

lic interest that the board be assisted in the matter. I support the Bill.

On motion by the Honorary Minister, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.39 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 18th September, 1928.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 4.30 p.m. and read prayers.

QUESTION—WHEAT SHIPMENTS.

Mr. LINDSAY asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, How many shipments and what quantities of wheat were sent away from each port in each month of the year 1927-28? 2, What was the maximum quantity of wheat stacked at each port during the same year?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1 and 2, The particulars are given in a return which has been laid upon the Table of the House.

QUESTION—WATERSIDE STRIKE.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL (without notice) asked the Premier: Has he heard anything about the strike on the waterfront to-day, or has he any later news than we read in this morning's paper? Can he tell us anything about the position?

The PREMIER replied: I have not heard anything to-day except that I have been informed the position has not changed from what was reported in this morning's paper.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: At Fremantle The PREMIER: I am referring to Fremantle.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I am sorry hear that.

BILL—WATER BOARDS ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by the Minister for Mines (for the Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies) and read a first time.

BILL—FORESTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT.

Reports of Committee adopted.

BILL—DRIED FRUITS ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 13th September. Mr. Lutey in the Chair; the Minister for Agriculture in charge of the Bill.

Postponed Clause 7—Power to require returns from growers:

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE I asked for the postponement of this clause because it seemed that the penalty for not furnishing returns was excessive. This clause was copied from the South Australian Act which does provide for a penalty not exceeding £500. As the penalty is merely for failure to furnish returns, I move an amendment—

That the words "and shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding five hundred pounds" be struck out.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: What fine do you propose to insert in lieu?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE The Act provides for penalties and the amount will be left to the discretion of the court. So high a penalty as £500 is not justified in this State.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It is a five-bob offence and a £500 fine.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE It is more than a five-bob offence. If returns are not supplied, the whole control will be dislocated. One grower was sent seven

notices and still refused to furnish returns. Still, I do not suggest that a £500 penalty is justified. For a first offence arising probably from neglect, the penalty would be trifling, but if a grower persistently refused to supply returns, a heavier penalty would be justified.

Mr. Kenneally: Would the court be limited?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, in accordance with the Act.

Mr. Mann: Do you mean the Justices Act?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No, the Dried Fruits Act.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: If the Minister moved to insert not exceeding £5 or £10 in lieu of the words proposed to be struck out, it would give specific instructions to the court.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It is in the principal Act; I think the amount is £20.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: In the following clause a penalty of £500 is provided.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It would be better to leave the penalty as provided by the parent Act.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Section 34 of the Act provides for regulations prescribing penalties. If necessary a suitable penalty could be prescribed for mere failure to furnish returns, as it would be only a trifling offence. If a grower dislocated the control of the board by persistently refusing to supply returns, there should be a heavier penalty. The people who did comply with the Act would have a grievance if one person were permitted to evade it.

Hon. G. Taylor: And to benefit at the expense of the others.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Persistent failure to furnish returns would be a serious offence, but it is not necessary to provide a specific penalty in this clause. A reasonable penalty could be prescribed by regulation and the court would have discretion as to the amount of the fine to be imposed.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: A grower who failed to send in a return would be in an awkward position, because he would not be able to sell his fruit; he would simply have to hang on to it.

The Minister for Agriculture: Not necessarily.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: His neighbour would know what the defaulting grower was producing. Growers making returns would be restricted to perhaps 25 per cent. of their crops for local sale. It takes

a long time for fruit to grow and be disposed of; fruit does not come up like mushrooms in a night. This legislation is of a peculiar character. I am satisfied the Minister is doing the right thing in proposing the amendment.

Mr. SAMPSON: The limit of £100 might be expressed in the clause, as this would make the wish of Parliament clear to the bench in the event of a case coming before them. The success of the whole measure depends upon the honesty of the growers, and there is a great temptation to get rid of fruit illegally. The honest grower might easily suffer because of the action of dishonest growers. In Sydney last week I heard that much Californian dried fruit was coming into Australia, and I made inquiries on the subject.

The CHAIRMAN: I must ask the hon member to speak to the clause.

Mr. SAMPSON: My desire is to show the difficulties growers have to face. It seems there is something in the nature of dumping Californian dried fruits in Australia, and that makes the position of our industry much more difficult. The New South Wales Minister for Agriculture advised that a great quantity of Californian seedlings, similar to our sultanas, was being shipped to Sydney, and that the present duty was not sufficient to protect the local product. With other States, New South Wales had made representations to prevent the importation of Californian dried fruits. As the result of inquiries it was ascertained that up to the present only the limited quantity of 20 tons had been imported, and the New South Wales Minister understands that the Federal authorities have taken action.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I do not agree that the fine should be fixed by regulation. In recent legislation too much has been allowed to be done by way of regulation, and every session resolutions are carried disallowing regulations laid on the Table. This is a fitting opportunity to fix the penalty for the offence of not supplying returns. In South Australia there must have been great difficulty in that matter, as legislation similar to this has been operating there for some time, and what I consider the atrocious penalty of £500 has been fixed. If South Australia is able to say in its Act what is a necessary or sufficient fine, why cannot Western Australia do so?

It would be a guide to magistrates and justices. Let us make our legislation as specific as we can. A reasonable amount should be substituted in the clause for the £500. Let the penalty section of the parent Act provide only for ordinary breaches likely to occur.

Mr. MANN: In the parent Act most of the sections provide maximum penalties. Section 30 provides a penalty for failing to brand and register, and the maximum there is £50. That section is analogous to the present clause, and £50 might wisely be inserted here as an indication to magistrates and justices of what Parliament intended.

Mr. Thomson: I think £25 would be sufficient.

Mr. MANN: I would be prepared to agree to £25. In any case the maximum penalty should be prescribed here. The power to prescribe penalties by regulation is not meant for such cases as this.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The clause referred to by the member for Perth deals only with the marking, branding and registering of packages. The offence there would be comparatively slight. A maximum of £10 seems to meet the present case. A failure to brand packages would not affect the whole industry.

Mr. Mann: To put a false brand on goods seems to me even more serious than the omission to furnish returns.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not agree. If the furnishing of returns cannot be enforced on growers the whole machinery of the Act would break down, because it would be impossible to fix quotas in the absence of knowledge of the total production. In the Eastern States the furnishing of returns is considered extremely important.

Mr. Mann: The Minister would do well not to rely too much on the Eastern States.

Mr. SAMPSON: If the fine is reduced unduly, the whole measure will be stultified. This clause deals with the furnishing of untrue particulars. While there may be objection to the £500 maximum, £100 as a maximum is reasonable.

Mr. FERGUSON: I hope the Minister will accept the suggestion of the member for Mt. Margaret. The hon. gentleman seems to regard the matter as of minor importance, but to my mind the present clause is one of the most important features of the Bill. In

South Australia many growers produce huge quantities of dried fruits, quantities much greater than are produced by single growers here. There is no grower in Western Australia who could upset the control of the industry as there are in South Australia, where individual men grow huge quantities. At the same time an individual grower in this State could do considerable injury to the operations of the board by refusing to send in a return, or by furnishing an incorrect return. That is of vital importance. I hope the Minister will agree to include provision for a fine up to £100.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: In effect the £100 penalty will be inserted automatically, because Section 32 of the parent Act reads—

Every person who does not do anything directed to be done, or does anything forbidden to be done by or under this Act, shall be liable to the penalty expressly provided therefor; and if no penalty is expressly provided therefor, shall be liable to a penalty of not exceeding £100.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: This offence was looked upon in South Australia as such a serious one, for which a severe punishment should be provided, that a fine of £500 was mentioned in their section. Ordinary offences under the parent Act here are met by fines not exceeding £100. If the offence is a serious one, why not specify the penalty in the clause?

The Minister for Agriculture: It is in the Act.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: But if the offence is to be covered by means of the section dealing with penalties generally, a magistrate will be inclined to regard the offence as an ordinary one for which a small fine may be inflicted.

The Premier: But if the penalty is provided in the parent Act, why include in the Bill the penalty up to £100.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Then, why did the Minister insert the special provision for a fine not exceeding £500. The provision of a special penalty attached to the clause will draw attention to the fact that Parliament looks upon non-compliance with the provisions of Clause 7 as a serious offence.

Amendment put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 8—Re-enactment of Section 20:

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The clause has been taken bodily from the South Australian

Act. Will the Minister explain the necessity for a penalty not exceeding £500?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The clause deals with a matter totally different from that mentioned in Clause 7 and relates to the registration of dealers.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Anyone who buys or sells is a dealer.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: But the clause relates to registered dealers only, not to anyone who may buy or sell outside the provisions of the measure. A dealer occupies an important position in the scheme and has to be kept in order. Unless there is some means of enforcing the law, the whole scheme will collapse. Last year a dealer representing a big firm in the Eastern States travelled through Western Australia and made inviting cash offers to some growers. He was not a registered dealer in this State. When he had completed his business, he quietly informed the growers that our Act was loosely worded and that, under its provisions, they could deal in dried fruits for one month without the necessity for registering. The clause will tighten that up, for it provides for a period of a fortnight only. As to the penalty provided, I take a different view from that with which I regarded the penalty attached to Clause 7. I believe the penalty should remain in this instance, for it will be imposed only upon dealers who deliberately set out to evade the provisions of the legislation. If we do not provide an exemplary penalty, it will be impossible to keep dealers under control. Experience has shown that a heavy penalty is essential. The board has had the utmost difficulty in administering the Act and it became necessary to seek Federal assistance to control those who desired to take advantage for their own benefit of an industry that is under supervision.

Mr. THOMSON: I am not so much concerned about the penalty as I am about the powers we propose to give to the board. I hope the Minister will say who are the registered dealers.

Hon. G. Taylor: There are but seven of them.

The Minister for Agriculture: No, there are more than that number.

Mr. THOMSON: At any rate, the registered dealers are all in the metropolitan area, and the board, as hon. members will observe if they read the clause, is to be provided with drastic powers. Although I know the board has a difficult task, un-

less a great deal more business common sense is exercised than in the past, the board may do a considerable injustice not only to growers but to business men. In order to show what interpretation the members of the board have placed upon their powers, I would mention that in Albany there are two wholesale firms who were not permitted to deal in dried fruits in this State. As a result of the ukase of the board, they were not allowed to purchase dried fruits from growers in Western Australia who had satisfied the requirements of the local consuming public. The board compelled those firms to purchase their supplies from Perth. That emphasises the economic waste that resulted from the board's action in compelling those business firms to send to Perth for their requirements. An average of £2 10s. has to be paid in railway freight on the dried fruit that comes up to be processed in the packing sheds. Prior to the inception of the board that fruit was processed and sold locally. Then there is another £2 10s. in railway freight to be paid on the fruit when it goes back to the district from which it came. In addition, the processing at the packing sheds costs some £5 10s. So approximately the average cost of all this business is nearly £11 per ton. The wholesale people down south will not purchase their dried fruits from the dealers in Perth; because to do so renders it impossible for them to supply their retail customers at a price that will enable those retailers to make a profit. It is provided in the Bill that anybody who is aggrieved has the right of appeal to the Minister. We must have control of the dried fruit industry, but when we think that great economic waste has been brought about by the administration of the board, we should draw attention to it. Some of the decisions of the board should be the subject of close examination by the Minister. Apparently it is not within the power of the Government to prevent the local consumption quota being sent into Western Australia. I will not oppose the clause, for I realise that power is given to appeal to the Minister; but I should like an assurance from the Minister that those who for years past have been dealing in this commodity will be given the same opportunity as those in the wholesale business in the metropolitan area to handle this product. Sometimes

there is just a little too much of this control to suit the country business people. At present, the only dealers registered by the board are those in the metropolitan area. I want to prevent a recurrence of what happened during the past two years, namely dried fruit being brought in from the Eastern States and sold here. It is a great economic waste to compel our dried fruit to come to Perth to be processed, instead of being processed locally. By that policy we have made a market for dried fruit from the Eastern States. That fruit has to pay a £4 10s. freight from Mildura to the seaboard, in addition to which there is the sea freight to Western Australia and all the handling charges. So between the two boards, the producers of dried fruit have to throw away something like £7 per ton, which is a direct economic waste. Probably the local board, when they realise that, will deal more sympathetically with those interested in the business, and not force everything into the hands of dealers in the metropolitan area. A somewhat similar position has been set up in the cement industry. When the new company took control at East Perth they decided who were to handle the cement. They kept the price just below that of the imported article, to debar any smaller men from bringing in cement from overseas. In that way the large merchants in the metropolitan area were given a volume of business to which they were not justly entitled. Under this new clause, the Dried Fruits Board are being given very great powers. I hope the board will exercise those powers with discretion. I should like the Minister to tell us who are the registered dealers at present. I think it will be found that every dealer is in the metropolitan area, and that country people are debarred from dealing in this product.

Mr. Ferguson: Have they been refused registration?

Mr. THOMSON: I understand they have. We want them to have the same opportunity for handling this product as have the registered dealers in the metropolitan area. I should like the Minister to indicate what is the intention, and what the necessity may be for giving the board more drastic powers than they have at present.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I can see a need for a heavier penalty. The Minister pointed out that Eastern States dealers have come over here and sold large quantities of their fruit

in Western Australia; and that no action could be taken against them under the parent Act. I understand the object of this clause is to prevent the continuance of that traffic.

Mr. Thomson: It will not prevent it.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Perhaps the Minister will say whether this is not to prevent Eastern States merchants coming over here to sell their goods.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is rather for the Federal law.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: But will not this help to prevent Eastern States merchants coming here without registration and selling their products?

The Minister for Agriculture: It limits the time in which such a merchant could operate.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Then there is necessity to impose a penalty that will prevent it. When a man comes here to commit a breach of this provision, he does it knowing what he is doing, and therefore he should be punished. Consequently I am not averse to a heavier penalty being inflicted. The board deals with a peculiar situation, and so I suppose we must make the best we can of it.

Mr. Thomson: I should like the Minister to give us the information I asked for.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: In this State at present there are 18 dealers. I cannot say where they all live. A reputable dealer would have no difficulty in becoming registered. But being registered, he would have to conform to the policy laid down by the board, and to the Act itself. I understand that the dried fruit sold at a cut price at Katanning and Albany was handled by an unregistered dealer from the Eastern States. That is what we are going to prevent. An unregistered dealer from the Eastern States, not conforming to the law, would be able to undersell local dealers. If people were permitted to deal outside the Act, they would be able to undercut, not only Katanning, but other centres throughout the State. To prevent this, it is necessary to give the State board Federal powers. There are no more than six agents in Western Australia, but there is no great desire to restrict the number of dealers so long as they are registered and conform to the provisions of the Act. Some unregistered dealer may secure fruit which has not been through any packing shed, and in that way undersell the local man. That could only happen through ineffective control. The complaint

of the member for Katanning is due to the impossibility under the existing law of controlling the unregistered man.

Mr. THOMSON: Under this Bill no one can deal in dried fruits unless he is registered. In the event of the board refusing to allow people in the Great Southern a license to deal in fruit, will the Minister give them the same opportunity to handle it as they enjoyed prior to the introduction of this Bill? While we are making it more difficult for our own people, it seems to me we are not preventing dealers from coming here and selling the products at a price below that fixed by the board.

Mr. FERGUSON: This is probably the most vital clause in the Bill. The member for Katanning is full of apprehension. Evidently he has not studied the question as deeply as he might have done. Every wholesale grocer in the metropolitan area, who has been dealing in dried fruits for some years, has been registered by the board, and not only in the metropolitan area, but in Geraldton and Katanning. There is no reason why wholesale grocers in all provincial towns should not be registered. Every person of that description who has applied to the board has been successful in securing registration. I doubt whether the board would be justified in refusing such an application from a person who complies with the provisions of the Act. No appeal has ever been made to the Minister on the point. The board should be in a position effectively to control the industry, such as they cannot do now under the Act.

Clause put and passed.

New clause:

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I move—

That a new clause be inserted as follows:—
 "This Act shall not apply to any area east of a north and south line running through a point 51 miles on the eastern railway line."

The addition of this clause would help smaller growers who are at a considerable distance from processing sheds, and for whom it would not be worth while providing local sheds.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: You wish them to be outside the scope of the Bill?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Yes. There are so few of these, I do not think it would be an inducement to others to embark upon the industry. Our dried fruit has to compete with other countries where it is produced at a lower cost. As a result of the cheap hand-

ling, it is possible to grade the other fruit even as to colour. As a result of this colour grading, foreign fruit on the market in London is often referred to as superior to Australian dried fruits, whereas the latter are as good as, if not better than, the more attractive looking article. Our people could not afford to hand pick their dried fruits in order to secure uniformity of colour when they are presented for sale. The effect of the new clause will be to exempt small growers from the expense of railing their supplies to the metropolitan area, and they will be able to sell their dried fruits much cheaper.

Mr. FERGUSON: I hope the amendment will not be carried. After the discussion on Clause 7, I had some hopes for the sanity of the member for Mt. Margaret, but he has slipped back. The brain-wave of that hon. member suggests the labouring of the mountain and the bringing forth of an abortion.

Mr. North: That is a new proverb!

Hon. G. Taylor: Do you refer to the Bill?

Mr. FERGUSON: The amendment will mean that the growers at centres as close to the city as Clackline will be exempt from the provisions of the Bill, and, in fact, the line he suggests will pass right through a district that is eminently suitable for viticulture. The new clause will defeat the whole object of the Bill. The growers he seeks to exempt will be excluded from the benefits of control, and will be at the mercy of growers in the Eastern States. They could not possibly sell their dried fruits because the growers in the Eastern States, particularly in South Australia, would flood the uncontrolled districts with dried fruits at a price that would undersell the local people. I hope the Committee will give the new clause short shrift.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I object to the amendment for similar reasons. I desire to protect the small growers, and I do not know whether the member for Mt. Margaret realises what will happen if we agree to his proposal. Although the effect would be to exempt the small growers from control, it would not exempt them from competition with the rest of Australia. The member for Katanning wanted to know if I could give an assurance that the traders he referred to, could carry on as they did in 1926 prior to control being exercised. I could not give that assurance any more than I can assure the member for Mt. Margaret that the growers east of the line he

suggests will be protected. As a matter of fact, the new clause will have the opposite effect.

Hon. G. Taylor: I cannot see that.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I presume the hon. member desires the small growers to be in a position to sell their dried fruits at 6d. or 7d. per lb. Would he be protecting the growers if he could not prevent the competition of Eastern States growers, who could sell their lines at 3d. per lb.? That is what will happen if we agree to his proposal. The Act is the only protective measure that is possible, and if we exempt any part of the State, the growers there will be at the mercy of other producers.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Where from?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: From anywhere, not necessarily from the Eastern States, but, perhaps, from the Swan district. It would be a better market for our local growers than the British market, even at 3d. per lb.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I think they will be prepared to take the risk.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not propose to allow the small growers to take that risk. If the Committee were to agree to the amendment, it would mean not only ruining those we seek to protect, but there could be no control over the dried fruits industry in this State. Every part of the State outside the controlled area would be a dumping ground. The members of the board are most anxious to do their utmost for the outer country growers. They were anxious to agree to the erection of packing sheds at Katanning and at Northam.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They do not want that; they want to sell their dried fruits.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: They cannot do that.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Of course they can.

The Minister for Mines: They can sell through a packing shed.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is not necessary.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: As to the quality and grading of our dried fruits, I can assure the member for Mount Margaret that if he were to visit the packing sheds, he would be satisfied that Western Australian Four Crown currants are superior to anything else in Australia this year, and that they will compare favourably with any similar products on the London market. As to the complaints about the colour of

sultanas, that could not apply to Western Australian sultanas, because they have not been exported to London.

Hon. G. Taylor: We cannot produce enough for our own requirements.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Western Australian dried fruits have not done anything to damage the reputation of Australia. The only method of controlling the industry is by means of packing sheds. About 83 tons out of the 1,600 tons produced annually in Western Australia are grown in the outer country areas. The growers in those distant areas consider that they are at a disadvantage compared with other growers because of their railway freight charges, but I do not know how we can overcome that difficulty.

Mr. Thomson: We can get over it all right.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The amendment will not do that, but will have the opposite effect.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The board did not help the growers at Northam. It is ridiculous to say that the Northam growers must pay railway freight to Perth on the currants they are compelled to send there, and that they then must pay more railway freight to take currants back again. That sort of thing is childish; we would not stand it with any other commodity. The growers in the Northam district do not grow sufficient to supply the local market. Why, then, should they not dispose of their supplies locally? It has always been agreed that unless we can secure for the grower more than export parity for dried fruits sold here, the grower cannot carry on. We can achieve that by much more simple means than the board proposes.

The Minister for Agriculture: I wish we could do that and have effective control at the same time.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister is too ready to agree with the board. Surely to goodness we can devise some means whereby growers in the country districts can sell their currants to the local storekeepers. Why should they be compelled to send their dried fruits to Perth and bring them back again?

The Minister for Agriculture: That would be cheaper than processing them in the country districts.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: At Northam we do not want the local dried fruits processed; they are always clean and ready for use. If the consumer is willing to buy

them as they are, why should the local dried fruit supplies be sent to Perth merely to be railed back again? Such a thing is childish and ridiculous. If we were not so deadily in earnest in our desire to assist the growers, we would oppose the Bill because of the stupidity of this one Act of the board.

The Minister for Agriculture: The members of the board will be delighted if you can show them how they can get over the difficulty.

Mr. Thomson: They have been shown the way out.

The Minister for Agriculture: The Act does not permit them to do it.

Mr. Thomson: But the Act does.

The Minister for Agriculture: Effective control would not enable them to do it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is a ridiculous state of affairs. I hope the Bill will be limited to this year alone, and unless that is so, I shall oppose it at the next opportunity. It is nonsensical, ridiculous and utterly absurd that struggling growers in the country areas must be put to unnecessary expense in sending their supplies to packing sheds in the metropolitan area. We are willing to help the grower to the extent of saying that he may charge the local consumer a price much above the export value. But we are not willing that so much trouble should be imposed upon the people struggling in the industry. It is our duty to see that the growers scattered about the country shall not be put to the unnecessary trouble and expense of packing and grading their fruit and paying railway freight both ways. Surely if we are capable of framing an Act that will help the grower, we are capable also of framing a clause that will give the board the power to say the fruit shall be sold in the district in which it is grown. The board do not improve the quality of the fruit passing through the packing sheds; the most they can do is to make it a bit cleaner. In London I was told that the Australian currants were far superior to the Greek currants: that the Australian product could be used after very little washing, whereas the Greek currants required several washings. The simple people where I come from are willing to eat the simple fruit produced by the simple grower, without any processing involving a long and costly railway journey.

The Minister for Agriculture: I should like to devise some means of preventing the movement of the fruit.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is quite simple.

The Minister for Agriculture: It is not simple. It is very complicated.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is quite simple to say that the stuff grown in Katanning or in Northam may be sold in those places.

The Minister for Agriculture: I will certainly discuss this point with the board.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: You have no chance. I tried it last year. The existing Act was put up by the board under the Minister.

The Minister for Agriculture: It was put up in the first place by the industry.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The board is the industry. This tightening up is required to give the board the control. I agree with the board to the extent that they want to make everybody come into line, and not let a few get the advantage over the many.

The Minister for Agriculture: It is all very difficult.

Mr. Thomson: It is not so difficult as it looks. I cannot understand why they cannot do it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Neither can I.

Mr. Ferguson: Two-fifths of the board come from amongst the outlying growers. They ought to be able to devise some scheme.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: When we interfere with the ordinary course of trade, we land ourselves in trouble. We must not give to anybody the right to do injustice. Why should the grower in Katanning or Northam have to pay £2 10s. per ton on the fruit one way, and then another £2 10s. to take the fruit back to the district in which it was grown?

The Minister for Agriculture: I think everybody wants to operate outside the pool.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No, we are not asking that. We have no right to do other than say that everybody shall operate on even terms. We have no right to submit any man to the disadvantages experienced last year. I wrote to the board, but they said they had no power to correct the position.

Mr. Thomson: They have power under Section 17 of the original Act.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If we limit the operation of the Bill to the coming season, then if the board do not do justice, we can consider the question of letting them have a free go. The Minister is not jocular

about having to put up this legislation, but necessity compels us to give the growers a chance to exist, in the hope that better times will come. At present the whole world is flooded with dried fruits. In America they have a glut.

The Minister for Agriculture: The Eastern States people are asking that the duty be increased on account of the Californian glut.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Every penny put on to the price of dried fruit retards the sale, because it is not absolutely necessary. I have been told that the price asked of the public last year resulted in reduced sales.

The Minister for Agriculture: I have been twitted with an increase of 1d. per lb. as the result of the Bill.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I know that the South Australians offered their fruit at a lower price than that at which our agents were prepared to sell.

The Minister for Agriculture: Was the fruit of similarly good quality?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: God knows! I think it was good fruit. However, that is the position: the Minister is not entitled to ask the country growers to pay this double railway freight. He can provide in the Bill that that shall not be done in future, that the sales are to be made direct by the grower and accounted for to the pool. It of no use the board suspecting that everybody in the industry is a rogue, and dishonest. The growers in my district could be trusted to treat the board fairly. The Minister ought to see if the Parliamentary Draftsman can prepare a clause that will enable sales to be made direct by the small grower. Years ago I was on Mr. Trimming's orchard at Woodanilling.

Mr. Thomson: Last year Mr. Trimming lost £300 as the result of having to send his stuff to Perth.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: He must be content to take his quota, of course, but there is no reason why he should be penalised in railway freight.

The Minister for Agriculture: I intend to go into that with the board with a view to preventing all unnecessary movement of fruit.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

New clause put and negatived.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—KULJA EASTWARD RAILWAY.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 6th September.

MR. LINDSAY (Toodyay) [7.33]: I understood the Leader of the Opposition intended to continue the debate. However, it is not my intention to speak at great length. The Minister for Works explained that the Railway Advisory Board had reported strongly in favour of constructing the line, but since the board reported in November, 1927 a great deal more development has taken place. For instance, the report of the board shows that 241,630 acres had been alienated, while 250,000 acres of forest country was still in the hands of the Crown. Since then the whole of that area has been selected. Within the last three months 99 blocks have been thrown open and all of them have been allotted to applicants. It is a remarkable fact that as one goes into the drier portions of the wheat belt, at least in that part of the State, the water catchment areas improve. In that district are to be found beautiful rock catchments only eight or ten miles apart. Although there has been sufficient rain for the growing crops this season, settlers in many districts will be in serious trouble for dam water unless we get some heavy rains between now and the summer. In the Kulja eastward district rock catchments can be utilised that unfortunately do not exist in many other parts of the wheat belt, and it will be possible to provide reserve supplies of water for the settlers. It has been questioned whether the rainfall in the district is sufficient for wheat growing. I have watched that country closely during the last four or five years. North of Beneubbin and Mollerin there have been settlers for many years and I am prepared to say, from my knowledge of the country, that a heavier rainfall is experienced between Mollerin and North Beneubbin than in the district 25 miles further south. It has been proved during the last four years that better crops can be grown in the northern than in the southern portion of the district. It is generally

accepted as a fact that the farther north or east we go, the lighter becomes the rainfall, but that does not apply in every case. A place on the Wyalkatchem-Lake Brown route has 2 inches more rainfall than a place 25 miles west, and although Bencubbin is 25 miles north of Trayning it has a rainfall better by two inches than the southern town. I believe the rainfall in North Bencubbin is higher even than in Bencubbin. There should be no doubt regarding the rainfall in the Kulja eastward district, though I agree that there is likely to be some shortage of rain in the far eastern portion. The district there is rather dry, especially in view of the very rich nature of the soil. The Minister for Lands recently decided to close against settlement the area of land further east and outside the vermin fence. I agree with that decision; it was a wise one. The railway will traverse a fairly safe district, but the settlers in the far eastern part will have to adopt better farming methods than they are employing to-day in order to be successful. Given good farming, I believe the eastern part of the district can be successfully settled. I was pleased to hear the Minister's statement that the construction of this line will be proceeded with as soon as the Ejanding northward line is finished. It is noteworthy that the progress made in the newly settled portions of the wheat belt has been much more rapid than that of the older districts. When I started farming we considered we were doing well if we got a couple of hundred acres under crop after several years' work, but in the newer districts are men who have 500 or 600 acres under crop after only two or three years' work. Thus the newer districts are being developed very quickly, and as a result I think this railway will be a payable proposition within one or two years of its completion, and will redound to the credit of the State as a whole.

MR. STUBBS (Wagin) [7.39]: I commend the Government on the activity displayed in opening up the eastern portion of this wonderful State of Western Australia. I do not sit on the same side of the House as the Government but I desire to be perfectly fair in my criticism of measures introduced by the Government from time to time. Those measures that meet with the approval of the people I represent will certainly receive my support. I have yet to learn that there is anything wrong in being quite fair in my criticism of the Government. I believe that the party now in charge of the Treasury

benches are doing an immense amount of good in developing the agricultural part of Western Australia. All said and done, the future prosperity of the State and of the Commonwealth depends upon the wealth produced from the soil. I feel convinced that the Kulja eastward district will produce a vast amount of wealth and indirectly will bring benefit to every man, woman and child in the State. During my travels in the eastern agricultural areas during the last 15 years, I have been impressed with the wonderfully rapid response of the soil to the moisture that falls from the heavens. The member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay) has had far more experience of that part of the State than has any other member of the House, and he was quite correct when he said the soil is very rich. The hon. member was a little doubtful about the adequacy of the rainfall during the growing period in the far eastern part of the district. Not many years ago, had anyone said that wheat could be grown successfully at Southern Cross, he would have been laughed to scorn and probably advised to get his head read. Yet there is ample proof that that theory has been exploded, largely by the adoption of scientific farming. Let me pay a tribute to the Department of Agriculture. It set out to increase the value of our wheat lands by testing different varieties of wheat and by recommending proper methods of cultivation in order to conserve the moisture in the soil. The adoption of that advice has led to the opening up of large areas of wheat land that formerly were considered to be not worth bothering about for wheat growing. I hope this railway will not be the only one for which the Government will seek authorisation this session, in order that the large tract of land between Southern Cross and Salmon Gums and towards Ravensthorpe might be developed. If those areas are made available, they will probably be the means of putting 3,000 or 4,000 families on the road to making good. I have pleasure in supporting the second reading.

MR. E. B. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin) [7.44]: In adding a few words in support of the Bill, I should like to join in the congratulations extended to the Government on their introduction of the measure. I have had an opportunity to read the Railway Advisory Board's report. There is no doubt from its contents, that the line should be built, and built quickly. This line is to be 70 miles long. It opens up one of

the best wheat-producing districts in the State, a district from which a great amount of wheat has been produced during the last few years. The Railway Advisory Board pointed out that 350 new farms could be established along that route. I believe since that report was written, over 200 new blocks have been surveyed and thrown open for selection, and are now being occupied by settlers. I have met a number of men who have been going out into the territory from Bennebun and other points along the route, and all are full of enthusiasm and hope for the future, provided the necessary railway facilities are given them in good time. Many of the settlers in this district have reaped seven bags of wheat to the acre from their holdings. At the time the Railway Advisory Board reported, 241,000 acres of land had been alienated and 654,370 acres are estimated to be available for selection from the Crown. Of this area, 250,000 acres are reported to have been classified as first class, and 404,000 as light land. Even the light land in that district is producing 12 bushels to the acre. If that were the total production, it is estimated that 2,820,000 bushels a year would be garnered from this new area. As the member for Toodyay has pointed out, there is a good rainfall, and splendid rock catchments all through the district where water could be conserved for the settlers. I am glad the Government have decided to keep this work going, and build this section of the line while the plant and the men are in the locality. That is a proper decision to arrive at, because it will save the State the expense of taking the plant away and bringing it back again.

Mr. Kenneally: They will want to get it finished before the elections are over, or some charge will be laid against them for keeping men in the district.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: There is no need to discuss the elections at this stage. Western Australia has been and is being opened up by men who are going out and have gone out into these areas and made good there. All that the men in the district referred to will require to make a success of their farms will be the provision of the necessary railway facilities. I wish to endorse the remarks of the member for Wagin when he expressed the hope that this line would be built quickly and that it will be the forerunner of a railway extending from Lake Grace right through Kalbarin on to Southern Cross. The Government have made a start

with that project by this Bill, and I hope before the session closes that the two other important lines I have mentioned will be authorised, and built as quickly as it is proposed to build this one.

MR. J. H. SMITH (Nelson) [7.50]: I am going to oppose the Bill. It is very unpleasant to have to strike a discordant note upon a subject of this kind. Before the Government place on the statute-book any more railway Bills, they should fulfil the promises they have already made. This country cannot live by wheat alone. Something else must be added to it. The Government have promised to build railways in the South-West, in order to save to Western Australia the two millions of money that are going out annually for dairy produce.

The Premier: This Bill does not say we are not going to do it.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: We have no definite word that the Government intend to do it. We cannot forever live on promises. When Parliament has authorised a certain work to be done, it is the duty of the Government to carry it out. The members of the Migration Commission and Mr. Bankes Amery have been through this particular part of the State, and know what it is capable of producing. The Minister for Lands has referred to his 3,500 farms scheme.

The Minister for Lands: Why the 500?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: You, Mr. Speaker, could not live on wheat alone. The Minister for Lands is prompted by the Premier and other members of Cabinet to say that the railway under discussion is part and parcel of that 3,500 farms scheme. I object to any more railway Bills going on the statute-book before the promises that have already been made are fulfilled.

Mr. Lindsay: This is a fulfilment of one of them.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: This is something entirely new. I am taking up the cudgels on behalf of the Boyup Brook-Cranbrook railway. The Railway Advisory Board and the members of the Migration Commission say that 2,500 people could be settled on either side of that railway, and yet no mention of it has been made to-night. We always hear from the Ministerial side of the House the remark, "We are farmers."

The Minister for Works: Who are "we"?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: They are endeavouring to gull the public.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. J. H. SMITH: They are doing so by this Bill. I claim there is no chance of this new railway being built for a long time.

Mr. Ferguson: Why not?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: If the Government of to-day were honest—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must not impute motives.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: If the Government were genuine—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is only varying his remarks which are still of the same purport.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: If the Government were genuine in their promises, and really desired to develop the State, they would build the Boyup Brook-Cranbrook railway and settle 2,500 people there, in accordance with the recommendation of the Railway Advisory Board and the Migration Commission. It would not cost more than about half a million of money. There would be no need to spend money on roads except at each end of the line, or for a few miles on either side of it. Why do the Government desire to spend another eight million or ten million pounds in opening up and developing our wheat lands? Why are they not sincere? If they were they would say that before they set about constructing any other railway they would fulfil the promises they have already made. I know the South-West well. The rainfall is assured. Some members have said, "You may get a 10 inch rainfall."

Mr. Lindsay: No one ever said that.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Where it is proposed to build the railway, the subject of this Bill, there would not be an average of 10 inches.

Mr. Lindsay: That is not correct.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: We do not know when we shall get another 1911 or 1914 season.

Mr. Lindsay: That is not correct.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I am not referring to the hon. member.

Mr. Lindsay: You referred to the district. Your statement was not correct.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I referred to previous speakers. To go out into country like that is a great gamble. We have had a wonderful cycle of good years, and we hope they will continue, but we cannot live by wheat alone. We must have mixed farming. We must stop the drift to the other States. Are we not wonderfully favoured in our legislation with regard to the export of wheat, as compared with that of timber and other primary products?

Mr. Stubbs: You cannot say wheat has not paid Western Australia.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I do not know that it has been such a wonderful asset. What made Western Australia? Was it the mining industry?

Mr. Withers: Timber!

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Someone interjected that it was timber. I have said before that our timber is worth over £100,000 more to the railways than is the transportation of our wheat. I object to the expenditure of any more money until the promises made for the South-West have been fulfilled. The other night I remained silent when the Leader of the Country Party moved for the appointment of a select committee to inquire into the Fremantle harbour extension. The Minister for Works spoke later. He had maps scattered all over the Chamber, and was using a long stick. I could hardly follow him. He referred to the benefits to be derived from the scheme put forward by Mr. Stileman. Did the Government forget there was such a port at Bunbury, which ranks fourth or fifth in the Commonwealth in the matter of exports? I am not going to sit silent when I know, and other sensible people in the State and this House should know, that the proper development of the South-West will prove the salvation of Western Australia, and prevent much money from going out of it. If mine is the only discordant note in this matter I do not care. Why should we build more railways when we can get no assurance from the Government that they intend to go on with the Boyup Brook-Cranbrook line? After incurring the expense of sending the members of the Railway Advisory Board there, of getting sleepers cut on the proposed route, of getting the line surveyed for a distance of 30 miles, why not go on? The Premier cannot deny that what I have stated is correct. Then why should we be asked now to vote for another railway Bill? It is distinctly wrong. What prospect is there of ever getting promises fulfilled if we vote for new lines now? Let the Government do their job and build railways where the best advice urges it.

Mr. Lindsay: We have the recommendation of the Railway Advisory Board in this case.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I am doubtful about this case right through. From 1911 to 1914 we believed ourselves to be doing something we ought not to do. The present

Leader of the Opposition was condemned right and left for what he did then. The same state of things may occur again; there may be thousands of sheep coming down through Perth to be fed. I want the Government to carry out the policy which they assured us they had adopted. I want the import drift to cease. It is well enough for the country to export; but, when we import, our money leaves our shores. When we export wheat, we get our money back. What I want to stop is the drift of two millions a year through imports. What better advice can we get than that of the Surveyor-General and other men like him who are at the top of the tree? They say that a line from Boyup Brook to Cranbrook would successfully settle 2,000 people. The Government were impressed with that recommendation, and contracts were let for the necessary sleepers, which are lying along the route to this day. The same officials reported in favour of a railway from Manjimup to Mt. Barker, and so impressed were the Government in that instance that they brought down two railway Bills. I was buoyed up with the hope that the project would be proceeded with immediately. There is also the line from Pemberton, where the Government now have fallers employed. I say in all honesty, before any more railway Bills are passed let the Government construct the lines already authorised.

MR. BROWN (Pingelly) [8.4]: I shall support the Bill because I consider that if the State is to progress, we must build agricultural lines. I do not agree with the previous speaker that wheat is not one of Western Australia's main products.

Mr. J. H. Smith: I said we could not live by wheat alone.

Mr. BROWN: We are not trying to live by wheat alone. Our exports in 1926-27 amounted to between seven and eight millions sterling, of which wheat represented £4,000,000 and £5,000,000, hides and skins also accounting for a considerable sum. In the case of this railway the experts have inspected the country and reported both the land and the rainfall to be satisfactory. We must find land for the people. We must put new settlers in these districts, and it is impossible for them to exist there without railway communication. To a certain extent I agree with the argu-

ment of the previous speaker. A good many railways have been authorised and are awaiting construction, and there is a danger that old settled districts will be left without railway facilities while new districts receive preference.

The Minister for Works: At the present time we have three railways under construction, and that has never been exceeded in the history of the country.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You borrowed 18 millions and built only a few miles of railway.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. BROWN: The Brookton-Dale River railway was the subject of agitation, and was proposed to Parliament, about 20 years ago. That is an old settled district, and successive Governments evidently have come to the conclusion that as the people there have existed without a railway for 20 or 30 years, they can exist without one a little longer. But that is not fair. Railways authorised years ago should be constructed. I have in mind particularly the railway east from Kondinin. The settlers there have been agitating for transportation facilities during many years. Last year they produced 70,000 or 80,000 bags of wheat, and even now they have no assurance—

The Premier: They have not been agitating for so very many years.

Mr. BROWN: The Armadale railway has been the subject of agitation for over 20 years, and it was authorised five years ago.

The Premier: But the hon. member was speaking of Kondinin.

Mr. BROWN: Yes, and people have been growing wheat east of Kondinin for six or seven years. The settlers to be served by the railway now proposed have been in existence as such for only about a couple of years.

The Premier: That is not correct.

Mr. BROWN: The land is almost virgin country, and yet the settlers are to be favoured with a railway immediately. By all means let them have a line, but also give railway communication to people who have struggled with difficulties for years. East of Kondinin, I repeat, people have been farming for six years, and after paying for the transport of their wheat to Kondinin last year there was very little left for them. In fact, wheat is now being grown

in that district at a distance of 50 miles from a railway. Are those people to be left without a railway while funds are being found for the construction of a railway in behalf of other people who are hardly settled on the land?

The Premier: The objective is the greatest good of the greatest number.

Mr. BROWN: The greatest number are the Kondinin settlers. Every Minister who has visited the district appreciates the need for that railway. Only yesterday I heard of a man who had paid £500 for a truck as the only means of enabling his son, who is settled some 30 miles from Kondinin, to get his wheat to the siding. It is anticipated that that holding will produce 6,000 bags of wheat this season, and it is about 35 miles distant from the railway. The Government ought to wake up to the fact that these people need railway communication without delay. I am extremely pleased to learn, in connection with the present Bill, that such an enormous area of land of good quality is available. I again urge the Government to see that old settled districts, or districts which have been established for years and have battled along against great difficulties, receive railway communication as speedily as possible.

MR. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [8.11]: No doubt hon. members will recollect that on the 27th February, 1918, this House carried a resolution that the Esperance Northwards railway should be the first line to be constructed after that date. The resolution also affirmed that all authorised railways should be built according to their dates of authorisation. I am glad to say that I voted against the resolution, which, however, was supported by most members now on the Government side of the House. At that time I pointed out that at any time some district might come into the limelight to such a degree as to render the building of a railway to it necessary. In my opinion, such an occasion has now arisen, and the railway proposed by the Bill is necessary. I think I am safe in saying that 90 per cent. of the people who come here from the Eastern States to settle on the land want to go in for wheat and sheep; and we must cater for the greatest number. Let us try to satisfy 90 out of every 100 persons who come to Western Australia. It is only right that we should provide

land for them, and if we provide them with land we certainly should also provide them with facilities for getting their products to port. Two men interviewed me to-day, both of them men with money who have devoted some time to looking for land here. They have a great complaint to make against both the Government of this State and its Agricultural Department. They say they were induced to come to Western Australia by representations as to its possibilities, but that now they cannot find land on which to settle although they have the money to develop the holdings they wish to acquire. Anything we can do to settle on our lands people who are attracted to this State should certainly be done. The member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) regards the line proposed by the Bill as purely a wheat proposition. A reference to the report of the Railway Advisory Board, however, shows that the area contains numbers of those large rocks known as monoliths, the presence of which enables water to be conserved and thus permits of the carrying of sheep. Wheat and sheep are the two industries we ought to try to develop to the utmost possibility. What, if we do send away a million or so annually for butter and bacon and eggs? If we can develop our wheat export by four or five millions annually, we can afford to pay a million or two for imported dairy products.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But we ought not to import fish or bananas!

Mr. ANGELO: No. With the limited amount of money that we have available we ought to develop as much of our State as possible, and should try to keep people who come here with the idea of becoming Western Australians. Let us not send them away disappointed. We can provide opportunities for such people more cheaply in the wheat areas than in the South-West. Let the South-West come along in due course! The Minister has told us that he is building three railways in that part of the State. Surely that is a fair thing!

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They are not building that number.

Mr. ANGELO: I thought he mentioned three railways, but at any rate railway development is proceeding in the South-West.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: There are two railways being constructed.

Mr. ANGELO: Then I was only slightly out in my statement. I support the Bill because we must open up as much land as possible to satisfy the requirements of the great majority of those who are arriving here and whose desire is to become Western Australians.

MR. CORBOY (Yilgarn) [8.16]: In supporting the Bill, I wish to mention the position of another district. I have had the good fortune to travel three times through the district to be served by the proposed Kulja eastward railway. Each time I have gone through the district, I have been increasingly impressed by the splendid type of settler there, and the magnificent belt of country in which they are farming. I heartily support the proposal of the Government to extend railway facilities to that part of the State. It will serve a splendid belt of country and there are many fine settlers there who will make good. All that is necessary to enable the possibilities of the district to be completely realised is the extension of railway facilities. I have been on the properties of several settlers. One of them happened to be at the war with me and he went on to his block without any assistance from the Agricultural Bank. His holding is 40 miles from the nearest railway and he spent £1,000 of his own money in developing it. He is quite content with his lot; he is one of those who were fortunate in selecting the right type of "Pommy" bride. She is a girl who is content to remain in the bush and does not want to come to the city.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Every bride is of the right type.

Mr. CORBOY: I know that what the Leader of the Opposition says is quite right. He and I have every reason to be content with our respective choices. I am glad indeed that the people of this district will have their railway facilities as speedily as the Treasurer is able to provide the money. At the same time I would like to draw attention to the fact that there are other districts much more advanced, where more work has been done and where production has gone on for a longer period, and yet those districts are still without railway facilities. In particular I would instance the Kalgarin district. As the member for Pingelly (Mr. Brown) has already pointed out, the settlers there are carrying on a fight that is becoming more and more difficult. Unless they get railway facilities soon, it will be impossible for

them to continue much longer. The Kalgarin settlers are carting, on an average, for a distance of 36 miles; some are carting 52 miles to the nearest railway. For five years they have been producing considerable quantities of wheat under those difficult conditions, and it is costing them, on an average, 1s. a bushel to land their wheat at the railway siding.

Mr. Brown: Quite right.

Member: That is an impossible proposition.

Mr. CORBOY: Of course it is. I am not going to apportion the blame. I do not feel competent to do so, nor do I think any private member of the House is competent to say exactly who is to blame. The position is that those people are being handicapped to-day by an unfortunate set of circumstances. In Western Australia we have set up a Railway Advisory Board, consisting of three officers who, in the opinion of the House, are thoroughly competent to say where a railway shall be built. Those three officers, after mature consideration and the most minute investigation of the whole district and its possibilities, and after determining the best route that would serve to meet all requirements there, made a certain recommendation to the Government. A Bill was prepared to authorise the construction of the railway and everyone was certain the line would be built quickly. I had the assurance of the Premier that the construction of the railway would be started within three months, and I told the settlers that that was the position.

Hon. G. Taylor: How long ago was that?

Mr. CORBOY: I am coming to that. After giving them that assurance, I now find that nothing has been done. The Premier gave me that assurance bona fide. I am convinced that he intended to do as he said. As it happened, however, another gentleman, whose province it was not to interfere, stepped in with a recommendation to build a railway in another direction. The Premier, being a layman, was in a cleft stick. He had received two different recommendations, each from a man or men thoroughly competent to judge. I believe that the Premier actually had the Bill in the House ready to move the second reading, when he received the report from the Engineer-in-Chief. Naturally he did not proceed with the Bill. That was two years ago. The people in the Kalgarin district feel their position, for even now they have

no authorisation for their railway. That is a circumstance very difficult to justify, and it should not be tolerated any longer.

Hon. G. Taylor: They are entitled to immediate consideration.

Mr. CORBOY: They are. The East Mollerin settlers are equally entitled to have a railway constructed to serve them, as they have been waiting for a long time, and I cordially support the construction of the Kulja eastward railway.

Mr. Lindsay: The settlers in the East Mollerin district and out from Bencubbin have also been waiting for a long time.

Mr. CORBOY: Some of them have. From the Government point of view, however, those men went out on their own responsibility. On the other hand, the Government, through the Agricultural Bank, have been advancing money to the Kalgari settlers. That district has been backed by the Government right through.

Mr. Lindsay: Up to a distance of 20 miles.

Mr. CORBOY: Most of the settlers who will be served by the line, are farming further out than 20 miles. The hon. member knows the position. I do not wish to get heated about this matter, but I feel that it was wrong for the Engineer-in-Chief to butt into this question at all.

Mr. Lindsay: Hear, hear!

Mr. CORBOY: It had nothing to do with him. We appointed a board of experts to deal with such questions.

The Minister for Works: And the Engineer-in-Chief was appointed on a committee of three to submit a report and recommendations to the Government.

Mr. Sleeman: But the hon. member does not think that the Engineer-in-Chief should say where a railway should go!

Mr. CORBOY: I do not say that he should.

The Minister for Works: Do you say he should not?

Mr. CORBOY: I do not say that he should or he should not, but the Railway Advisory Board was appointed to undertake that duty.

Mr. Sleeman: And they are experts.

Mr. CORBOY: Yes.

The Premier: The Government are responsible for what has happened or for what has not happened, not the Engineer-in-Chief.

Mr. CORBOY: That is so, and I think I tried to make that clear.

The Minister for Works: The Engineer-in-Chief was asked by the Government to report.

Mr. CORBOY: Then that completely exonerates the Engineer-in-Chief. If he was asked by the Government to do something—in the circumstances the phrase I used, “butted in,” can hardly be applied to his action—it was his duty to carry out the instructions he received, and nothing further need be said about him from that standpoint. There may be quite a lot to be said for the Engineer-in-Chief’s recommendations, as there is to be said for the recommendations of the Railway Advisory Board. The point is that, having received the proposals of the Railway Advisory Board and also those of the committee on which the Engineer-in-Chief sat, the Government might well be expected to have come to a decision after a lapse of two years, as to which of the set of proposals they intend to adopt. The Premier has intimated that the Government are responsible for what has happened. In those circumstances, it is time that the Government shouldered their responsibilities and indicated what they intend to do. While I cordially support the proposal to build the Kulja eastward railway, I hope the Government will not delay much longer in arriving at a decision as to what they intend to do regarding the railways east of the Great Southern railway system. I hope they will do that so that the Kalgari settlers and others concerned will know what their position is likely to be, and when they may expect the promised railway facilities. At any rate, I hope we shall have before us this session a proposal to authorise the construction of the promised railway.

MR. GRIFFITHS (Avon) [8.25]: The three speeches we have heard and the one I will make could, perhaps, be said to represent the same views with merely changed localities to lend point to the arguments. Each speech is really a case of “ditto” to the others. Each of us has his grievances and is anxious that the requirements of his own people shall be attended to.

The Premier: Surely you are not going to join the band!

Mr. GRIFFITHS: In common with every other sensible member of the House, I support the construction of this railway, especially as cheap money will be available for it. It would be merely a dog-in-the-manger attitude if we objected to the line because

our own particular railway has not received attention. To adopt that attitude would be wrong. At the same time, I would like to have some idea as to when these further extensions are to cease. Cheap money was available for the Ejanding northwards railway and when that proposition was agreed to, I thought it was possible that something would be done regarding the Yarramony railway. Some members are pleased to be humorous when they refer to me as the "member for the Yarramony railway."

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: At any rate, that is worth while.

Mr. Panton: The hon. member should be careful, or he may put his railway off for another 12 months.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I thought there was a chance that something would be done for the Yarramony people when we agreed to the Ejanding line. Those people are not desirous of a line that will compete with passenger traffic. All they want is a line that will enable them to get their produce to market. It is just on 20 years now since the question of providing them with railway facilities was dealt with, and at the risk of the possibility of its construction being put back another 12 months, as the Premier said he would do every time I spoke about the line, I would like to know whether there is not a remote chance of the line being constructed.

The Premier: There is certainly a remote chance.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Of course, I know it is remote.

The Premier: At any rate I can promise you that straight away.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Despite the fact that the Premier told the Yarramony people distinctly that their railway should have been provided by a previous Government, and that when he was in power he would see that something was done for them, I am tempted to raise the matter again because I am afraid, with all these different railway projects before us, the claims of the Yarramony line may be relegated to the background. I support the second reading of the Bill because it would be merely a dog-in-the-manger attitude for anyone on the opposition side of the House to vote against the railway, in view of the fact that cheap money will be available for the work. I am fully aware that the money necessary to construct the line I am advocating will be dearer and will have to be provided for on

our Loan Estimates. I support the second reading of the Bill.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [8.30]: I do not know whether the map the Minister has had placed on the wall is intended to guide us. If so, it is a very small argument in favour of the railway. The red line is supposed to be the limit of settlement between Lake Mollerin and Lake Monger for some years. Settlement is then to go south-east. But the map on the Table is different. There we are going north as well as east, and no doubt we shall lose in rainfall, as against the average of the wheat settlement. Members know that the rainfall belt comes away from Geraldton east of the Wongan-Mullewa line, and then east to include Southern Cross. This line will take us into a fairly dry belt. However, there is no doubt about the quality of the land. The settlement in the Mollerin area is very considerable, and the people east of Bencubbin have been out there for some time and have thoroughly proved the land. I am not going to oppose this line, which is to be built with cheap money. The advantage we get out of the migration agreement amounts to about 40 per cent. of the amount borrowed. We built the line from Salmon Gums to Norseman under that agreement, and I am doubtful if the land adjacent to that line has yet been settled. That sort of thing means considerable loss, because the interest goes on all the time, although the expenditure is rendered more or less useless for the time being. I understand the cost of this proposed line will be about £3,225 per mile.

The Minister for Works: It will mean about £4,600 per mile.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Then it will be very costly construction. I do not know how it can come to anything like that amount.

The Minister for Works: It is intended to use 60-lb. rails.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But apart from that it will mean £3,200 per mile. It is a terrific cost as compared with the cost of laying down lines a few years ago.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: The majority of those lines cost £2,000 to put into railway working order on being taken over by the Working Railways.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: You are referring to the lines put down by a previous Labour Government.

Mr. Kenneally: Cheap initial railway construction inevitably means increased cost later.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, if it is too cheap. Even so, that is scarcely justification for a cost of £4,600 per mile. In the old days light agricultural lines were laid for as little as £1,100 per mile, sleepers and rails included.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: But they were only 40-lb. rails.

Mr. Kenneally: And half-a-crown sleepers.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: They were perfectly good sleepers. As compared with those sleepers, one can see mighty queer looking sleepers in other countries.

Mr. Kenneally: After a number of derailments on the Goomalling-Dowerin line they had to be reconditioned.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Just the same, I am astonished at the cost of this proposed line, £4,600 per mile. No wonder the Government cannot construct all the lines authorised. It is an enormous amount to pay per mile for an agricultural line. How do the wood lines carry their heavy traffic? Yet such a line is laid down, worked for a time, then pulled up and laid down again somewhere else. I do not know what the Meekatharra-Horseshoe railway cost, but I venture to say it was a very small part of £4,600 per mile.

Mr. Marshall: It is not within measurable distance of being completed yet. You are on bad ground when you mention that line. You had better not take that as an illustration.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yet that line, or a wood line, would be quite sufficient to carry the wheat traffic. This proposed line of 74 miles is to cost about £350,000. I am sorry the Government cannot see their way to building the lines already authorised. Just before the last elections we authorised a number of railways. Except the Salmon Gums-Norseman line, I do not know that any of them has been completed. The Dale River and the Yarramony Eastward lines ought to be built, and so, too, ought the authorised lines in the South-West. I am glad to see the country being opened up. If the country along this proposed railway is as suitable as the Minister says it is, and will accommodate 300 farmers, it will mean that a few of the people now wanting land will be served. There is still the land that has been surveyed to the south of

Southern Cross. That will require to be opened up by a railway. However, if the cost is to be £4,000 per mile, I do not know how soon these railways can be built. During the last 4½ years we have borrowed some 18 millions of money without building many miles of railway. We have two or three lines under construction at present. But when we are borrowing very largely, we should build pretty rapidly too. There is always the temptation to use this one per cent. money for the opening up of the country; because we then get all the advantages of expenditure, while paying mightily little for the money during the first 10 years. I do not know why the Premier will persist in making a joke of the repeated request by the member for Avon (Mr. Griffiths) to have the Yarramony Eastward railway built. In this House last year we carried a motion authorising the construction of that line forthwith. Yet nothing has been done since then. It requires an explanation by the Premier.

Mr. Stubbs: Why was the line not built long ago?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Because we had no money with which to build it. Of late years, of course, we have borrowed more rapidly than ever before.

Mr. Kenneally: And the management of the finances has been much better.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, the management of the finances has improved enormously. One can see that by the hundreds of unemployed looking for work, even for food, notwithstanding that we have borrowed more than ever before and spent more than ever before.

Mr. Thomson: And we have increased the working costs of our railways.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Certainly the finances have been better managed than ever before. How, then, is it that we have all these hundreds of unemployed men tramping about looking for work, and many of them begging food? However, I am not going to oppose the passing of this railway Bill, although I am sorry to hear what the cost is going to be. I cannot understand why the work of laying this line, where relatively there are no engineering difficulties, should cost such an enormous sum. It is a tremendous amount to have to pay for the laying of a railway. I suppose it is the dearest rate we have ever had to pay.

The Minister for Railways: We require to have the line ballasted.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: They always require to be ballasted.

The Minister for Railways: No fear! Some of the railways you built are not yet ballasted. When we are using big engines, we cannot have lines without ballast.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The hon. member is nothing if not progressive. As he has told us, he bought a few yards of cloth somewhere this morning.

The Minister for Railways: Is it not a good thing to buy £2,000 worth of cloth cheaply? Are you not glad?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Of course I am.

The Minister for Railways: Well, what's the matter with you?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister says that railways built years ago are not yet ballasted. Still, they are doing their job all right.

Mr. Marshall: What has this to do with the Bill?

The Minister for Railways: It is the settled policy of the country to use heavy engines, and so we must have ballasted lines.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But you do not run heavy engines over all the lines.

The Minister for Railways: No, but we run them where we can.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Six years or more ago it was decided that we should have 60-lb. rails instead of 45-lb. rails.

The Minister for Railways: In the department we did not know anything about that until two years ago.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: In all countries travelling is now much faster than it was a few years ago, and so heavier rails have to be used. In South Africa they are using 120-lb. rails. Of course it is possible to travel on such lines much faster than on ours. We have 80-lb. rails between Perth and Northam and they are certainly an improvement on the 60-lb. rails, but 60-lb. rails are better than 45-lb. rails. I am glad it is intended to use 60-lb. rails in the proposed line. I hope the map displayed on the wall of the Chamber is not the one by which the Kulja eastward district will be judged, but that members will be guided by the map laid on the Table. The line ought to prove

satisfactory when settlement has been made. A great deal of the land has already been settled, at any rate that on the western end, leaving only the land on the eastern end to be opened for selection.

MR. THOMSON (Katanning) [8.46]: I have greater confidence in the South-West than the member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) apparently has in the wheat belt. I think the hon. member, in stating his intention to oppose the construction of this railway, did so more by way of entering a protest in view of the fact that so far we have been unable to get any satisfaction as to when the Boyup Brook-Cranbrook railway will be constructed. That is a matter which also concerns quite a number of people resident in portion of my electorate. It would be very satisfactory to a large number of settlers and would-be settlers in that area if the Government could indicate when the line will be constructed and whether it will be constructed with the cheap money. That work would provide considerable employment and would open up a large area for settlement. I support this Bill because it has such an important bearing on the development of the State. If the estimate is correct that every man on the land carries an average of seven other men upon his back, directly and indirectly, the settlement of this district will mean providing employment for another 3,250 people. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that it is surprising to find the estimated cost of this railway is £4,600 per mile. That appears to be extraordinarily high. In reply to interjections, it has been stated that when the Working Railways took over some of the branch lines that had been constructed by the Works Department, an additional £1,500 to £2,000 per mile had to be expended to bring them to the standard of the Working Railways. This brings me to a point that my party has advocated for quite a number of years, namely, that the construction of railways should be carried out by the Railway Department or under its supervision. I do not know whether the statement is correct that the Working Railways have had to spend such large additional sums to bring lines handed over to them up to standard. I do not doubt the statement because it has been made by men who had worked on the railways for years prior to coming into this House. If it is so, the engineers of the

Railway Department should be put in charge of the construction works.

The Minister for Works: That was not the fault of the constructing department. It was due to the instructions given to the department by the party in power. It depends upon what authority is given to the constructing department.

Mr. THOMSON: That might be so. Still, we have one department constructing the lines and another department has to take them over regardless of whether it is satisfied with them.

The Minister for Works: What nonsense! The Working Railways will not take them over unless satisfied with the lines.

Mr. THOMSON: Then why has it been necessary to spend up to £2,000 per mile on railways before the department would take them over? It seems to me that the construction of the railways should be the responsibility of the Railway Department engineers. I do not wish to appear to be throwing a spanner into smooth-working machinery, but though we are using large sums of cheap money—and the Government are justified in utilising it—I should like to know what guarantee we have that we are getting full value for the money expended. The Minister for Works smiles. The only means whereby we can decide whether we are getting value for the money is to call for tenders for the work.

Hon. G. Taylor: A wise proposition.

The Minister for Works: There has never yet been a Government in office that would build railways by contract, because there was no contractor in the country who could compete with the Government. Even Frank Wilson could not build railways by contract.

Mr. THOMSON: The Minister is not quite correct in that statement, because I know of two railways in my district that were built by contract. I have no desire to enter into a discussion of the merits or demerits of contract versus day labour, but I say unhesitatingly that in the interests of the country we should have a check on the departmental estimates. When we are told that the construction of a line, which the Minister for Works admitted presented no engineering difficulties, is to cost £4,600 a mile, it seems inordinately high. Whether it is, I do not know; I am not in a position to judge. Still, we must realise that some

years ago we could construct railways at half the cost, and one would like to know why the cost has increased so greatly.

The Minister for Works: Everything has gone up.

Mr. THOMSON: Years ago railways were built for £2,000 per mile.

The Premier: In pre-war days.

Mr. THOMSON: That is so.

The Premier: When the men were getting 7s. per day, whereas to-day they are getting 15s.

Mr. THOMSON: No.

The Premier: Of course; everything has doubled in price.

Mr. THOMSON: Everything has not doubled.

The Premier: It has.

Mr. THOMSON: I cannot agree with that.

The Premier: Well, wages have doubled.

Mr. THOMSON: No; in pre-war days the rate for unskilled labour was not 7s. per day.

The Premier: We took office in 1911 and the minimum wage for labourers was 7s. per day.

Mr. THOMSON: That is correct, but still the price has not doubled.

The Premier: It has since then.

Mr. THOMSON: Anyhow, the point I wish to stress is that the State has not an adequate check on the departmental estimates. We follow a system under which the departmental engineers submit estimates and, so far as I know, there is no check on them. The Minister and his engineers may eventually be able to say that they built this line for less than the estimate, but still that affords no check for the State. It would be in the best interests of the country to call for tenders for a huge work that is going to cost £340,000. We should have a definite assurance that the money is going to be spent in an economical way. I do not say it will not be spent economically. Of course the Minister for Works is a strong believer in day labour; he says he will get the results and cut out the profit that a contractor would make. When we investigate State activities competing with private enterprise, we find that the results are not in favour of the State carrying on such activities. If the departmental engineers submitted the lowest tender, they should get the work, but if a private individual submitted a tender many hundreds

or even thousands of pounds less than the departmental estimate, he should be given an opportunity to show that he could do the work. If a private contractor undertakes a big job, he has to carry it out. Even if he shows a loss, it is his own funeral. Whenever a departmental estimate is exceeded, the officials may regret it, but the State has to shoulder the cost. We should get down to a system that will give us a check on the estimates of the departmental engineers, and we should certainly hand over the construction of new railways to the engineers of the Railway Department, who should be the best judges of the methods of construction required in the various districts. I support the second reading of the Bill because it is essential that when we put people on the land, we must provide facilities for them to get their products to market. I should like the Government to go even further than that. If they could push railways into some of the new areas suitable for settlement, without withholding facilities from people who have been waiting many years for them, it would be a good thing for the State. There is a projected railway in my district in which I am keenly interested, and I hope that when the report of the Advisory Board is made available, it will receive due consideration.

HON. G. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret)

[9.0]: I have no desire to oppose the second reading of the Bill. It has always been the desire of the House to give the farming areas such railway facilities as will make for further development and the success of the wheat-growing industry. One cannot help remembering, however, that already we have authorised the construction of four or five other lines, and that as yet there is no sign of their being built. Altogether we must be waiting to construct 300 or 400 miles of line, and now we are passing another Bill for a further 70 miles, at a cost of something over £4,000 a mile. One wonders why we authorise all these railways, when years elapse before any attempt is made to construct them. It seems as if they are passed through the preliminary stages in order to buoy up the hopes of settlers who are far removed from railway facilities. You, Mr. Speaker, are one of the members of the House who suffered a great deal from that very method of railway authorisation, the line in which you

were interested having been held over for eight or ten years. That policy is not right. When we have 300 or 400 miles of railway awaiting construction, we are forced to the conclusion either that they were not passed because of any urgency, or because of the claims of the people affected, or that they were passed for some other purpose, such as to placate the settlers, keep them from worrying the Government, and possibly make it harder for the member representing the district owing to the fact that the work that should have been started had been delayed for a number of years. I am not sure whether, in view of the great developments that are taking place in the agricultural areas, it would not be wise for the Government to build only light lines for the present, lines that could be run out 30 or 40 miles, and bring the wheat in to the main line. A year or two could well elapse before any ballasting was done, or any effort was made to put the lines into the same condition for ordinary running as holds good with other parts of the system where passengers as well as goods are carried. There would not be much passenger traffic on a light line of 30 or 40 miles in length. It would be run over the best available grades, and could be built for a couple of thousand pounds a mile instead of £4,000. The ballasting could be done at any time later on. Lines of this kind could be extended into the wheat areas to lift all those tons of wheat the member for Toodyay and other members have spoken of.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: You want something pretty substantial for that class of freight.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: We have had experience of wood lines running along the contour of the country on the goldfields. Big loads are lifted on those lines. I remember that years ago some engines were running on a private woodline, as they were considered to be not equal to lifting the loads that required to be handled on the Government railway system. Those engines were bought for a mere song by a private woodline company, put into order, and then used to haul rakes of wood to the main line. The engines that were running on the main line could not lift the loads that were landed at the siding by the woodline locomotives. They were discarded engines. There must be something wrong when anything like that can take place.

Mr. Pantou: They were running down-hill to the main line.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: No. They could lift bigger loads than could the big engines which had replaced them.

Mr. Panton: I do not think so; they had the grade with them.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: They used to haul big rakes of timber over the country, just as the contour permitted them.

Mr. Panton: They had the grade with them.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Very few accidents ever occurred on those woodlines. I think we could meet the requirements of a large number of settlers in outback places by means of light railways. The member for Yilgarn spoke of settlers being established from 32 to 50 miles away from the railway. It would be preferable to run a light line out to those people and save them all the haulage entailed by transporting their wheat to the railway, and to leave the ballasting until later. Those lines would only be carrying wheat. They need not run at a rapid rate. It is not necessary to run a heavily-laden wheat train at a high speed. It could be run to meet the requirements of the line itself. The member for Katanning has been agitating for many years for the re-introduction of the contract system in place of day-labour in railway construction. I do not think there is much in his argument about the Railway Department building the lines. That work could well be done by the Public Works Department, unless the railways took over that particular section of the Works Department, though nothing would be gained by it. There is, however, some force in the argument of the hon. member when he says we should have a check on the Public Works Department in this regard. When tenders are called and the price offered by the Public Works Department is satisfactory, and the work is carried out according to the tender, it is right that the department should get the work. I do not think that practice has always obtained, or that tenders have been called for many years. Apparently the policy has been laid down that all this work must be done by day labour. I know we have no railway construction contractors in this State.

The Minister for Works: There are no railway construction people here.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: No railway construction engineers would come here to do the work. They would think it was only a flash

in the pan, a political spasm, the result of some resolution carried in the House upon a snap vote, and they would not make the necessary arrangements to carry out works under contract. That is one of the drawbacks from which we suffer. Our public works have gone up considerably in price during recent years. During 1912 or 1913 the wages paid for navvying work ranged around 9s. or 10s. a day. I think the men received a little more for railway construction work in the bush or in agricultural areas. They were, however, getting 9s. a day on tramway construction. I remember when the Government were putting in the double line from Oxford-street. It was just before Christmas, when the weather was very hot. Mr. Scaddan was Premier at the time. The men asked for 10s. a day, and they were off the job for two or three weeks, because the Government did not grant them an increase. I met the Government on behalf of the men. I knew many of them, and several of them lived in the street where I lived. They are getting much higher wages now.

Mr. Thomson: I think it is 15s. 4d. a day.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: It is either 16s. 4d. or 14s. 8d.

The Minister for Railways: It is 15s. 4d.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The rate of pay was only 9s. a day in 1912. A big increase is represented there. I suppose the cost of rails and fastenings as well as of sleepers has also gone up. I think the timber workers were receiving 7s. or 8s. a day then, but their wages have gone up in proportion to those of other workmen. All these things add to the cost of public works. In 1906 or thereabouts we were in the habit of passing railways that were to cost £1,000 or £1,500 a mile. Those were light railways. We knew that it would cost another £1,000 a mile after the Railway Department had taken them over, and put them into the condition required by the system. That work was not done straight away. The Government should consider the question of constructing light lines in the wheat belt, where people have to cart their wheat over long distances, so much so that it is almost unprofitable for them to grow wheat. The member for Yilgarn said that when settlers had to cart wheat for fifty miles, it represented a cost of 1s. a bushel. Light lines of this description would be a

great relief to such people, and would tend to put heart into them. Those settlers who live a long way out would have a greater chance of developing their holdings. Work of that nature would relieve the position for the unemployed. A lot of cheap money is coming into the State. We have the money from the Federal Government for road work. Certainly mining is not so active as it was. Notwithstanding this there is a steady flow of money into the State, but many people are still looking for work. I have heard many versions of the cause of this unemployment. I do not think there is much truth in the statement that people are looking for work and hoping they will not find it. The difficulty is that some of the unemployed are not capable of taking the work that is offered. If they do take it, they may not be equal to it, and they are not allowed to remain in that employment because they are not giving value for the wages they receive. When men are being paid 15s. or 16s. a day they are expected to give a better return than would be the case if they received only 10s. We are told by people who are controlling our public works that they are not getting as much done for the present wages as they got done when the wages were 8s. or 10s. a day.

Mr. Sleeman: Those were the days! Do you believe that?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The cost of public works indicates that. Perhaps it is a job of muck forming. Nothing but pick and shovel work is required, but the men do not give anything like the same return for the wages they now receive as they gave in former years, so we are told by the Minister in charge of the Bill. If we take the proportionate increase in wages, we find that we are not getting from the men to-day the results that we did years ago when the workers were on a much lower scale of payment. I am bound to think the men have not deteriorated, but there must be some underlying reason for the change. I know the Government are just as anxious to get value for money spent as any other Government have been. I admit that freely. There should, however, be some check on the work done by the departments. I am not speaking of railway construction, but we know that some of the departmental work is considered by eye-witnesses who are able to judge, not to represent full value. Still I do not know that anyone in this

House should speak about people sitting down on their jobs. It does not come well from members of this House. Certainly I shall not take up the attitude of accusing people of loafing on their jobs. Viewing the Chamber as it is from time to time, I say this is the last place which would be justified in accusing others of loafing on their jobs.

MR. KENNEALLY (East Perth) [9.17]: I hope the Government will not follow the advice tendered them by some previous speakers and return to the stage of many years ago in the matter of railway construction. I refer to the times when it was urged that this country should construct lines which, within a couple of years of their completion, really constituted a danger to the working people of the country. The previous speaker said that the Railway Department had been prepared to sell locomotives to private companies.

Hon. G. Taylor: I did not say they were prepared. I said they had sold one locomotive.

Mr. KENNEALLY: That they were prepared to sell and did sell one locomotive to a private company. I will put it that way to please the member for Mt. Margaret. That hon. member said that the locomotive in question, after being sold, was able to haul a greater amount of products and timber to a given point than the larger Government engine could take away from the given point. The assertion simply shows that what the hon. member does not know about railway work would fill a large-sized volume.

Hon. G. Taylor: But you know all about it.

Mr. KENNEALLY: I shall endeavour to enlighten the hon. member, so that he, too, may know something. Had the hon. member visited the railway he refers to, he would have found a locomotive in the middle of trucks, not with all the trucks behind it. He would also have learnt that when that locomotive with trucks in front of it and trucks at the back of it came to a gradient up which it could not haul the full number of trucks, it would simply run ahead propelling the trucks in front of it and then return to haul the rear portion of the train up the gradient. Does the hon. member advocate that system for the State railways?

Hon. G. Taylor: A very good excuse.

Mr. KENNEALLY: If he does, it simply shows that his idea is to go back instead of going forward in the matter of railway work.

Hon. G. Taylor: I am not advocating that at all.

Mr. KENNEALLY: The hon. member says there is no need to ballast lines. Now, there was very little ballasting indeed done on the line from Goomalling to Dowerin when constructed. It was built at a time when Western Australia was hearing a lot about 1,000 miles of railway at £1,000 per mile. An effort was made to construct lines on that basis, with the result that, as the member for Albany (Mr. A. Wansbrough) pointed out, the lines had not been long constructed before they required a greater expenditure for reconditioning than their original cost.

Hon. G. Taylor: But the lines served their purpose in the meantime.

Mr. KENNEALLY: They served the purpose of eating up the funds of the State to an inordinate extent. Any Government would be well advised to take no notice of hon. members who advocate a return to that system. The initial cost of railway construction, if the work is properly done, is the lesser cost. A railway built for the purpose of benefiting the country must be capable of doing the work for which it is designed, and must not be a hotch-potch proposition involving an enormous expenditure in reconditioning before an adequate service can be obtained from it.

The Premier: Some of those lines were built with round-backed sleepers, and bush timber at that.

Mr. KENNEALLY: In the case of the Dowerin line, trees were simply cut down and laid on the hard ground, with the result that it became imperative for the sleepers to be taken up inside 12 months. Is that a system of railway construction which would be advocated by any hon. member with an understanding of the position? The member for Mt. Margaret would not need to know even as much about railway construction as I do to realise that that is not a suitable method. Another phase to which we must give attention is that if light railways are built in a manner that does not require ballasting, special locomotives are needed to work them. Are we to spend additional amounts of money in getting special light locomotives that will be able to run over such lines but will have to be retained for

those lines only? And such lines will be only a few short lines.

Hon. G. Taylor: It might be advantageous to do that and so help the farmers for the time being.

Mr. KENNEALLY: The genuine help to the farmer is to give him a railway system that will shift his wheat expeditiously, and not a system that will not do so simply because the engine cannot get beyond a given point. If we have the interests of the farmer at heart, we should build railways in such a manner that they can be worked by the locomotives we have in use at present, instead of compelling him to wait until we construct suitable locomotives. We must build agricultural lines so that they will be capable of carrying trains at a reasonable rate of speed. We have enough speed restrictions in this country already. Speed restrictions mean increased expenditure. The first cost of a railway must be the main cost if we are to construct properly. Therefore I hope the Government, in building the line proposed by this measure, will adhere to their policy of construction so that the railways will answer requirements.

Mr. Lindsay: The Ejanding Northwards line is being well constructed.

Mr. KENNEALLY: I am prepared to say that the working costs of that line will be light. I hope the Government will continue their present policy, because from the little knowledge of railway working I possess—according to the member for Mt. Margaret—I say it is better to build a line that is capable of doing the job than to build a line which will need constant patching to enable it to do its work.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Lutey in the Chair; the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Authority to construct:

Mr. THOMSON: The line is to cost £4,600 per mile. What was the cost of constructing the line from Norseman to Esperance? The figures I have—they may be wrong—show the cost as less than £2,000 per mile.

The Premier: It is more than that.

Mr. THOMSON: The authorisation was £210,000, and the length of construction was 125 miles.

The Minister for Railways: No. There are two sections of 60 odd miles each, and one of those sections cost the total you mentioned.

The Premier: There were two separate authorising Bills.

Mr. THOMSON: Even on that basis the cost was only £3,300 per mile. Here we have an increase of £1,300 per mile, which seems abnormal.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I cannot be expected to carry the costs of all these jobs in my head. If the hon. member desires the information, I will get the figures for him later; but he should bear in mind that 45-lb. rails were used in the instance he quotes, whereas in this instance the rails are 60-lb.

Mr. Thomson: But then the cost of getting sleepers down there must be enormous as compared with what it will be on this job.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not know that there will be so much difference in that respect. I do not think that any railways have been constructed here for less than £4,000 per mile for a good many years. It all depends on the nature of the country, of course. However, the cost here is very cheap compared with the cost elsewhere.

Mr. Thomson: We have only small engineering difficulties here.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Elsewhere railways built over level country have cost up to £16,000 per mile.

Mr. Thomson: Heavy engines must be used there.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Western Australia has the cheapest railway construction in the world. Shortly after I took office a minute was put up to me by the Engineer-in-Chief stating that every Minister in charge of the department had refused to adopt the contract system for railway construction because there never had been a railway contractor here who could compete with the methods adopted by the department. Even the late Mr. Frank Wilson, who was an ardent supporter of the contract system, adopted day labour for railway construction.

Mr. LINDSAY: I do not wish to enter into the question of contract versus day labour, but I have observed the work done on the Ejanding Northward line, and it may interest hon. members to know that from the day the laying of the rails started

until the completion of the line three-quarters of a mile was laid every day with one exception, which was a very wet day. I consider that that rate of work is something to compliment ourselves on.

Hon. G. Taylor: What number of men were in the gang?

Mr. LINDSAY: I am not sure of the number. However, I watched the gang and saw them doing excellent work. The line is well ballasted, and the men who did the laying of the rails gave specially good service.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 3 to 8—agreed to.

Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—ABATTOIRS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Order of the Day read for the resumption of the debate from the 30th August.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Lutey in the Chair; the Minister for Agriculture in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Amendment of Section 6:

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I move an amendment—

That in paragraph (C2) there be inserted after the word "sale" the words "by auction," and after "stock" the words "(except milch cows and horses)," that the words "in any district except" be struck out, and "in the metropolitan abattoir district elsewhere than" be inserted; and after "Minister" there be inserted "but no such regulation shall extend or apply to sales by auction on the premises of the owner of the stock."

When the Bill was discussed previously, the fear was expressed that power would be taken to establish abattoirs in country districts and that the sale of stock would be prohibited except in stock yards attached to abattoirs. I then stated that it was intended to apply only to abattoirs in the metropolitan districts. There are three abattoir districts—Midland Junction, Fremantle and Kalgoorlie. We do not wish

the clause to apply to the Kalgoorlie abattoirs area, because it is unnecessary. The amendment will definitely limit the operation of the clause to the metropolitan area. With the amendments I propose, paragraph (C2) will read—

Prohibiting the sale by auction of stock (except milch cows and horses) in the metropolitan abattoir district elsewhere than in a saleyard established under the Act, or with the license in writing of the Minister, but no such regulation shall extend or apply to sales by auction on the premises of the owner of the stock.

Mr. Kenneally: What is the definition of "metropolitan abattoir area" in the principal Act?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That is not contained in the Act, but the Act gives power to declare abattoir districts.

Mr. Kenneally: What does the metropolitan abattoir area consist of?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The Fremantle abattoir district, which has a radius of 12 miles, and the Midland Junction abattoir district, which has a similar radius. That covers the whole of the metropolitan area. The amendments I have indicated will meet all the objections that were raised.

Mr. Lindsay: Not all of them.

Mr. DAVY: I understand that the Minister intends to limit the power of prohibition to the metropolitan area, and that it will not apply to sales by auction on the premises of the owner of stock. That will mean that within the metropolitan area the Minister will be able to frame regulations prohibiting the sale of stock except at Government saleyards, with the exception that people may be permitted to sell by auction on their own premises.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is so.

Mr. DAVY: What justification is there for the establishment of public saleyards, or for the prohibition within the metropolitan area of sales by private owners? If the Minister's proposals are accepted, one person will not be able to sell a pet lamb to another individual. That will be the position.

The Minister for Agriculture: No, it will not be the position.

Mr. DAVY: The power sought by the Minister will enable regulations to be

framed that will prevent that being done unless the lamb is sold by auction.

The Minister for Agriculture: At first we prohibited the sale, but owing to exception being taken to it, we have made it refer to sales by auction.

Mr. DAVY: Under the amendment the Minister will have power to say that in the metropolitan area no stock shall be sold, except in the Government saleyards.

The Minister for Agriculture: No stock shall be sold by auction.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We had in mind only the Midland Junction yards, but what about the Robb's Jetty yards? Since we collect rent for them, we do not want to impose fees also.

The Minister for Agriculture: But we lease those yards from the private owners.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I think we lease the ground to the shippers.

The Minister for Agriculture: No, the ground is privately owned. The stock is sold at Copley's yards. We have leased the abattoirs, and we lease also the stockyards.

Mr. Panton: Before the passing of the Abattoirs Act the shippers had their own yards.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: At all events, I am going to ask the Minister to accept the insertion of the words "stud stock" after the words "cows and horses."

The Minister for Agriculture: I will agree to that.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Then I move an amendment on the amendment—

That after "horses" the words "and stud stock" be inserted.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Suppose a person is selling a number of stock on his own property and a neighbour wants to run in a few cows to be sold also. Would this amendment permit of that?

Mr. Thomson: Cows and horses are to be exempt.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Very well. Again, will this amendment affect the goldfields abattoirs area?

The Minister for Agriculture: No, it applies only to the metropolitan area.

Mr. LINDSAY: I congratulate the Minister on the way he has met members on this side who have tried to get the Bill into reasonable form. By his amendment he is giving us all that we asked for. It still leaves open the question of a man wanting to sell a horse or a cow or a sheep

to a neighbour, while it exempts cows and horses and stud stock. What we have asked for we have got, and I hope the Committee will agree to the amendment.

Mr. FERGUSON: The amendment does not meet with all the wishes of members on this side.

The CHAIRMAN: The only amendment before the Chair just now is the insertion of the words "and stud stock."

Mr. FERGUSON: There are hundreds of my electors within a 12-mile radius of Midland Junction, and a good many of them are stock owners. If there could be added to the exemptions in the amendment the words "and store stock," it would be all right. No farmer would object to taking his fat stock to the Midland saleyards. But repeatedly farmers are having auction sales on their farms, and according to what the Minister has said, neighbours will not be allowed to take their store stock to any of those private auction sales. If the Minister would except store stock also, it would be satisfactory. People do not sell their store stock in the Midland saleyards.

Members: Of course they do.

Mr. FERGUSON: Those sale yards are used essentially for fat stock.

Mr. Lindsay: That is not right.

Mr. FERGUSON: Practically the only store sheep received for sale are big drafts from the pastoral areas that are sold to farmers, railed to the country to be fattened, and returned to the market.

Mr. Panton: They are sold at Midland, though.

Mr. FERGUSON: The bulk of the store sheep are sold in the country districts, and not in the sale yards. A settler within 12 miles radius of Midland Junction should be able to sell his store stock at a neighbour's clearing sale if he so desired.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: We have gone to considerable expense to construct abattoirs and sale yards, and it is necessary to protect the property. We do not propose to depart from existing conditions. Not only stock for slaughter but store stock is sold at Midland Junction.

Mr. Lindsay: That is correct.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It would be better to retain the existing Act than to make the retrograde step suggested by the member for Moore.

Mr. Ferguson: But only for clearing sales.

Mr. Davy: What is the objection to that? The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: A decided objection. We are merely seeking authority to continue the existing practice.

Mr. Davy: The existing practice is not to prevent people from selling as they like.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The stockowners and agents are well satisfied with the conditions proposed. Only milch cows and horses are sold in the tow saleyards; other stock is taken to Midland Junction.

Mr. DAVY: Had this Bill been passed in the form in which it was introduced, it would have been possible for the Government to wipe out all horse saleyards in the metropolitan area.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Everywhere.

The CHAIRMAN: The question before the Chair is that "stud stock" be inserted.

Mr. DAVY: Yes, but I doubt whether that is sufficient. We are building up exceptions gradually and I wonder whether we have not made a mistake regarding goats and pigs. We started off with a broad prohibition, and the further we go the more necessary we find it to limit the generality of the prohibition. The question is whether we are limiting it sufficiently when we exclude horses and milch cows. Now it is suggested that stud stock and stores should be excepted. According to the principal Act, stock includes any bovine animal, swine or goat, and also such other animals as may be declared by notice published in the "Gazette."

Hon. G. Taylor: That is the drag-net power.

Mr. DAVY: We do not know where the limitations will land us. Even with the limitations proposed, the Bill will apply to all stock except milch cows, horses and stud stock. Thus there will be included in the prohibition, all swine, goats, sheep and cattle, and any other animal to which the Governor may declare the Act shall apply. A poor case has been made out by the Minister for such drastic interference.

The Minister for Agriculture: About what other animals are you worrying?

Mr. DAVY: Let us deal with goats.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is going outside the clause.

Mr. DAVY: If the Minister has his way the sale of almost all animals will be prohibited, including goats and swine.

The Minister for Agriculture: Do you suggest that swine should be sold anywhere?

Mr. DAVY: I do not see why not. They are sold anywhere the owner chooses to sell them.

The Minister for Agriculture: No.

Mr. DAVY: What prevents their being sold anywhere?

The Minister for Agriculture: Many things. People cannot do what they like within an abattoir area. They must comply with the regulations. They cannot keep their swine where they like.

Mr. DAVY: We are not talking about the keeping of swine. I know of no law which lays down where swine should be sold.

Mr. MANN: Under this Bill the department could prevent the sale at the James-street and Stirling-street markets of turkeys, fowls and all classes of poultry.

The CHAIRMAN: The question before the Chair is the insertion of the words "stud stock."

Mr. MANN: I should like the Minister to say whether it is intended to stop the sale of poultry at these markets.

The CHAIRMAN: Members are entering into a general discussion. They must keep to the subject matter before the Chair.

Amendment on the amendment put and passed.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Under the Bill the department may prohibit the sale of almost any animal. If poultry can be included in the term "animal," as suggested by the member for West Perth, the poultry markets in Perth will be seriously affected.

Amendment, as amended, put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:
I move a further amendment—

That in paragraph (c) the following words be added:—"But no such regulation shall extend or apply to sales by auction on the premises of the owner of the stock."

Mr. THOMSON: We have now come to the real reason why this Bill has been amended. The Government have erected certain saleyards and find it necessary to force people to use them. Last year a revenue of £4,627 was derived from these yards. If people living within the metropolitan area desire to establish saleyards for the sale of stock, as they do in the

country districts, they should be entitled to do so, but under this amendment they will be prevented from engaging in such a business. If there are any vigneron within the metropolitan area who are keeping a few sheep, they will have to send them to the Government saleyards when they want to dispose of them.

The Minister for Agriculture: They will send them where the buyers are.

Mr. THOMSON: A man may require to sell his own stock by auction. In order to make a greater success of the sale, the auctioneer in charge may want to concentrate upon that property the stock belonging to other owners. Under this amendment a sale of that description would not be allowed.

The Minister for Agriculture: Those people are pretty lucky to be so close to a sale yard. What about people who have to truck cattle hundreds of miles?

Mr. THOMSON: People who have to truck cattle hundreds of miles send them in as fat stock. The point is that the Minister proposes an additional restriction. At present a farmer may send his cattle to a neighbouring farm to be sold, and I am opposed to the restriction of that right.

Mr. DAVY: I move an amendment on the amendment—

That the following be added to the amendment:—"or to the sale anywhere of any stock except those specifically mentioned in Section 2 of the principal Act."

That section defines "stock" as bovine animals, swine or goats—

The Minister for Agriculture: We have added sheep and lambs.

Mr. THOMSON: Also such other animals to which the Governor may by notice in the "Government Gazette" declare that the Act shall apply. I object to His Excellency the Governor deciding what animals the measure shall apply to.

The Minister for Agriculture: The power has always existed.

The Minister for Railways: What harm is there in having a power that has never been unduly exercised?

Mr. DAVY: No harm, provided that one is confident that the power will never be unduly exercised. However, I object to any Government having the power here proposed. The member for Perth raises the point that under the measure it would be perfectly competent for the Government to establish a State poultry farm.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is ridiculous.

Mr. DAVY: It is not more ridiculous to establish a State poultry farm than to establish State sale yards for goats. The meaning of "stock" should not be extended except by Act of Parliament.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The definition in the principal Act omits sheep and lambs. It has been necessary to add sheep and lambs by this Bill.

Mr. Davy: Why did not you do it by notice in the "Government Gazette"?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: One can see how easy it is to overlook some animal that should be included, from the fact of the framers of the original definition omitting sheep and lambs. I am not prepared to say that we can now include all the animals that should be included from time to time.

Mr. Davy: But Parliament meets every year.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Under regulations one has to take greater powers than those proposed here. Whoever is in charge of the abattoirs will not act in such a manner as to make himself ridiculous. No difficulty such as that now suggested has yet arisen.

Mr. SAMPSON: The metropolitan abattoirs district, I understand, includes Fremantle and Midland Junction. There is a sale yard at Armadale. Would that be included?

Mr. Thomson: Yes.

The Minister for Railways: No. Armadale is 19 miles from Perth.

Mr. SAMPSON: I do not know what the distance is as the crow flies.

The Minister for Railways: It is 19 miles by rail, anyhow.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Armadale is excluded. In any case, it would be a concession to Armadale to be included.

Mr. Sampson: The clause will not prevent the inauguration or continuation of sales at Armadale?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No.

Mr. SAMPSON: I raise the question because the metropolitan area is such an indefinite term and the metropolitan abattoirs area is not defined.

Amendment on the amendment put and negatived.

Mr. THOMSON: I wish the Minister could see his way clear to add something to

his amendment that would not prevent a farmer availing himself of the opportunity presented by a sale of stock on his neighbour's premises, to send some of his stock to be sold with that of his neighbour. That is the custom throughout the country areas to-day. If a sale is held in those circumstances, why should a farmer not have that privilege? It would be an inducement to buyers to attend the sale, because more stock would be there for disposal. I wish to protect the interests of the small grower.

Mr. DAVY: The Minister says that he wishes to limit the operations of the clause to the metropolitan abattoir district. What does the "metropolitan abattoir district" mean? Section 3 of the Act provides that it shall be in force in such parts of the State as the Governor may declare to be districts for the purposes of the Act. If anyone looked at the Act, as it will be amended by the Minister, he would find nothing to guide him as to where the metropolitan abattoir area started or ended. He would have to inspect the proclamation that was issued when the district was declared, but the boundaries of that district might have been altered many times subsequently to the issuing of the original proclamation.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I have already informed the Committee that the metropolitan abattoir district consists of an area with a radius of 12 miles from the Midland Junction abattoirs and an area with a radius of 12 miles from the Fremantle abattoirs. That covers the whole of the metropolitan area and that is what the metropolitan abattoir area consists of.

Mr. DAVY: Is it not a fact that without any reference to Parliament, except through the "Government Gazette," the boundaries of the metropolitan abattoir area may be altered at the sweet will of the Government? They can extend the boundaries so as to cover the whole of the State.

Hon. G. Taylor: The Government have power to do that now.

Mr. DAVY: But that does not carry with it the power to prohibit sales.

Mr. Mann: And that is the point.

Mr. DAVY: The boundaries of the metropolitan abattoir area are entirely in the hands of the Government to be extended as may be deemed fit.

The Minister for Agriculture: You think the word "metropolis" has no meaning and that it may include the whole of the State!

Mr. DAVY: The word "metropolis" has no meaning under the Act. From a legal standpoint, the Government could issue a proclamation extending the boundaries to Carnarvon in the north, to Southern Cross in the east, and to Bunbury in the south.

The Minister for Agriculture: It would not be safe to vest the administration of the Act in the hands of anyone who was likely to extend the boundaries of the metropolitan abattoir area to Kalgoorlie or as you suggest!

Mr. DAVY: But as it is, the Government could do that and their power could not be questioned.

The Premier: But would not a court hold that such an Act was ultra vires?

Mr. DAVY: No.

Mr. SAMPSON: I see in the proposed amendment a grave danger that threatens the Swan district. If the amendment be agreed to, it will be illegal to hold auction sales at which calves, pigs, and other stock may be sold.

The CHAIRMAN: That has been agreed to. We are now dealing with the Minister's second amendment.

Mr. SAMPSON: I understand that so long as the auction sale is held on the property of the owner of the stock, there will be no objection, but that there will be objection to neighbours' stock being included.

The Minister for Agriculture: This is a concession given to you.

Mr. SAMPSON: And a valuable one, but just the same I hope the clause will be thrown out.

Mr. THOMSON: Perhaps the Minister would agree to accept after "owners" the words "or neighbours."

The Premier: The neighbour might be up at Carnarvon.

Mr. THOMSON: We are imposing a restriction on people who at present are at liberty to sell their stock on a neighbour's property. It is quite possible that the metropolitan abattoirs area may be considerably extended. If we pass the amendment we shall be interfering with privileges that people have enjoyed in the past. I move an amendment on the amendment—

That after "owner" the words "or neighbours of the owner" be inserted.

Mr. Panton: Make it neighbours or their dependants.

Mr. FERGUSON: I will support the spirit of the amendment.

The Premier: But you do not like its wording.

Mr. FERGUSON: I do not know what the wording should be. There are within the metropolitan abattoirs area some 500 of my electors. The Minister seeks to impose a difficulty upon them. Farmers in that district will be able to hold auction sales at which to dispose of their own stock, but their neighbours will be deprived of the privilege of taking any stock to those sales. If the neighbour wishes to sell his stock, he must have an auction sale of his own, or alternatively take his stock to the Government sale yards at Midland Junction.

The Minister for Agriculture: I am offering you a concession, but apparently you do not want it.

Mr. FERGUSON: I want the farmers to have the privilege of taking their stock to a neighbour's auction sale.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I should like to know what the hon. member would consider to be a neighbour. Surely there should be a defined radius beyond which nobody could be regarded as a neighbour.

Mr. SAMPSON: Advertisements of auction sales frequently invite entries from others. Very few sales of stock would attract buyers if the stock were from only one owner. There is every justification for the inclusion of neighbours' stock. These neighbours, of course, are small owners.

The Premier: And they have a sale yard at their back door—at Midland Junction.

Mr. SAMPSON: Gosnells is a long way from Midland Junction.

The Premier: But Gosnells is not included.

The Minister for Agriculture: I gave the hon. member an assurance about Armadale.

Mr. SAMPSON: That is so. Perhaps the Minister would agree to report progress so as to enable the proposed amendment to be properly drafted.

Mr. Panton: You want to get your second wind.

Amendment on the amendment put and negatived.

Amendment put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

House adjourned at 10.51 p.m.