It would have been a most extraordinary thing to hand a man over to the police, in order to prejudice a case by having him detained on a bogus charge. They went to the other side of the street and Green left, and he was in a friend's place until Myra Heaven's case was tried. After Myra Heaven's case had been tried, mark you, there was a warrant out against Green for the Dean

conspiracy case. The charge against Green in that case was absolutely without foundation, and might just as well have been laid against any member of this House. The charge against him in connection with Myra Heaven's case was even less substantial. The hon. member for West Macquarie describes him as this accomplice. He says, "Mr. Meagher told the detectives that the accomplice was not there." It was a bogus charge against Green, and he was no accomplice. To put Green on trial on a foundationless charge would have defeated the ends of justice in Myra Heaven's case. Therefore, Green's keeping out of the way until Myra Heaven's case was finished, and then coming out and asking them to proceed in his case was a wise and just proceeding. To show what a foundationless proceeding it was to make the charge in connection with Myra Heaven's case, they actually took the warrant out to arrest Green, not on the oath, but on the statement of an old criminal named Hill, who, in the witness-box at Darlinghurst, actually denied the statement. I will ask permission to read a few lines of the proceedings to show what a monstrous miscarriage of justice it would have been if Green had been convicted on such an information. Green was a man who was never in gaol in his life, and there was no more foundation for the charge against him than there would have been against any member here. Green kept out of the way until Myra Heaven was tried on the charge of abortion. The man Hill, who had been in gaol as many times as he had fingers and toes, gave evidence at Myra Heaven's trial. Mr. Wade, the Crown prosecutor, called him, and I will quote the proceedings from the *Sydney Morning Herald*, of October, 1895, to show how innocent Green was of this particular charge, and to show how the hon. member for West Macquarie would take Green to his bosom, and make him his dearest friend, and yet at a moment's notice he is ready to reproach him by classing him as an accomplice. No one knows better than the hon. member for West Macquarie that this evidence was given at Darlinghurst. The charge was laid against Green that he had attempted to spirit Hill away. Hill was put into the witness-box, and the Crown prosecutor, after the jury had

retired, asked that the witness Hill should be called, as he wished to ask him a few questions. It was on Hill's statement that the warrant was taken out against Green. The witness was brought into court.

Mr. Wade: Do you know a man named Dan Green?—*Witness*: Yes.

In whose employ is he?—I believe he is in the employ of Messrs. Crick and Meagher, but I am not sure.

Mr. Edmunds, who had been appearing for the accused in the case just tried, objected to an inquiry being held behind the backs of certain parties. His Honor said that at present no one had been implicated, but if there was any reflection on any one he would see that they had an opportunity of answering the charges. Hill, in answer to *Mr. Wade*, said he saw Green towards the end of September. He spoke to him, but Green gave him nothing.

The detectives were arresting Green because it was alleged that he gave Hill money to leave the country. Now, Hill was on his oath, and it was not a drunken statement extracted by the police. In answer to *Mr. Wade*, he went on to say:

They met in an hotel at the corner of King and Castlereagh streets. He made a statement after his arrest, but it was not true, except the part in which he said he had a conversation with Green. He did not recollect what Green told him. He told Detective West when he arrested him that Green promised to give him a tenner if he went away, but that statement was not true.

Here was the sole and only witness to take away Green's liberty; and when he is put on his oath he actually admits that he had made a bogus statement to the detective. The reason why is clearly shown.

He told West the truth at first, and he did not believe witness, so he told another story.

He told West at first that Green had nothing to do with the matter, and as West would not believe him, he told him another story, upon which West took out a warrant.

He admitted that he told West that Green gave him £10 in notes and the price of his fare by train to Brisbane, but that was all untrue. He also told West that he accepted the money, so as not to give evidence against Mrs. Heaven. He had invented the story, because he thought he was not going to be arrested. He thought when he made the statement that West would not arrest him. He told Detective West that Green asked him to go to Brisbane, and that the best way would be to take the boat to Ryde then to go from Ryde by train to the Hawkesbury, where he would catch the train to Brisbane.

[*Mr. Meagher.*

The charge was that this man was sent away, but he voluntarily came back to be present at Mrs. Heaven's trial.

This was not true, although witness did go to Ryde, and from Ryde to Hawkesbury, and then on to Brisbane. He declined to say where he got the money from. He did not get the money honestly. It had nothing to do with the charge of conspiring to defeat the ends of justice. He got the money outside of Green altogether. He came back from Brisbane a few days ago in order to be at the court on the 30th September. He went to Brisbane to look for work, and he was there a week. He did not know why he did not start for Brisbane from Sydney. He started from Ryde because he wanted to go that way.

This is the whole of the evidence given in answer to *Mr. Wade*. A bogus charge was made, and the only witness, Hill, voluntarily came back and made this statement, yet Crick tells us that Meagher spirited away a witness who was an accomplice with him, whereas, when we go into the matter, we find that the person concerned is none other than Crick's bosom friend and accomplice, Dan Green, his turf commission agent. I think I have dealt with this matter as fully as I possibly can. I am sorry that *Mr. Crick* is not present, because I intend now shortly to conclude by saying that in regard to criminals, Crick knows more about them than I do. In the Dean trial, there was a high official connected with the case who is supposed to have had some connection with a girl many years ago. He acted honorably to her, but Crick, knowing that certain notes had passed from him to her at Bathurst, intimated to me his intention to buy those notes from the unfortunate creature. The result was that after offering his gold to this unfortunate woman, he found she would not sell the letters to him. To her honor be that said. And let me say this, that at Darlinghurst, to several solicitors, Crick read seven or eight notes written by this gentleman, and referring to this matter of seventeen years ago. The writer has since acted honorably to the woman. He has educated his progeny, and has done all that a man could possibly do in the circumstances. The notes which *Mr. Crick* was so busy reading to all the solicitors and barristers at Darlinghurst redound to the credit of the writer. Crick himself told me that he tried to buy the letters, but the poor creature—and her circum-

stances were very low—refused for gold to sell them. Crick then intimated to me that he intended to send somebody up to steal them, and he did employ a man. Let him deny this. He did employ a criminal to go to Bathurst, so he tells me, and it is the only truth that one can get when talking of a criminal, and the woman's house—Mrs. Glass's house—was opened surreptitiously, and these letters were stolen. Three of them accidentally got mixed up with my papers. At the conclusion of the Dean trial Crick, who was acquitted before me, was so busy showing the contents of all these notes round, because they might give pain to a man who was discharging his duty—thinking that it might give pain to him, he was so busy in reading them that three of them got among my papers, and many months afterwards when I opened them I found the letters there. When the proceedings of the royal commission are finished I shall hand them back to the woman, whose house was opened in the way I have described. A box was burglariously broken open, and those letters were stolen by Crick through the agency of a criminal. The letters bear the signature of a high official. I do not want to go any further into that matter. But I do say this: that of all men who should talk of criminals the hon. member should be the last. He should be the last man to say that Meagher was a would-be murderer. Let him understand this: that in his allegations against me he has not only butchered me, but neither man or woman is safe with him. Since he makes this foul charge against me, let me say that in the month of December letters were coming up to Darlinghurst Court from a woman who earned her livelihood in a George-street bar, with whom Crick was intimate, who subsequently went to another bar in another street, who subsequently became ill in the month of December, 1895, and who was said to have died of peritonitis. Crick was frightened out of his senses, and a doctor, who afterwards left the colony for a couple of years, gave a certificate that the woman died of peritonitis. Those who are in the "know" know what she died of. There is one man who in the beginning of every year ought to fall down on his knees, as he did in his terrible sweat in the beginning of 1896, for fear that the Hon.

J. H. Want, the Attorney-General, was making inquiries. This same man, Crick, was afraid that the body might be exhumed—this person who had daily received letters at Darlinghurst while the trial was on. He talks to me of an intention to murder. I invite a royal commission. All I have to say to Crick is that Meagher has not finished with him. He is said to be looking for a portfolio, and on the day which brings him his portfolio, Meagher will bring something into this Chamber which will astonish people. "But sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." I shall keep this note which has been written to me by Crick, I shall keep the letters purloined from the woman at Bathurst by Crick, until the royal commission is over. In conclusion, I have to deny any charge of attempted injury to Sir Julian Salomons. The matter occurred in the way I have related. I am extremely sorry that Crick did not think it worth his while to be present. But the suggestion was made to me by a loafer in the way I have described. Such a thought as that never entered into my mind. It was suggested to me. I conveyed it in no secret way to Crick, and, I believe, Levien was present. As a matter of fact, the thing never bothered me. From that day to this—beyond a jocular remark in my own home to some private friends—I have never thought of it, and, if Crick thought it was genuine, his position was not to curry favour by writing this suggestion to assist me as a legislator, but to take proceedings against me. I am very sorry if any one should have been misled by what I retailed of what was told to me. The two criminals were never in my office. I never offered to assassinate Sir Julian Salomons. I give my statement fully and frankly, and I think the House and the country will see that there has been a conspiracy and a diabolical combination on the part of Crick and Norton to injure me. I ask, in all fairness, for the appointment of a royal commission.

CROWN LANDS BILL.

In Committee; consideration of Legislative Council's amendments:

[Mr. O'SULLIVAN, Temporary-Chairman.]

Mr. CARRUTHERS (St. George), Secretary for Lands [2.22 a.m.]: There

are only two amendments in this bill. The first is in clause 1. The Legislative Council has inserted the words "after the commencement of this act." Those words were not necessary. They do not alter the meaning of the bill one whit from what it was when it left this Chamber. Therefore, I see no reason to object to an amendment which is inserted only to make more certain that which, to my mind, was reasonably certain before. The second amendment omits the word "original" in the sub-clause of clause 1, which says "the value of improvements shall in no case exceed the original cost of making the improvements." I should have preferred to have retained the word "original," but at this late period of the session I do not intend to invite the Chamber to disagree with the amendments made by the Legislative Council. The bill with the amendments will practically effect all that this Chamber desires it to effect. For these reasons I move :

That the Committee agree to the amendments made by the Legislative Council in this bill.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Resolution reported and agreed to.

LAND AND INCOME TAX (DECLARATORY) BILL (No. 2).

Bill received from Legislative Council with amendments.

In Committee; consideration of the Legislative Council's amendments :

[Mr. O'SULLIVAN, Temporary-Chairman.]

Mr. REID (Sydney—King), Colonial Treasurer [2·27 a.m.], rose to move :

That the Committee agree to the Legislative Council's amendments in this bill.

He said : I am sorry to say that owing to the hurry of business just now it is impossible to give hon. members copies of the amendments made in the bill by the Council, but I shall be very glad to give an explanation of them, which need not be of a lengthy character.

Mr. LYNE : Is the right hon. member going to allow the Council to amend a money bill ?

Mr. REID ; This is not a money bill ; the measure which fixes the tax was the money bill. This is a bill amending the Land and Income Tax Act, which was amended by the Council in 170 directions and not a word was said about it.

Mr. LYNE : A good deal was said about it.

[*Mr. Carruthers.*

Mr. J. C. WATSON : Mr. Speaker ruled at the time that it was not a money bill !

Mr. REID : I deliberately put the machinery of the land and income taxation system into a separate measure so that the objection should not be taken, and so that the other Chamber should have a fair opportunity of amending the Land and Income Bill if they thought fit. The first clause of this bill has been altered so as to enable the subsequent exemption of the cases of the Australian Mutual Provident Society, Tindal, the Broken Hill Proprietary Company, and such cases as may be pending in the courts ; but as it happens there are no cases pending, because those are the only actions that have been brought.

Mr. J. C. WATSON : Will the exemption be for three years ?

Mr. REID : No ; only for one year. In the case of the Broken Hill Proprietary Company the exemption is for the year 1897, but we shall receive the tax for the years 1896 and 1898.

Mr. COHEN : And it is the same with regard to the Australian Mutual Provident Society ?

Mr. REID : Yes, in virtue of clause 4, which has not been altered, and which reads as follows :—

Where before the commencement of this act money has been paid to the commissioners for the use of her Majesty as land or income tax, such payment shall be as valid as if this act had been passed immediately after the passing of the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act of 1895.

We have received the money in advance, and the effect of the clause is to make the bill read into the act of 1895, and speak from the date of the passing of that act.

Mr. J. C. WATSON : The proviso does not alter that !

Mr. REID : No ; that clause is untouched. Many of us did not wish for any exemption, even in the cases which had been before the Privy Council ; but a very large minority—within seven or eight of the majority—endeavoured to utterly destroy the retrospective character of the bill in all cases, and I think, therefore, that we can congratulate ourselves that the Council did not take the very straight tip which was given to them. The provision as to the mode of calculation left in the bill as it passed the Assembly was as follows :—

To be calculated according to the proportion which such product, commodity, or substance so

exported bears in value to the value of the total exports by the taxpayer of such product, commodity, or substance during the preceding twelve months.

That suggests itself to me as not quite satisfactory nor a workable arrangement; but I am glad to say that the words I have read having been struck out, the clause which gives the Government power to provide for these matters by rules and regulations is left intact, with the addition of a proviso to the effect that under these rules the incidence of the tax shall be so adjusted that it shall not exceed the rate payable on profits. We do not object to that.

Mr. J. C. WATSON: What does it mean?

Mr. REID: That is to be determined by painstaking actuaries and accountants. The power to make rules and regulations is the important power, because, with this in existence, if a difficulty is found to exist, the rule can be altered to meet it.

Mr. LYNE: This being a bill under which large sums of money will be raised, it is a taxing bill!

Mr. REID: This bill does not raise a penny.

Mr. BARTON: Is it not supposed that it will stop a leak in the revenue?

Mr. REID: Only by an amendment of the machinery bill.

Mr. BARTON: When the leak is stopped there will be so much more revenue!

Mr. REID: It is very disappointing that the Council should have acted with such comparative fairness in this matter, but we must put up with it. Clause 2, with respect to the mortgages of land, and mixing in mortgages which were not subject to land-tax as a deduction upon income-tax, has been amended in such a way as to leave the principle of the clause intact. The clause now reads in this way:

No deduction for land-tax under section 10 of the principal act shall be allowed in respect of mortgages of lands not situated in New South Wales.

That will practically reach the case that I aimed at, and it gives us this great advantage, that the question of guarantees which was raised, and which is a matter of some difficulty, disappears.

Mr. FEGAN: Is the right hon. member going to accept the amendment?

Mr. REID: I am. There is an amendment at the end of clause 1, but it is immaterial.

And in fixing such rules, income derived from the ownership, use, and cultivation of such land subject to land-tax, shall be held to be exempted.

That is a harmless amendment, and it is the present state of the law. Then the clause about costs is omitted, because it is considered unnecessary. These are the amendments made in this bill, and I have consulted with the most competent adviser I could have, the Commissioner of Income-tax, who has been present while all the amendments have been made, and to whom they have been submitted, and he strongly advises me to accept the amendments, as they will not in any way seriously affect the revenue, except as to those three pending cases, and that will only be for one year. Considering all the circumstances, I confess, and especially in view of the fact that the cases exempted commanded the votes of a minority of the House within five or six of the majority, the House being so nearly divided on the question of exemptions. The House was nearly divided on the question of exemptions, and in view of that division of opinion in the Assembly, I am glad that a more destructive use was not made of it in another place.

Mr. BARTON (Hastings - Macleay) [2:38 a.m.]: I am not going to deal with this matter in a spirit of undue criticism. Perhaps it is a pity that under our system, when we find that the reasons for a certain thing, which was once regarded as a political principle, are gradually disappearing, we should still stick to our theory, and without having much regard for business considerations. This House has so entirely the control of all financial matters—it is so entirely master of the situation—that I, for one, do not particularly quarrel with the amendments made by the Legislative Council, unless they go to the entire root of any tax or revenue bill. I do not say that we should give up principle; but I do say that we should sometimes accept business propositions. That is what the Premier proposes now, and I think, therefore, we can heartily approve of it. This is a bill to stop a leak in the revenue. When that leak is stopped the revenue is larger. The right hon. gentleman comforts himself with the delusion that it is not a revenue bill; but inasmuch as, by the operation of the bill, the revenue will be very largely enhanced, if we pay any

regard to the description we had the other morning, inasmuch as if this is a revenue bill, this is a strange inroad upon all the constitutional principles which the right hon. member has been advocating, and advocating with wonderful insistency. That we should now be asked to accept these amendments made by the Legislative Council I say is a remarkable proposition, and I am going to accept it. But what becomes of all the career of the hon. member, his bitter antagonism to, and his tremendous fury against, the Legislative Council? What becomes of all that he has been saying during the last four or five years? Is it true, or is it not, that a bill which was to deal with the revenue in such a way as to increase it, has been amended by the Legislative Council, largely affecting the hon. member's proposal? It is true that the amendments might have been worse. The right hon. member says, like the lady in a celebrated story, "It is only a little one," but these are amendments in a taxation bill, and it is of no use, simply because the word "declaratory" is used, and that the words "intention of the House" are used to think that it will take away the character of the measure. How was it introduced? Was it not introduced by all the formality that accompanies taxation bills? The result of it all is, that the provisions for revenue is affected, and affected largely, and the right hon. gentleman tells us again that it is only "a little one." The hon. member says it is nothing, but let anybody look at it and say whether it is nothing. Is it not a fair and reasonable thing for us in this House to say that the course of action on the part of the head of the Ministry, which has been a continuous attack upon another house of the legislature, is now shown to have been nothing more nor less than a deliberate sham?

Mr. F. B. SUTTON (Bathurst) [2.43 a.m.] was understood to say that he had been given to understand that in the other Chamber cases which had been allowed to stand over by agreement with the commissioners, pending the decision of the court, had been brought under the operation of the act.

Mr. REID: As I explained in cases where the commissioners have arrived at a special agreement with an individual taxpayer, that his case should be decided by those other cases, we carry out that arrange-

[*Mr. Barton.*

ment as a matter of honor. Fortunately, I do not know that one exists; certainly there are none of any importance. Where we have agreed with a man that his case should be held over pending the decision of another case, of course it would be the grossest breach of faith to take advantage of such an arrangement, even if we had power, and to make the agreement a source of wrong to him.

Mr. LYNE (The Hume) [2.45 a.m.]: This is a bill which has been considerably altered, and which has either increased or decreased taxation.

Mr. REID: Incidentally!

Mr. LYNE: Directly. I feel that this House, through the guidance of the Prime Minister, has given away all the true privileges that it had; and were it not that we are not in a fit state to consider this or any other bill, I should proceed to force the matter to a decision as to whether this House is to give up all the privileges which the Premier is said to be fighting for. It is not a proper thing to ask the House at a moment's notice to accept amendments which practically make this a new bill—amendments which are not printed, and which have not been submitted to the Chamber, and which hon. members have not had an opportunity to read. No hon. member knows, not even the Prime Minister, exactly what the amendments are. The right hon. gentleman said that clause 4 had not been amended, but I find that clause 4 has been amended very seriously. Clause 4 has been added to by about a page!

Mr. REID: Yes, those are the exemptions that I have read out to the House!

Mr. BARTON: Clause 4 is not amended, but clause 5 has been replaced by something which alters the whole thing—

Mr. LYNE: The Council have added at the end of clause 4 these words:

Nothing in this act contained shall affect the decision of the Privy Council in the case of the Commissioners of Taxation against Teece, or the decision to be given by the Privy Council in the following cases now pending:—The Commissioners of Taxation against Charles Grant Tindal; the Commissioners of Taxation against the Broken Hill Proprietary Company (Limited), and the Commissioners of Taxation against the Broken Hill Proprietary Block Ten Company (Limited), or those cases now before the Court of Review which would be governed by the decision of the Privy Council given or to be given in the aforementioned cases—

I am sure there is not a member in the Chamber who knows, from the explanation of the Premier, what the amendment is. It would take some little time to follow these amendments, and to see how far reaching they were; and they should have been printed, and hon. members should have had an opportunity of considering them before being asked to vote. The Premier says that the reservation in the clause only applies to the year 1897, that the Broken Hill Company, the Mutual Provident Society, and all the others will have to forfeit the money for the other years, excepting the year 1897. If that is so it, is a very serious matter. I fought the bill in the House on one contention only, and that was that it was extreme retrospective legislation. The money was paid by these companies under protest, and one case was taken as a test case, the decision in which would govern all the others. If this bill is so framed that these individuals or companies will have to pay in respect of every year, except the one year of 1897, then the amendment does not effect what I have contended for in this Chamber. The members of the Legislative Council, dealing with this matter calmly and deliberately, would not perpetrate such an absurdity as not to amend the bill, so that it would apply to all the past years when this money has been paid under protest. I should like the leader of the Opposition to say whether or not, in his opinion, this amendment will prevent the companies from paying beyond the year 1897. As the hon. member for Bathurst stated, some promise was made in the Legislative Council to induce hon. members there to vote for the bill, that other cases pending which could not be put in the bill would be dealt with in the same way as those cases which have been dealt with by the courts or the Privy Council.

Mr. GARLAND: The amendment says so!

Mr. LYNE: I have not had an opportunity to see the amendment. It shows the necessity for not hurrying a matter of this kind through the House so rapidly as the Premier wishes to do. If the amendments made by the Council only apply to the year 1897, and if in all other cases where the money has been paid under protest, and as the Premier has said, action has been stopped with the concurrence of the Taxation Commissioners, pending the

decision in those cases—if these amendments only apply to 1897, then I think they are of very little value at all. The principle which I objected to was the retrospective principle, which was introduced to a degree which we have never seen before. I object to the acceptance of the Council's amendments. I think that this bill is a money bill, and that we should maintain the rights of this House; but, if the Government are prepared to whittle them away, all we can do is to protest when there is only a handful of hon. members here to deal with this important legislation. If the amendments only deal with that one year, and in the meagre way in which the Premier says they do, they are not worth anything at all, and we need not have any bother about them. If they apply generally to cases where money has been paid under protest, and these cases have been taken as cases to decide the others, I am quite satisfied.

Mr. BARTON (Hastings-Macleay) [2:58 a.m.]: The Prime Minister denied that the amendment at the end of clause 4 is one applying generally, instead of only applying to the year 1897.

Mr. REID: No. If the hon. and learned gentleman knew the facts, he would see at once that there is no necessity for any misunderstanding. Take the case of the Broken Hill Proprietary Company, with the large amount of £15,000 a year. Over three years have elapsed; they have only brought an action in respect of one of those three years. They have not brought any proceeding in respect of the other two.

Mr. BARTON: —————

Mr. REID: I do not care what they reckon. All I know is that there is no case either pending or decided except in reference to one year, and we are not under any engagement with them to make the other years abide by the decision in the case of the one year. If we were, we would be bound to return the three. We are not under any such obligation or understanding. This clause speaks only of cases. They have not brought before the Court of Review even the other two years, that hon. gentlemen will see that in no sense therefore can the other years be spoken of as years the subject of a case pending. If they had brought cases for the three years against us separately even, and those cases were in existence at the

present time and pending, I quite admit that they would be covered by this clause; but the fact on which I rely for my statement is that there is only one case in the case of the Broken Hill Proprietary Company, and that case is only for one year.

Mr. BARTON: We are told in this addition to clause 4:

Nothing in this act contained shall affect the decision of the Privy Council in the case of the Commissioners of Taxation against Teece, or the decision to be given by the Privy Council in the following cases now pending:—The Commissioners of Taxation against Charles Grant Tindal, the Commissioners of Taxation against the Broken Hill Proprietary Company (Limited), and the Commissioners of Taxation against the Broken Hill Proprietary Block Ten Company (Limited), or those cases now before the Court of Review which would be governed by the decision of the Privy Council given or to be given in the aforesaid cases.

We are now told by the Premier that, because each of them referred to the income of a particular year, because they could not be brought forward in any other way except in reference to a year, the whole of the operation and effect of this amendment is that only the income for that particular year is affected, and not income derivable from a series of years. If that is the way in which the Government looks upon its obligations, the Government will—of course it has not done so yet, and, therefore, I will not be chargeable with using strong language in that particular way—it will run a tight race with any experienced swindler in the country.

Mr. REID: That is a nice expression to use!

Mr. LYNE: It is a true thing to say!

Mr. BARTON: Either the intention is that the law shall be obeyed, and when once the law is decided that the principle governing a case is to have operation, or the intention is that, notwithstanding the meaning and effect of the law as laid down by the authorised tribunals, the Government is to slip out of the effect of that law on the plea that, although you cannot raise a case except on the income of a particular year, having so raised it you are restricted to that year, and you are not entitled to have the effect of the decision of the court in respect to other years to which the same principle applies. That would be a most dishonorable and most criminal position for any government to take up. I am quite prepared to

[Mr. Barton.]

find that I am laughed at by the Prime Minister, because he laughs at all principles.

Mr. REID: The hon. member cannot be serious!

Mr. BARTON: I am so serious that I think it is almost impossible to conceive of any government endeavouring to interpret a bill of this kind, even if the law allowed them to interpret it so, in such a way as to follow out the decision of the act, as well as the decision of the court, with respect to a particular year.

Mr. GARLAND: Is not that what the act says?

Mr. BARTON: I do not think it is. I do not think it is the effect of the act, and if it were, and the Government were chargeable in any way with bringing about such a modification in the act as that, they would be chargeable with something more serious than I would like to mention. This bill is a revenue bill, and we find the Government in this position: For the last four or five years it has been living on the cry of the iniquities of the Legislative Council, and it is prepared to swallow as much as it can get in a dose.

Mr. REID [3.3 a.m.]: I only want to make one observation in reply to the very offensive observation of the hon. and learned gentleman, who, I admit, very seldom indulges in such observations. I suppose the conscience of the Legislative Council on matters of this sort is about as sensitive and refined as any conscience in the world. In the other Chamber I am informed that there was an endeavour to make this bill cover cases where objections were lodged in the department, although cases have not actually been brought. That matter was fully debated in the Council, and that view was not carried into effect. In other words, the claim that such cases should be covered by this bill was rejected. If our friends in the other Chamber are willing to take that view of the position, it is hard that it should be called the view of an experienced swindler.

Mr. BARTON: I said I acquitted the Government of any intention to do anything which would look like the course of an experienced swindler!

Mr. REID: The hon. and learned member said if the Government took that course they would take a course which would resemble that of an experienced swindler.

That course, which the hon. member spoke of in that way, has been put into law by both houses knowingly.

Mr. LYNE: It is not so!

Mr. REID: Of course the hon. member will say that is not so. He always contradicts.

Mr. LYNE: I have been informed that it is not so!

Mr. REID: I have been informed that it is, and I am making an official utterance. What comparison can be made between the hon. member's utterance and mine?

Mr. LYNE: My utterances are true!

Mr. REID: They may be; but I have never taken the trouble to inquire, and I am glad the hon. member gives himself an excellent character. To show that this course is not so questionable, and so devoid of political morality as the hon. member wishes to make out, I would point out that in the case of the Tramways Declaratory Act, there was a sheaf of cases brought against the Government for damages in connection with the working of steam motors the moment the court decided that their use was illegal. There was a sheaf of actions brought, and judgments recovered. Not only did this House bar all claims in respect of that illegality; but in the Upper House Mr. Darley—now Chief Justice—expressed the opinion that those actions should be defeated, and that the intention of the legislature should be respected.

Mr. BARTON: Can the hon. member give any information as to the number of cases pending?

Mr. REID: Surely it is a matter of principle, and not a question as to how many cases are pending. Swindling does not go by number, but by principle. If a man swindles one person, his morality is equal to swindling a dozen. Let me point out that the preamble of this bill is preserved by the Legislative Council, and gives it the effect of a retrospective measure. The hon. member wants us now, when the bill declares it is retrospective, to say that there is nothing retrospective in this bill.

Mr. BARTON: Did the hon. member ever construe an act by the preamble unless there was an ambiguity in it!

Mr. REID: That is a perfectly fair remark, but the preamble is very useful, showing the lines on which the bill pro-

ceeds. However, I can assure the House that this matter has been fully discussed, and I will take the responsibility of the bill. I am quite satisfied with it under the circumstances. Considering the endeavours that were made in various ways to bring about a different result, and considering the very narrow majority we had on this question about giving the exemptions, I think under the circumstances we ought to accept the bill.

Mr. LYNE (The Hume) [3·8]: The hon. member has made a statement that this has been thoroughly discussed, and that members of the Legislative Council deliberately put this in. I have been informed on quite as high authority as the hon. member, that certain members of the Council did not understand it in that way, and that some hon. members of that Chamber would not have voted for it if they had the slightest idea that the construction placed upon it by the Prime Minister is the proper construction.

Mr. REID: The majority would!

Mr. LYNE: I do not think so. The hon. member had a very narrow majority there. The hon. member insinuated that great efforts had been made to defeat the bill. I do not know to whom he was referring. I do not know that there were any great attempts made in that direction. I think the members of the Council deliberated on the subject, and did what they thought best. I only hope that the hon. member is wrong in his construction, and that the Parliament of the colony will not do an act which is practically immoral and un-English, an act which had never been done in the same circumstances before. It is ridiculous to compare this with the case of the tramway motors. I heard that argument used in the Council to-night, and the bottom was knocked out of it, even by some hon. members who supported the bill. The hon. member can find no instance where there has been any wholesale deprivation of the rights of the taxpayers by retrospective legislation. It is no use at this hour trying to do anything. We are asked, as usual, to rush legislation through without any consideration and without knowing what the amendments are. It is evident the Prime Minister does not know what amendments have been made. He said a clause was not amended, and I have proved that it was. That shows he has

not had time to look through the amendment. The Prime Minister, who has charge of the measure, ought to know something about it, and ought not to make such an egregious blunder. This is practically a new bill, and we really do not know what it contains. There was an important clause—No. 2—which went up to the Council, but I do not know what has happened to it.

Mr. BARTON: It has been knocked out and something put in which is not the fiftieth cousin to it!

Mr. LYNE: If we had time to look into the new clause we might know what it is, but I cannot follow it at present.

Mr. GARLAND: It exempts all mortgages not in New South Wales!

Mr. LYNE: The hon. member being the left-hand advocate for the Government, I suppose he has had an opportunity of seeing the amendment, but I never yet found lawyers to agree in any opinion. I will ask hon. members to bear with me for one moment while I point out what has been done. Clause 2, as it was sent up to the Council, read as follows:—

(1) Where money is secured by a mortgage of land in respect of which land-tax for any year is payable and is also secured by a mortgage of other land (whether land-tax is or is not payable in respect of such last-mentioned land), or by a charge on or security over any personal property, or by any guarantee or by any such mortgages, charges, securities, and guarantees, the sum directed by sub-section one of section ten of the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act of 1895 to be deducted from the tax on the unimproved value of the first-mentioned land, is hereby declared to be a sum which bears the same proportion to the income-tax leviable for that year upon the interest derivable from the whole mortgages, charges, and securities as the value of the first-mentioned land, together with all improvements thereon, bears to the value of the whole of the land (including improvements thereon) and personal property, the subject of the mortgages, charges, and securities, together with the value of all such guarantees:

Provided that this annual deduction shall not be diminished by reason of any exemptions or deductions from payment of income-tax provided for in sections fifteen, sixteen, and seventeen of the said act, and that no such deduction from land-tax shall be deemed to extend beyond the amount of land-tax due for such year upon the first-mentioned land.

(2) The deduction contained in this section shall apply in respect of deductions from land-tax payable for any year before the commencement of this act, whether any such deductions have or have not been allowed by the commissioners under sub-section one of section ten of the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act of 1895.

[*Mr. Lyne.*

I have read the clause which was sent to Council. The whole of it has disappeared, and this is what had been put in its place:

No deduction of land-tax under section 10 of the principal act shall be allowed in respect of mortgaged land not situated in New South Wales.

That is the clause as it now stands. I cannot follow rapidly the other alterations that have been made, but here we have a long, elaborate clause which must have been inserted with some definite purpose completely omitted and a line and a half substituted.

Mr. REID: An excellent amendment!

Mr. LYNE: The hon. member does not care what it is so long as he can put anything into his pocket and get into recess.

Mr. BARTON: Will it give the Government more or less revenue?

Mr. LYNE: In my opinion it will give the Government more revenue.

Mr. BARTON: At that rate the Upper House is taxing the country?

Mr. LYNE: There are a variety of the amendments in the bill which I cannot follow, and it is too much to ask hon. members to accept them without understanding what they are. Only the preamble and title are left intact. A taxation bill has been knocked head over heels by the Council, and this House tacitly accepts what is done. The hon. gentleman never intended to fight the Council over any question of this kind, although at one time he abused them so much. We have been sitting here now nearly a week, and it is not surprising that only a handful of members are present. But I think that those who are here will commit an unconstitutional act in accepting the amendments in the manner in which they are put before us, with not a solitary member in the Chamber knowing what any of these clauses really mean.

Mr. PRICE (Gloucester) [3.18 a.m.]: I do not think we should be called upon to accept these amendments. On a previous occasion when amendments were made in a taxation measure the Premier vindicated the constitutional right of this House, and he sent hon. members to the country. This bill was introduced by message from the Governor in the ordinary way in which a bill dealing with taxation should be introduced. Certain provisions of the bill proposed to deal with incomes earned outside the colony. This House, by a majority of

7 in one division and a majority of 8 in another division, asserted the principle of that taxation. We now find amendments made which completely alter the bill, and which infringe the constitutional rights of this branch of the legislature. Clause 1 has been altered out of recognition. Clause 2 has been materially altered. Clause 4 has been added to so as to materially alter the effect of the bill.

MR. COHEN: The very amendment that the hon. member voted for last night is now in the bill!

MR. PRICE: The very amendment I voted against. I will content myself by voting against the action which is being taken.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Resolution reported, and adopted.

KOORAWATHA TO GRENFELL RAILWAY BILL.

In Committee; consideration of the Legislative Council's amendments:

MR. YOUNG (The Manning), Secretary for Public Works [3.32 a.m.]: Hon. members will probably have seen the amendments made by the Legislative Council in this bill. They are almost on the same line as clauses we have inserted in other bills in this House. For instance, one amendment has reference to the giving of the land by the people affected by the railway. Another amendment proposes to affect the rental in respect of Crown lands. I am prepared to accept the amendments rather than lose the bill. I may mention that there is sometimes delay in the carrying out of a work of this description, when we provide that the people holding the land shall give it, because it takes a considerable time to make the necessary arrangements. That, however, is not my fault. I do not know that it will delay the construction of the railway for more than a short period, and I do not think that any great damage will be done. I move:

That the Committee agree to the Legislative Council's amendments in this bill.

MR. J. C. WATSON (Young) [3.34 a.m.]: I do not intend to offer any opposition to the amendments being accepted. I wish, however, that we had a little more time at our disposal, because it seems to me that the form the new clause inserted by the Legislative Council has taken might very well be improved. We hear a lot

occasionally from the venerable gentlemen upstairs about the necessity of amending clauses which go from this Chamber, and yet I must say that, although I am in agreement with the proposal in the new clause which has been inserted, that betterment should be charged in respect of the line going through private lands until it is a payable concern, the form in which they have inserted that proposition is about as involved and incomplete as it is possible to conceive. One of the new clauses provides:

The provisions of the acts relating to Crown lands which apply to the payment and recovery of rent for such land shall apply to the payment and recovery of such additional rent.

If the clause is to be effective, it must apply also to collections of the betterment tax, in respect of privately-owned land. I do not see how the clause in that shape is going to be workable, unless the judges put a very wide and liberal construction upon it.

MR. YOUNG: If we do find it unworkable we shall have to ask for an amending bill!

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Resolution reported and adopted.

BYROCK TO BREWARRINA RAILWAY BILL.

In Committee; consideration of Legislative Council's amendments:

[MR. O'SULLIVAN, Temporary-Chairman.]

MR. YOUNG (The Manning), Secretary for Public Works [3.39 a.m.], rose to move:

That the Committee agree to the Legislative Council's amendments in the bill.

He said: The amendments in this bill are practically the same as those moved in the preceding bill, except that there is no proviso requiring the land needed for the railway to be given to the Government, because the line will go through Crown land nearly the whole way. An amendment has, however, been inserted providing that the lessees shall be charged an additional rent until the railway becomes a paying one. I do not know how that proviso will act; but I do not object to giving it a trial. At any rate, I am prepared to accept the amendments, and, if we find them unworkable, we shall have to introduce an amending bill.

MR. F. B. SUTTON (Bathurst) [3.40 a.m.]: It is not very satisfactory to hear the Minister in charge of a bill say that

he does not know much about the amendments; but that if they do not work he will have to bring in an amending bill. I believe that there are no freeholds between Bourke and Brewarrina, and it is quite a new feature of our legislation to require tenants of the Crown to pay a betterment-tax. I was present during the discussion of one of these bills in the Upper House, and I think I heard the Attorney-General say something to the effect that he accepted the amendments, though he was not sure that they could impose these charges upon lessees; but he would have inquiries made. I ask the hon. member if these inquiries have been made?

Mr. YOUNG: I have not made any!

Mr. F. B. SUTTON: Well, I suppose if the Government cannot make them they will not.

Mr. YOUNG: We are in a corner now, and the easiest way is to accept the amendments!

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Resolution reported, and adopted.

THE ROCK TO GREEN'S GUNYAH RAILWAY BILL.

In Committee; consideration of Legislative Council's amendments:

[Mr. O'SULLIVAN, Temporary-Chairman.]

Mr. YOUNG (The Manning), Secretary for Public Works [3.45 a.m.], rose to move:

That the Committee agree to the Legislative Council's amendments in the bill.

He said: The amendments in this bill are precisely the same as those in the bill sanctioning the railway from Koorawatha to Grenfell.

Mr. LYNE (The Hume) [3.46 a.m.]: I cannot say that I am opposed to the betterment principle.

Mr. YOUNG: The hon. member tried to get it on!

Mr. LYNE: What I did was to try to pass a general bill, but I do not think it is fair to apply it on any special railway without applying it to all railways. The bill which I submitted to the Chamber was to that effect. It was proposed that all railways except national railways should be subjected to the betterment principle. It is rather a heavy impost to charge 1d. per acre on land within 5 miles of the railway. I cannot remember what the amount was that I proposed in my general bill, but I am inclined to

[Mr. F. B. Sutton.

think it was less than 1d., and that it shaded down to something very small. There seems to be no provision in the bill for the cessation of the rate. Suppose that the railway becomes a paying one, according to this clause the owner of the land will have to go on paying for all time. There is provision in the bill for the tax to be brought into force by proclamation. But what is the use of a proclamation when the bill itself fixes the distance within which the taxes are to be imposed? There is no necessity whatever for a proclamation. If a man has 1,000 acres of land near the railway he will have to pay a tax of £4 3s. 4d. An owner has about 2,500 acres of land not very far from the Rock station, on which, if this provision comes into force, he will have to pay £10 or £12 a year. I telegraphed to the district yesterday, and asked whether the progress association was prepared to accept this bill, and the reply which I got from the president and the secretary was that they would leave the matter entirely in my hands. I saw the representative of the Government in the Upper House, and asked him not to construct the railway unless the people wanted it. I should like to get a statement publicly from the Secretary for Public Works that if the people in that locality do not wish to take the railway, it shall not be forced upon them with this tax.

Mr. YOUNG: I have no desire to make the railway if the people do not want it!

Mr. LYNE: But the hon. member may feel bound to carry out the act.

Mr. YOUNG: No. I am authorised to construct the line, but I am not compelled to do it. I have no desire to make the railway if the people in the district do not want it.

Mr. LYNE: My constituents might blame me in the future for accepting the clause. I hope the hon. member will not proceed with the work unless he has reason to believe that a majority of the people in the district desire him to do so.

Mr. YOUNG: I certainly will not!

Mr. WILLIS (The Barwon) [3.55 a.m.] said this was a new departure on the part of the Upper House in inserting penal clauses in the various railway bills. Personally, he thought they were illegal, and could not be collected, as regarded Crown lands. There should be an all-round tax imposed

on the betterment principle on railway lines already constructed, as well as on those about to be constructed. We had railways running to the doors of some of the hon. members in the other Chamber, some of which railways did not pay. One of the hon. members in the Council who voted against this bill, had a railway running pretty well past his door, on which the country lost about £36,000 per annum. Those hon. members had everything they wanted, and now, because other people, living in remote parts of the colony, wanted railway communication in order to send their goods to market, these gentlemen imposed penal clauses upon them.

Motion agreed to.

Reported, that the Committee had agreed to the amendments of the Legislative Council; report adopted.

THOMAS SUFFIELD.

Debate resumed (from 25th October, 1898, *vide* page 1792), on motion by Mr. A. H. Griffith:

That, in view of the refusals of successive ministers of justice to grant an inquiry into the case of Thomas Suffield under the provisions of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, this House is of opinion that, with the object of enabling him to clear away the stain which rests upon his name, a royal commission to inquire into the circumstances connected with his trial should forthwith be appointed.

Mr. ANDERSON (Waterloo) [4 a.m.]: After such a long sitting, and at this early hour of the morning, I think it desirable that the debate should be adjourned, especially as there is other important business still on the paper. The officers of the House, as well as hon. members, are utterly exhausted after the long sitting.

Mr. A. H. GRIFFITH (Waratah) [4-1 a.m.], in reply: I will not take up much of the time of the House, as this matter has been gone into very fully on two previous occasions. I think I made it clear to the House that Suffield did not receive a fair trial at Maitland, and that it was morally and physically almost impossible that the crime could have been committed by him. I think I have also succeeded in showing that this is a case in which if there was a criminal court of appeal the verdict would have been reversed on the ground that it was contrary to the weight of evidence; but as there happens to be no criminal court of appeal, and the only means of doing justice where juries bring

in verdicts contrary to the evidence in criminal cases is an inquiry under the Criminal Law Amendment Act, or by royal commission; and as an inquiry under the Criminal Law Amendment Act cannot be granted now, because Suffield has ceased to be a prisoner, therefore the only means of obtaining anything like justice for this man is by the appointment of a royal commission. The only new evidence that could be brought before a royal commission would practically be the clearing of the character of the Warrens. The Warrens were the chief witnesses for the defence. They absolutely proved an alibi. Warren and his wife and his daughter proved that Suffield was in the house at the time this crime was supposed to have been committed. The royal commission would find out for itself whether the Warrens, who had lived in the district for a long time, were trustworthy persons, whose word ought to be believed; and if he arrived at that opinion, then the verdict would be that the verdict of the jury in this case was wrong, because, if they are to be believed, as I think they are, it was impossible that this crime could have been committed by Thomas Suffield. I think there would be no use in my dilating any further on this case, because I believe that every hon. member is seized of the facts. I will content myself now with going to a vote.

Question put. The House divided:

Ayes, 18; noes, 24; majority, 6.

AYES.

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Dick, W. T. | Ross, H. |
| Fegan, J. L. | Smith, Samuel |
| Fitzpatrick, J. C. L. | Stevenson, R. |
| Griffith, A. H. | Suttor, F. B. |
| Hughes, W. M. | Watkins, D. |
| Jessep, T. | Watson, J. C. |
| Lyne, W. J. | |
| Meagher, R. D. | <i>Tellers,</i> |
| O'Sullivan, E. W. | Carroll, J. G. |
| Price, R. A. | Holman, W. A. |

NOES.

| | |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| Anderson, G. | McLean, F. E. |
| Archer, W. | Millard, W. |
| Ashton, J. | Morgan, W. |
| Brunker, J. N. | Nobbs, J. |
| Campbell, Archibald | Reid, G. H. |
| Carruthers, J. H. | Rigg, W. |
| Clarke, T. | Sleath, R. |
| Cohen, J. J. | Thomas, J. |
| Cook, J. | Willis, W. N. |
| Hawthorne, J. S. | |
| Hogue, J. A. | <i>Tellers,</i> |
| Lee, C. A. | Garland, J. |
| Mahony, W. H. | O'Connor, B. B. |

Question so resolved in the negative

ADJOURNMENT.

LAND EXCHANGE: INTEREST ON OVERDUE RENTS.

Motion (by Mr. REID) proposed :

That the House do now adjourn.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN (Queanbeyan) [4:10 a.m.]: I wish to ask the Secretary for Lands not to complete the proposed land exchange on Edgeroi Station, in Narrabri district, till next session. I have received a very strong letter from Narrabri about this matter. The land board has decided in favour of the exchange, but we hope the hon. gentleman will agree to stay his hand until such time as we can show solid reasons why the proposed exchange should not take place.

Mr. H. ROSS (Narrabri) [4:11 a.m.]: I have been requested by a number of my constituents to bring under the notice of the House the proposed exchange of land on Edgeroi, in the Narrabri district, for land in another district. The land board has decided in favour of the exchange, but on the question of equal value the board has nothing to say. What we complain of is, that a large number of persons have expended large sums in the Narrabri district, under the impression that at the expiration of these leases of Crown lands the lands would be open to settlement. To lock up 18,000 or 20,000 acres of land, and to give the fee-simple to a company which already holds a very large area of land, would block the tide of settlement and give an advantage to the people in another district. If the decision in this matter is held over, the people will show further reasons to the Minister why the land should not be exchanged.

Mr. WILLIS (The Barwon) [4:13 a.m.]: Before the Secretary for Lands replies, I would like him to reply to a request I made on behalf of the settlers in the interior. Considering the devastation which the bad season has caused throughout the north-western districts, will the hon. gentleman, when he considers an application for an extension of time for the payment of rent, forego that penal 5 per cent. interest which he generally charges? He might very reasonably accede to this request. It is only foregoing the interest on these amounts to help the settlers a little. It is not very much; but it means a great deal to men who have very little. I admit the hon. member has always been willing to help these people. But it does seem

like screwing the last farthing out of these men when they get a notice that a three or six months' notice to pay the rent has been granted, but that they will have to pay 5 per cent. for that favour.

Mr. PRICE (Gloucester) [4:16 a.m.]: I would like to ask the Secretary for Lands a question with regard to the definition of the word "adjacent." The Minister promised when the bill was passing through the House that a most liberal interpretation would be placed on the word "adjacent," so that a man having a small block of 10 or 30 acres should not be debarred from taking up a holding some distance away. Another matter I wish to draw attention to is the laying of the cables for the electric tramway. There is no insulation of the cable from the power-house at the bottom of Liverpool-street, and as it is laid within a few inches of the water-mains belonging to the Hydraulic Power Company, some serious damage may be done.

Mr. CARRUTHERS (St. George), Secretary for Lands [4:18 a.m.]: With reference to the exchange of land on Edgeroi and Burburgate holdings, I can assure hon. members who have spoken on the subject that I will not be hasty in coming to a decision. As I am assured, especially by the hon. member who represents Narrabri, that the inhabitants can bring additional evidence, I will give them an opportunity of doing so by referring the case to the Land Appeal Court. That evidence may cause the court to come to a different decision from that arrived at by the land board. If the decision is not varied by the Land Appeal Court, the hon. member cannot expect me to set my judgment against that of the boards constituted by Parliament to speak from local experience and the evidence adduced. I would remind the hon. member that a short time ago an exchange of land at Balranald, consisting of 50,000 acres, took place in which a lessee surrendered about 50,000 acres adjacent to the town of Narrabri. The people of Narrabri never raised the slightest objection to that, and they took all the advantage they could, and that exchange was strongly opposed by a section of the country and Narrabri is reaping the advantage of forty or fifty new selections. While Narrabri benefited by that exchange the people of Balranald suffered. Their action in the present case is hardly fair. This particular exchange

is not adding to the estate of any large company, because they are giving up acre for acre of agricultural land within 4 or 5 miles of a railway-station at Boggabri, while they are taking pastoral land some distance away from Narrabri. We are getting agricultural land very much nearer a railway-station and many miles nearer to the markets of Newcastle and Sydney. However, it would ill become me to prejudge the matter. The whole case will come before the Land Appeal Court, where evidence will be taken on oath. I hope the hon. member for Narrabri will be satisfied with that, and that he will tell his constituents that they shall have another chance. The whole expense will be borne by the Lands Department. Let them appear before the Land Appeal Court and furnish the fresh evidence, and I will hold my hand until the decision of the Land Appeal Court is known. I will give every consideration to the point raised by the hon. member for Gloucester.

Mr. J. C. WATSON: In connection with the exchange at Narrabri, will the Lands Department move the Land Appeal Court to take fresh evidence?

Mr. CARRUTHERS: In this case I will take pains to instruct counsel that the Land Appeal Court shall be asked to sit as a board to rehear the case. I overlooked the question asked by the hon. member for The Barwon. I suppose the hon. member was referring to the penal rate of 10 per cent. Ten per cent. is fixed by law, but I have taken it upon myself to remit 5 per cent. That 5 per cent. really only represents a penal rate of 1 per cent. I will consult with the Colonial Treasurer, who is most seriously affected by these matters, and if the Cabinet will agree to it, I shall be perfectly willing to remit even the extra 1 per cent. during this very severe drought.

Mr. W. M. HUGHES (Sydney—Lang) [4.23 a.m.]: I desire to ask the hon. member at the head of the Government, now that he has had an opportunity of conferring with his colleague representing the Government in the Upper Chamber, whether he has any reason to offer the House for the abandonment of the Navigation (Amendment) Bill in the Legislative Council? I asked the hon. member the question during the formal business before the tea-hour, and he told me he had not had an oppor-

tunity of making inquiry about the matter. I want to point out to the hon. gentleman that it seems to me a most extraordinary thing that the hon. member, being in charge of that department, who some twelve months ago gave a deputation, of which I was a member, a most solemn assurance that this measure should be brought on to a consummation this session, who, since that time, has assured half a dozen different deputations that the one measure which should be passed into law this session, at any rate, should be the Navigation Bill—I want to ask the hon. member how he accounts for the fact that an hon. member representing the Government in another place has been allowed to introduce some forty amendments in this bill without his knowledge, and without any explanation to the hon. gentleman, not only agreeing to the postponement of the bill but approving of it. The matter is one of great importance, because hundreds of human lives may be sacrificed through the failure of the Government in another Chamber to push this measure on. This is not in any way experimental legislation; it is, to all intents and purposes, the English act. I have looked over the amendments brought forward in another place, and I find that two pages of them are already in the bill, which proves conclusively that, whoever read the measure, the Attorney-General did not do so. It is, I think, a disgrace that an hon. member in charge of an important measure of this kind should hang it up at the last moment in order to please a section of the community. The bill is the result of months of investigation presumably, and it was satisfactory to sections so widely apart as those represented by the hon. member for Pymont Division, and those represented by the hon. member for Grafton. The hon. member for Grafton the other night assured us that the bill was an excellent one, and that it was necessary; yet this bill is proposed to be amended by the Attorney-General in the Upper Chamber. Twenty of the amendments proposed are already in the bill, a number of them are met by the power given to the Governor to declare that any provision of the Imperial act shall have effect in this colony. I do not say that the hon. member in charge of this bill knew anything of this matter elsewhere, I am sure he did not; but he will see that we must

hold him responsible as head of the department. What am I to say to my constituents in reply to the question they will ask me as to what has become of the Navigation Bill? Will it be any excuse to say that at the last moment the Attorney-General attached to the bill some forty amendments, and that that was the reason the bill has not been considered in the Legislative Council? Will it be held to be a sufficient reason that this was mainly because the hon. member introduced the bill in the last moments of the session? I do not think so. I think that the hon. member will agree with me that the Government is, in a large sense, responsible and culpable. We have here a comprehensive measure which all sections of the community considered to be necessary, and recent disasters have emphasised the outcry for the passing of the bill into law. The only reason the Attorney-General assigned for the amendments was that a deputation of the Chamber of Commerce waited upon him, and without any investigation into them he had the amendments printed and circulated in the other Chamber, to the intense astonishment of other members, who were already overwhelmed by the character of the bill. This, of course, knocked the bill on the head. The only considerable bill which had a chance of going through was deliberately killed by the attachment to it, by the Attorney-General, of these useless and unnecessary amendments.

Mr. LYNE (The Hume) [4:33 a.m.]: I presume the Prime Minister is not going to meet the House to-morrow?

Mr. REID: That is very likely!

Mr. LYNE: The hon. gentleman seems to concur for once in what I say. For my part, I am exceedingly glad, in view of the long sittings we have recently had, that I shall be able to eat my Christmas dinner elsewhere. I hope any little troubles we may have had will be forgotten. I have no ill-feeling towards my political opponents, and I hope they have none towards me. I can only say it will be a bad thing when we cannot respect each other. I hope that when the time comes that we are able to dislodge the tenacious Premier, the Government and his supporters will display as little acrimonious feeling as I do at present. I hope the change will come soon. It will not be my fault if it

[*Mr. W. M. Hughes.*]

does not, and when it comes, I hope there will be no ill-feeling. On behalf of the Opposition, I wish the Government and their supporters a merry Christmas and a happy new year.

Mr. SAMUEL SMITH (Sydney—Pyrmont) [4:36 a.m.]: In conjunction with the hon. member for Lang Division, I am somewhat surprised and disappointed that the Navigation Act Amendment Bill, and the Early Closing Bill are not to become law this session. So far as the Marine Board is concerned, I trust the Premier will, during the recess, cause a stricter supervision to be made of vessels leaving the port than is made now. I am prepared at any time the Premier desires to submit to him the names of a number of vessels in regard to which there is a condition of things which ought not to exist. It will be a great disappointment to the seafaring community that the Navigation Act Amendment Bill does not become law. I trust, however, as we have not been able to get the measure passed this session, the Premier will adopt the suggestion I have made, and give special instructions to the responsible officers of the Marine Board to make a more careful inspection of vessels which are not carrying passengers. I trust that next session the Premier will use his influence with the representatives of the Government in the Upper House in getting the measure passed into law at the earliest opportunity.

Mr. J. C. WATSON (Young) [4:40 a.m.]: I must also express my regret that the Legislative Council did not see its way to, at any rate, pass a portion of the measure referred to. I remember accompanying a deputation to the Premier before the last election, when he contemplated the possibility, at any rate, of being able to pass a short bill embodying the latest regulations of the Board of Trade, which would have given the Marine Board power to prevent a lot of coffin-ships leaving the port. Unfortunately we shall have another six months during which the Marine Board will have no power to stop the outgoing of those vessels. Although I admit the great ability of gentlemen in another place, it is nearly time this House began to consider how far it is justified in submitting always to the dictation, not only of the members, but of the Representative of the Government in that Chamber. In connection with every measure of reform,

we are compelled to submit to the dictation, not only of the members of that body generally, but of the Representative of the Government there. Our measures are always brought to conform to his ideas of what is fair. Everything is hacked and patched about. Every measure is shorn of its useful features in order to placate the Attorney-General. It is about time that state of things was stopped. The Navigation Act Amendment Bill, the Early-closing Bill, the Arbitration Bill, are cases in point. Every measure of reform which has been agitated for years past is practically emasculated to suit the views of the gentleman who represents the Government in the other Chamber.

Mr. REID (Sydney—King), Colonial Treasurer [4.43 a.m.]: I should first acknowledge with gratitude the lecture with which the hon. member for Lang Division has honored me. I am becomingly grateful to him for it. At the same time, if the hon. member had a little more fairness he would understand that the progress of Government measures in the Upper House is not entirely in the hands of the Government, and has not been for some time past; that we are absolutely destitute of anything like a majority sufficient to enable us to exercise the power which a government ought to exercise over the deliberations of that Chamber; that that state of things is and has been notorious for years; that we have to struggle to get the best we can, and have to be contented with that best, however bad it may be. The hon. member puts the blame on the head of the Attorney-General. I would point out, however, that the Attorney-General leading a house which is, by a large majority, opposed to the Government, is put in a very thankless and very difficult position. Instead of the Attorney-General cutting and hacking measures about his aim is to endeavour to prevent the cutting and hacking about of the measures of the Government, and in doing that he often has to accept an amendment which the Government under other circumstances would not accept.

Mr. W. M. HUGHES: Why does he want to put the forty amendments in?

Mr. REID: That was a step on the part taken by the Attorney-General with the best motive in the world. In the press of business during the past two or three days it has been impossible to have that

consultation which colleagues generally have in connection with such matters. With reference to the loss of that bill this session, I regret to say that several other bills have shared its fate. Any promise that I may make in connection with measures is subject to one flaw, that I have not the cordial support in another branch of the legislature which I have here.

Mr. W. M. HUGHES: Will the right hon. member try to remedy that?

Mr. REID: I think that something may be done which will have a very decided influence upon future legislation. I promise hon. members that I shall take all these difficulties to which we have been exposed for a long time past into the most serious consideration, and that I shall endeavour to put matters into a more satisfactory state. I can quite understand the disappointment which hon. members feel at the loss of the Navigation Bill this session, and I am thoroughly disappointed the Government cannot have the credit of having passed it. But, as I have said, there are forces in another place entirely beyond our control. If we had had reasonable prospects of passing that measure this session, a very special effort would have been made to pass it. I do not deny that the Government have this session been too late in dealing with measures. I feel that we have allowed matters to drift in a way which is not creditable to us, but in respect to which there are certain excuses which I do not wish to enter upon at a moment like this.

Mr. DICK: The right hon. member may remember that he promised us a pilot-boat for Newcastle. That promise would have been redeemed by the passing of the bill. Now we shall have to wait another year!

Mr. REID: I hope not so long as that. With reference to the remarks made by the hon. member for The Hume in the absence of the leader of the Opposition, I greatly appreciate what he said. Sitting on this side of the House we are apt to forget what we so thoroughly realised when we were on that side: that it is the duty of the Opposition to vigilantly criticise and to watch the movements of the Government, especially with regard to legislation. We are apt to forget that this is the duty of hon. members opposite, disagreeable though it may be to us. But

while the hon. member for The Hume and myself are in a constant state of heat and misunderstanding inside the Chamber, I do not think that we have a single unpleasant word to say outside, though I have not his skill in various scientific pursuits in which we occasionally engage. It must be my fault that the hon. member is so constantly set on edge, because our private relations are of the most friendly character, and I can only say the same of, I think, almost every member of the Opposition. I am deeply sensible of the generous feeling shown to me by my political opponents as well as by my political sup-

porters, upon a recent occasion, when there was a very good opportunity for treatment of a different kind. I am deeply sensible of the generous way in which hon. members have dealt with me in this and in past sessions. I have met with none but the friendliest feelings, and I thoroughly agree with the opinion that there is nothing inconsistent in strong political opponents being good personal friends. The more that attitude characterises public life the better will it be in every respect for the affairs of the country.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

House adjourned at 4:50 a.m. (Friday).

PROROGATION OF PARLIAMENT.

(*Gazette, No. 1102.*)

NEW SOUTH WALES, } Proclamation by His Excellency the Right Honorable HENRY
to wit. } ROBERT, VISCOUNT HAMPDEN, Governor and Commander-in-
(L.S.) HAMPDEN, Chief of the Colony of New South Wales and its Dependencies.
Governor.

WHEREAS by the bill passed by the Governor and Legislative Council of New South Wales, in the seventeenth year of the reign of her Majesty the Queen, intituled "An Act to confer a Constitution on New South Wales and to grant a Civil List to her Majesty," and assented to by her Majesty, under the authority of the act of the Imperial Parliament, passed in the session of the eighteenth and nineteenth years of the said reign, intituled "An Act to enable her Majesty to assent to a Bill as amended of the Legislature of New South Wales to confer a Constitution on New South Wales and to grant a Civil List to her Majesty," it was amongst other things enacted that it should be lawful for the Governor of New South Wales to prorogue the Legislative Council and Assembly thereof from time to time: And whereas it is expedient to prorogue the said Council and Assembly: Now, therefore, I, HENRY ROBERT, VISCOUNT HAMPDEN, the Governor aforesaid, in pursuance of the power and authority so vested in me, do hereby prorogue the said Legislative Council and Assembly until Tuesday, the thirty-first day of January next, and the same stand so prorogued accordingly.

Given under my hand and seal, at Government House, Sydney, this twenty-third day of December, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and ninety-eight, and in the sixty-second year of her Majesty's reign.

By his Excellency's command,

G. H. REID.

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN!