

Mr. Teesdale: A shot in an old face has often brought down gold.

Mr. MULLANY: Yes. That reminds me of the Irishman who, after sinking a shaft to a certain depth, stopped owing to lack of resources. Then somebody else came and sank 2ft. more and got good values. The Irishman thereupon declared that in future he would never stop sinking a shaft until he had gone two or three feet further. These people did not sink shafts further. For the honour of the State the whole business should be investigated. Certainly some people were drawn into the speculation by the high results which were published, but which were not borne out by the battery. The carrying of the amendment I have suggested would give the Royal Commission a wider scope. Accordingly I move an amendment—

That in paragraph 2 of the motion, after the word "which," line 1, there be inserted "samples were taken and."

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: 1 move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and negatived.

Question, as amended, put and passed.

MOTION—GOSNELLS ESTATE.

To inquire by Royal Commission.

Debate resumed from the 26th September on the following motion by Mr. Mann:—

That in the opinion of this House a Royal Commission, consisting of a judge of the Supreme Court, should be appointed to investigate the affairs of the Gosnells Estate Company before and after the appointment of a receiver, and more particularly the transactions connected with the sale of the company's lands and the failure to provide a title on completion of the terms of contract by the producer.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [10.9]: I shall not offer any objection to the inquiry desired by the mover, though I rather think the matter is one capable of settlement through the ordinary channels before the courts of the land.

Mr. Mann: That has been tried.

Mr. Teesdale: The people have no more money.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The courts have been tried, and very little has resulted. If those concerned think that they would get some sort of satisfaction from an inquiry, perhaps the House is justified in granting it. However, I suggest the deletion of the words "consisting of a judge of the Supreme Court." I do not think that provision is necessary. The matter has come before at least one judge already, and may, as the result of this inquiry, come before other judges. The hands of the Government should not be tied in any way as re-

gards the appointment of a Royal Commission of this kind. I, therefore, move an amendment—

That the words "consisting of a judge of the Supreme Court" be struck out.

Amendment put and passed.

Question, as amended, put and passed.

House adjourned at 10.10 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 8th November, 1923.

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

BILL—PINJARRA-DWARDA RAILWAY EXTENSION ACT AMENDMENT.

Third Reading.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. J. Ewing—South-West) [4.34]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

Hon. A. BURVILL (South-East) [4.35]: Yesterday I intimated that I would move for the recommittal of the Bill with a view to amending it and shortening the distance of this line. I find now that this alteration can be made by regulation. I will, therefore, leave it to the Minister to see that this procedure is followed.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. J. Ewing—South-West—in reply) [4.36]: I recognise the importance of the statement the hon. member has made, and I assure him that representations along those lines will be made to the Government.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time, and passed.

BILLS (3)—REPORTS OF COMMITTEE.

- 1, Change of Names Regulation.
- 2, Friendly Societies Act Amendment.
- 3, West Australian Trustee, Executor, and Agency Company, Limited, Act Amendment (Private).

Reports adopted.

MOTION—ESPERANCE NORTHWARDS RAILWAY EXTENSION.

Debate resumed from 4th October on motion by Hon. J. W. Kirwan—

That in the opinion of this House, the Government should seek the necessary authority this session to extend the Esperance Northwards railway, now in course of construction, so that it will junction with the main railway system of the State at Norseman.

The PRESIDENT: This seems to be identical with the motion that has come up from the Legislative Assembly.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: There is an important difference between the two.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. J. Ewing—South-West) [4.38]: There is a material difference between Mr. Kirwan's motion and the resolution received from the Assembly. The former seeks authority for the construction of the line this session.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Whilst the plant and the men are on the ground.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The latter motion is to the effect that the line shall be built at the first opportunity, and to this the Government have agreed.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: That is merely shelving the question.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Unless I speak at great length I may not be able to persuade the hon. member that the Premier is adopting the right attitude. The Government recognise that this is an important district. The recent report of the Minister for Agriculture gives the greatest encouragement for the future development of this district. The country, however, has not been thoroughly and efficiently classified. The Premier desires this to be done before the Bill is introduced in another place. When it is done he will be in a better position to satisfy members that the line is justified. Mr. Kirwan may say that this is the right time to build the line, because the plant and the men are in the locality. The linking up of Norseman with the Esperance line will probably mean the expenditure of a couple of hundred thousand pounds.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: It will depend on how the line is built and who builds it.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I am not opposing the motion; my only desire is that Mr. Kirwan should agree to amend it in conformity with the motion moved in another place. If the Government are in office next session a Bill for the construction of the line will be brought in.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: One has no confidence in the good faith of the Government to do this.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The Premier, I am sure, would not make a statement that he did not intend to abide by. His word politically is his bond politically. He has said that certain classifications of the land must be made, and certain investigations carried out. The rainfall must be ascertained and everything put into such order as to enable him to place a satisfactory case before members in another place.

Hon. H. Stewart: Has the Railway Advisory Board reported on this line?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Not during recent years.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: They reported on it a number of years ago.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: This is a question of linking up the Esperance line with Norseman, and there is a material difference between this motion and that moved in another place, as I have already explained. Mr. Kirwan should agree to the amendment I have suggested. He has done good work, along with other members, in his advocacy of the construction of this line. His objective is a through line from Norseman to join up with Esperance, and it is a laudable object. The Government, however, have to consider the advisability of spending this money. The Premier has indicated that when he has ascertained the requisite information concerning the country he would bring down a Bill for the construction of the line.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: All the particulars are already available. Royal Commissions and boards have reported over and over again.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The country has not been properly inspected. Data as to the rainfall, the suitability of the land for agricultural purposes, and consideration of the mallee and salmon gum areas have not been fully gone into.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: You cannot get the rainfall record for twelve months.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The rainfall question must be thoroughly inquired into, so that we may find out if the country will grow wheat successfully. I do not think any doubt exists in the mind of the Premier, and certainly no doubt exists in my mind. I have confidence in the Minister for Agriculture, who is a practical farmer and a big wheat producer. He would not have made the statement attributed to him on his return from this district, if he did not believe in the possibilities there.

Hon. H. Stewart: He was down there fully three days!

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Some people can see as much in three days as others can see in three months. The Minister for Agriculture is a far-seeing man and when he saw what was there, he recognised the possibilities of that belt of agricultural country. I hope that in the near future that area will be a large producing district. I will not speak

at any length, because I could not do any good if I did so. I simply ask Mr. Kirwan to accept the assurance I give him, and not to press the motion in the form in which it stands. I do not doubt his facts for one moment. If I used the notes I have prepared, I would delay the House for a considerable time discussing the possibilities of the country. All these things are well known and within the knowledge of hon. members. The question is not one regarding the possibilities of the district; it is a question of what the immediate results will be to the State from the building of this line. It is a question as to whether it is better to incur this large expenditure this year, or whether the necessary information should be brought up to date during the recess, so that we may place it before hon. members. If the Mitchell Government are in power after the general elections, the Premier has promised that the Bill will be introduced next session. In view of that fact it is a fair thing to ask Mr. Kirwan to amend his motion by deleting the reference to immediate construction and thus bring it into conformity with the motion passed in another place suggesting the construction of the line as soon as possible. I trust hon. members who represent the districts affected will not endeavour to force this position during the remaining few weeks we will be assembled here. In view of that short period it would not be right to introduce a Bill this session without the necessary information to place before hon. members, just on the eve of a general election. I doubt, even if the Bill were introduced at the present juncture, whether it would be passed. If it is the good fortune of the State to have the same Government in power after the next elections—it would be a splendid thing for Western Australia if that should be the result—hon. members can rely upon the promise of the Premier being carried out.

Member: The men who are there could be engaged upon the work.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: But it might not be right to use the State's money at the present time in constructing the line.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: The plant is there now for the work.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The construction of this line may mean anything from £100,000 to £200,000 according to the class of line to be constructed and the weight of rails to be used. That is a very large expenditure. I do not oppose it. I hope to see that money spent in the near future. In view of the assurances given by the Premier, and those I give the House now as representative of the Government, the hon. member should be content to amend his motion as I suggest. Before Parliament meets again, the matter will be thoroughly investigated. We want to know something more about the classification of the land, the rainfall and so forth.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: The district has had a bitter experience regarding procrastination.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: If the investigations made prove satisfactory—and I have no doubt on that point myself—we will be in a better position to place the case for the railway before hon. members.

Hon. H. Stewart: If the investigations are satisfactory?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The Premier did not even make that reservation in the course of his statement.

Hon. H. Stewart: And the Bill will be introduced next session.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The Premier stated that if the Government are in power next session the Bill will be introduced.

Hon. T. Moore: That is a bait for the electors.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I am not here to discuss baits being thrown out to the electors. I am here, as the Premier was in another place, with a full sense of responsibility resting upon me, and neither of us would be worthy of the positions we hold if we were to throw out any such bait to the electors. This is a clear statement made by the Premier, that he will carry out a certain policy if certain things eventuate. I hope those things will eventuate, but if they do not the responsibility will rest no longer upon the Mitchell Government or upon me. I ask the House to accept the Premier's assurances. The Premier's statements may be accepted with absolute confidence.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: We have been told that for the last 20 years.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Not by this Government.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: By other Governments.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Not the Mitchell Government. In this case the Premier has made a definite statement.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: We are not inclined to accept those statements.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The hon. member should do so.

Hon. H. Stewart: What are we to understand as the significance of the political word of the Government on a political point?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The hon. member should know.

Hon. H. Stewart: I am drawing attention to the use of the word "political."

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: There is no political significance in the use of the word. I ask the hon. member to accept the statement made by the Premier.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Will you give us a valid reason why you cannot go on with the work now, seeing that the plant is there?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: For one thing alone, the time before us is not sufficient to enable the matter to be attended to properly. Before we can submit a Bill to the Legislative Assembly we must be armed with full and sufficient information. It is no use doing it otherwise.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Is the report of the Royal Commission not satisfactory?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION : The report of the Commission is of a cursory nature. It is not a report based upon an extensive investigation.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: They were nine months in making the investigations.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION : The hon. member knows that the time they spent in investigating the district concerned, could not have been more than a week or a few days.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: They were there for several weeks.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION : They would require to be there for months before they could investigate the whole of the country affected by this line, and before they could see what the possibilities really were. All these facts have to be placed before the House before we can ask members to agree to a Bill authorising the construction of the line.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: The Railway Advisory Board were favourable to the construction of the line.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION : I can see the hon. member is not satisfied with the assurance I have given.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: I certainly am not.

Hon. J. Mills: Are not railways supposed to be built in the order of their authorisation?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION : There is nothing to prevent the line being constructed next session.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Do you not say the Premier is satisfied with the line?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION : The Premier wants a thorough investigation into the whole matter before he will submit a Bill to the House.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: Then he is not satisfied with the statement by the Minister for Agriculture!

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION : After all, the Minister was not in the district for very long. Of course, I am not opposing his statement for one moment. I hope the line will be constructed at a very early date. In view of the statements that have been made, however, it is only fair that Mr. Kirwan should amend his motion along the lines I suggest.

Hon. J. Duffell: Get down to your notes and give us something else!

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION : I do not wish to do that and I am sure hon. members do not wish me to go at length into the potentialities of the country. It is sufficient to say that I am satisfied the country down there is good. Mr. Kirwan will be acting wisely and in a statesmanlike way if he adopts the course I suggest. He should not force the motion, as he evidently wants to do. I do not say that in an offensive way. However, it would be fair to the Government if he did as I suggest. It would be simply wasting time to send the motion as it stands to another place, seeing that they have dealt with it at some length just recently. If Mr. Kirwan would amend his motion as I suggest, then it would go forth as the unanimous

wish of Parliament that a Bill should be introduced at an early date to authorise the construction of the line.

Hon. A. Lovekin: You told us last night something about "as soon as possible."

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION : The hon. member will misunderstand what I say. Time after time he puts a wrong construction on my words. For my part I am heartily in accord with the object Mr. Kirwan has in view and the Government, too, are in accord with it.

Hon. T. Moore: Is the Premier in accord with it?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION : Of course he is; he has made a statement to that effect.

Hon. T. Moore: Then he has changed his opinions very much during the past few years. The line would have been built years ago but for him.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION : That does not matter now. The Premier has explained his attitude. Great men change their minds. It is only the narrow-minded people who do not do so. He has said that the line must be constructed as soon as possible.

Hon. T. Moore: The land has not changed and he condemned it years ago!

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION : We should be grateful that the Premier has changed his mind regarding this railway and the possibilities of the land. If the present Government are in power next session, I hope to see the railway constructed, and for that reason I urge the amendment of the motion.

Hon. A. BURVILL (South-East) [4.57]: I support Mr. Kirwan. At the present time we have one dead-end at Norseman and another at the end of the Esperance-Northward line. Thus we have two dead-ends there.

The Minister for Education: That will be fixed up next session.

Hon. A. BURVILL: The result will be not only awkward for the settlers themselves but extremely awkward for the Railway Department. I do not say anything about the intervening 60 miles but the settlers along the line under construction will not be able to get their produce to a market.

The Minister for Education: Where do they want to send it?

Hon. A. BURVILL: They may want to send it to Kalgoorlie, where they can get good prices.

The Minister for Education: They will be able to get there next year.

Hon. A. BURVILL: If they want to get their produce to Perth, they have to take it down to Esperance or else cart it overland to Norseman. The Government granted a bonus of 1s. 6d. a bushel for wheat carted to the rail head. I do not know if that still obtains. This will be very expensive to the Government and the settlers will not be in touch with the market. The expense of dead-ends has been stressed during the dis-

cussion on the Pinjarra-Dwarda Railway Extension Act Amendment Bill and I have already drawn attention to the statements made by the Commissioner of Railways. In this instance, the line will provide the worst proposition possible for the Commissioner of Railways. There will be three dead-ends and the Government will be faced with the necessity of transferring railway material, including trucks and engines. They will have to keep enough trucks available for the maximum traffic to be dealt with along the present line, and when that traffic ceases, the engines and trucks will be idle. If there should be a break in connection with the plant, the department will have to face the cost of taking the engine or trucks all the way to the railway workshops.

The Minister for Education: Why do you want to force the hands of the Government, seeing that they are prepared to carry out the work?

Hon. A. BURVILL: The Government have the plant on the spot to go on with the line at once. In the interests of the Railway Department, the Government and the settlers it would be bad policy not to continue the line through at once.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS (North-East) [5.1]: I support the motion. I have carefully perused the report of the speech delivered by the Premier in another place. He definitely said there was no question at all regarding the rainfall. He quoted the rainfall from Norseman to Esperance and is perfectly satisfied on that point. The only thing he desires is that the land be classified.

The Minister for Education: That is quite right.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: The Premier even went so far as to say that one of the vital points was to have available the locomotives and other paraphernalia for the construction of the line.

Member: And the money to build it with.

The Minister for Education: Well, give the Government a chance.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: It is in order to save money that we suggest the line be completed at once. During the last day or two, while discussing the Pinjarra-Dwarda railway deviation, we have heard a good deal of the necessity for avoiding dead-end lines. Here we have constructed another with a dead-end and the desire of some members is that it should remain at a dead-end. The Minister has indicated that the Government, if returned next session, will introduce a Bill.

The Minister for Education: That should be sufficient.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: That is a matter of opinion. The whole of the plant for the construction of the line is on the spot, though of course rails would have to be provided. The Premier said there was no doubt regarding the wisdom of building the line, and the whole argument revolves around the point whether the land should first be classified.

Hon. J. Mills: Are there any settlers along the route?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Only one or two, and they could give information how they have fared since settling there. The Minister for Agriculture said the land was all right, and later he stated he would not withdraw one word of what he had said regarding the quality of the land in the district.

Hon. H. Stewart: Which district?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: The district he traversed from Norseman to Esperance. The Minister has stressed that point in speeches made in another place, and also on the gold-fields. It would be in the interests of the country if the line were built, and much money would be saved if the work of constructing it were proceeded with at once while the plant and rolling stock are on the spot.

Hon. J. MILLS (Central) [5.4]: I intend to oppose the motion. Although I think the railway should be built at some future date, there are other parts of the State where the country is settled and the provision of railways is overdue. I refer particularly to the Yuna extension. We are given to understand that the land to be served in the Esperance district is new land that has not been classified, and that there are only one or two settlers along the route. That would hardly justify the building of a line. The settlers at the Esperance end are served by railway and the port of Esperance, and that is sufficient for them. There is no justification for constructing the line at present. If railways are not to be built in the order in which they are authorised by Parliament, where shall we get to? The approval of Parliament will mean nothing.

Hon. J. E. DODD (South) [5.5]: The reasons in favour of Mr. Kirwan's motion are so obvious that I cannot understand the Government not agreeing to complete this line. It should be unnecessary to say anything as to the advisableness of carrying the railway through to Norseman. As Mr. Burvill pointed out, when we were considering the Pinjarra-Dwarda proposal, the fact was stressed that the line would have a dead-end unless it was junctioned with the Great Southern railway. If that was a reason in favour of that railway, surely there are a thousand reasons why the Esperance line should be linked with Norseman. I believe the material and men are on the spot, and surely it would be cheaper for the Government to continue the work at once, rather than wait for another year or so. Although we do not doubt the genuineness of the Premier, it is possible he may change his mind again. He has changed his mind once, and he may change it a dozen times. I hope the motion will be agreed to. The Minister said a railway Bill required a great deal of consideration. I have seen railway bills put through this House after members had told the Minister they required no information. I had that experi-

ence; members were satisfied to pass the Bill without requiring any information. Why the need for all this consideration regarding the Esperance line? To leave the line at a dead-end within 60 miles of the main system seems an utter absurdity. I believe the old idea of centralisation has been broken down, for which we have to thank the Country Party. I do not wish to embarrass the Government in any way. Last session I was pleased to support the Government and Mr. Ewing to pass the Jarnadup Railway Bill, and I hope we shall now receive his help in return.

Hon. G. POTTER (West) [5.8]: I should not like to cast a silent vote on this motion. On two previous occasions when discussing railway matters generally, and the Esperance-Northwards railway particularly, I stressed the value of proceeding with that line. Something has been said about people changing their minds. There is no harm in any man changing his mind if he finds he is wrong and some new development or fact is brought under his notice. I have heard of no facts to make me change my opinion that this line should be proceeded with. On the other hand, the Minister for Agriculture, who, in addition to being a member of the Cabinet, is an authority on agriculture, has testified to the value of the lands in these districts. We have heard eulogies, too, from experienced men from the Eastern States. People in the Eastern States, who have become wealthy on similar country there, are looking for like land in Western Australia for their sons, because there is none available for them in the East. A few days ago a high official in the Government service said the demand for wheat lands at present was so great that it was difficult to meet it. Therefore I cannot see any consistency in placing an obstruction in the way of making the Esperance lands available. There are people down there who, by tenacity of purpose, have held on to their land, battling against great odds. From time to time they have been promised a railway and access to their natural market; it is a hope that has been long deferred. A few days ago it was remarked that the best type of settler is the one that hangs on under adverse conditions, but there is a limit to patience and endurance. While the attention of mallee farmers from the Eastern States is focussed upon our mallee lands, it would be deplorable if anything was done to relax in any way their interest. The land that would be served by this railway is good; indeed, the reports state that it is superior land, and it would be lamentable if any of the settlers, by reason of hope being further deferred, left the district. If it were given forth to the world that the Government had determined to build the line, there would be some encouragement for other people to settle there.

The Minister for Education: They have done so.

Hon. G. POTTER: I am glad the Minister said the Premier was in favour of building the line. I accept the Premier's word, but if he has made up his mind that the line should be built, why not ask Parliament for authority this session, and let the work go on? Even critics of the Government could not then say it was a question that should be postponed until some future time.

Hon. J. DUFFELL (Metropolitan) [5.13]: While I recognise the necessity for linking up these two lines, we should remember that we have received a message from another place where members have given this matter the fullest consideration. We should respect that message. I consider it essential that these two lines should be linked up. If the coffers of the Treasury were bulging with the weight of gold, I could understand members being anxious to have the motion passed. It is not a question of whether members are seized with the necessity for constructing this line; it is a question whether we should not have confidence in the judgment of another place that this line should be built when the finances of the State are easier. The motion expresses the opinion that the Government should build a line to Norseman, irrespective of whether they are in a position to do so. It is certainly a good point to urge its completion on the ground that the men and the plant are available on the spot, but everybody is aware of that. No doubt there would be a certain saving. The question, however, is whether the present time is opportune for the country to continue the railway as suggested by the motion. I could not in my wildest dreams imagine that, as indicated by the mover, the rejection of this motion would be a way of shelving the subject. The reasonable and thinking men who compose the Parliament of this State would not allow a matter of this importance to be shelved, realising, as they do, the need for linking up. I can quite understand the anxiety of goldfields members to have the motion carried, and thus bind Parliament and the Government to immediate action. There are plenty of reasons in favour of linking up, but we must realise the financial position. At the same time, notwithstanding the huge deficit of last month, there is good reason to believe that we have turned the corner. Let us confidently expect that the line will be continued in the near future, but at the same time let us respect the terms of the Assembly's message. I must therefore oppose the motion. When the Assembly's message comes up for consideration, I shall support the proposal in its entirety.

Hon. H. STEWART (South-East) [5.19]: I have listened with close attention to Mr. Potter. I wonder whether that hon. member has any authentic information as to the quality of the land along the proposed extension. From the Minister for Agriculture, who spent three days in the Esperance district, we have learned that three million acres of agricultural land are available there,

including much excellent country. I have yet to learn, however, that the quality of the land along the extension now under consideration is such as would warrant railway construction.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: The Royal Commission recommended the extension after nine months' consideration. The Wilson Government appointed the Commission.

Hon. H. STEWART: Having seen a number of agricultural lines built in the recognised agricultural districts of this State, I say it is extremely desirable, before even the Railway Advisory Board report on a proposed line, to have a classification made by the expert officers of the Lands Department of the whole of the country to be served.

The Minister for Education: Quite right.

Hon. H. STEWART: Therefore I feel it is only fair and reasonable to support the Minister in this matter. I do not know whether the Royal Commission referred to by Mr. Kirwan consisted of laymen or members of Parliament. However, land classification is a matter for the expert officers of the Lands Department. Experience in this State has shown that even after classifications have been made by the expert officers, the land does not always prove to be of the productive value anticipated; that is, when people have been settled on what has been classified as first-class and second-class land, Mr. Potter has been somewhat carried away. His assertions are based, I think, on the Premier's statements regarding the area of good land in the Esperance district. A district extending for 120 miles, from Norseman to Esperance, by a range of 15 miles or more, on either side of the line, may contain a large area of good land up to the point to which the railway has already been constructed, while the climatic conditions of the area between the present terminus and Norseman may be such as to render the land unsuitable for agriculture.

Hon. G. Potter: Is it the rainfall you doubt?

Hon. H. STEWART: Not so far as the railway has been constructed, but from the prospective terminus onwards. Rainfall and quality of soil are the two great considerations. Take the case of Newdegate, where it was said, prior to classification, that there were 350,000 acres of first-class agricultural land available. An inspection made by the Minister for Agriculture in March of last year resulted in the statement that the Newdegate district contained from 350,000 to 500,000 acres of first-class land. The Railway Advisory Board have reported that there is enough first-class land there to warrant railway extension. However, when the partition of land by surveys and detailed classification had taken place, it was found that the district to be served contained only between 100,000 and 200,000 acres of agricultural land.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: That land had not been inquired into by a Royal Commission over a period of nine months.

Hon. H. STEWART: The cutting up of the Newdegate land by departmental officers into blocks of approximately 1,000 acres involved a closer investigation and more detailed work than any inquiry by a Royal Commission. I am sure that the results so obtained would be much nearer the mark than the results obtained from any Royal Commission so far appointed in this State. Probably Mr. Potter's statements are based on the assertions published in the Press by people who have viewed the Esperance country in a general way.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: The Railway Advisory Board years ago recommended the construction of the complete line.

Hon. H. STEWART: Right through to Norseman?

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Yes.

Hon. H. STEWART: From what I have seen of railways now running and railways now under construction, I consider it is perfectly justifiable to have an up-to-date report from the Railway Advisory Board and an up-to-date classification from the Lands Department in this case. Another point raised by Mr. Potter was that the people settled in the Esperance district, waiting there and hanging on, were entitled to our sympathy.

Hon. A. Burvill: Besides sympathy, they need a local market.

Hon. G. Potter: They do not want sympathy. They have had too much sympathy.

Hon. H. STEWART: Mr. Potter sought our sympathy for them in supporting this motion. Mr. Harris told us that on the 60 miles of line represented by the proposed extension there are two people living.

Hon. E. H. Harris: A few people.

Hon. H. STEWART: Those people, at any rate, have never had any promise; and since 1914 they have had no hope.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: You are quite wrong. Numbers of promises have been made by various Governments.

Hon. H. STEWART: Promises that this line would be completed through to Norseman?

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Yes, and resolutions passed by this House too.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member will have an opportunity of replying.

Hon. H. STEWART: I do not wish Mr. Kirwan to think I am antagonistic to him on the question of railways.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Only on the question of this railway.

Hon. H. STEWART: No. I do hold, however, that the Minister's suggestion to obtain an up-to-date classification of the land and an up-to-date report by the Railway Advisory Board is just and reasonable. I have asked for an up-to-date report from the Railway Advisory Board in the case of every railway Bill that has come before this House since I have been a member of it, the first of them being the Piawaning Northward Bill. I voted against that Bill because I thought that with so many railways already authorised it was useless to pass a measure authorising

yet another line without any prospect of its being built. Had some other members gone with me on that occasion, they might have had this extension before the Piawaning Northward railway was built. The carrying of the motion will, I fear, lead to an unsatisfactory position.

Hon. W. Carroll: Carrying the motion will not affect the position one jot.

Hon. H. STEWART: I believe that interjection is right. Order of construction in the order of authorisation has been laid down as a principle. Therefore the carrying of the motion can have no effect unless the Government are to depart from the accepted procedure. Various Acts authorising railways and extensions of railways are already on the statute-book and waiting to be carried into effect. The mover of the motion is really asking for something unfair, for the establishment of a precedent which should not be established, for departure from a line of procedure which has been accepted in Parliamentary circles as right and proper. The hon. member knows that as regards the extension which is nearing completion, he is indebted for support to the Country Party in another place. That party many years ago supported the proposal for extension to the present terminus. What I ask is, not that there shall be any undue delay, but that we shall have the fullest information in considering this matter. It is only reasonable that the Minister should have support and that opportunity should be given him for obtaining full information. It is strange the Premier should agree to the construction of the line and to the bringing down of an authorising Bill next session, when he has said he first requires a classification of the land. That inconsistency is not at all satisfactory.

Hon. R. J. LYNN (West) [5.31]: I agree with Mr. Stewart when he says that probably this will prove to be merely a pious resolution, and that the Government need take no notice of it. Still, it will have also this effect: If the House, by a reasonable majority, pass the motion, it will serve to show the Government that the House is willing also to pass the proposed Bill. For many years I opposed the building of the Esperance railway, believing it would not be in the best interests of Western Australia. In those days we hesitated very much about constructing the railway, for the reason that it would divert certain trade that ought to belong to other ports. Even in my earlier election, many years ago, we were almost compelled to oppose the railway for fear it would affect Perth and Fremantle.

Hon. A. Burvill: Open confession is good for the soul.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: Ten or twelve years ago the reports on the quality of the Esperance lands were very conflicting. We had on the one hand analytical men who definitely declared the land contained salt in large proportions; on the other hand, experts declared the land was very good. Recently the Minister for Agriculture visited the place, and on

his return told us the land was equal to the best mallee country in Victoria; that it was indeed a land flowing, or capable of being made to flow, with milk and honey. I am going to support the motion from a point of view rather different from others already disclosed. I have visited many parts of Western Australia, and I know the effect on the general railway system of dead-end railways and railways not connected with the main system. It is quite clear that the proposed extension will not cost very much.

The Minister for Education: It will cost £250,000.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: I cannot see how a 60-mile length of railway across flat country is going to cost £250,000. I venture to say it will be constructed for not more than £100,000.

The Minister for Education: What sort of rails are you going to put in for that price?

Hon. R. J. LYNN: Roughly speaking, interest and sinking fund on that sum will amount to £7,500.

Hon. A. Burvill: More than that will be lost every year if the line be run as a dead-end.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: Certainly the linking up of the line with the main system will effect a saving of at least as much as the interest and sinking fund on the capital cost involved. Leave the line where it is, and we must have at Esperance separate locomotive sheds, and the creation of a department similar to those at Port Hedland, Marble Bar, Ravensthorpe and Hopetoun. It will not be possible to operate the system at all economically, because the line will run from one dead-end to another dead-end. It will be almost impossible to operate such a line without bringing into being another set of officials, unless indeed, they do as is done at Marble Bar and Port Hedland, namely, run one or two trains per fortnight. But in view of the expected settlement at Esperance, it will be necessary to render a reasonable service. The cost of operating such a service on a dead-end railway as against its cost if the railway were connected with the main system, would represent a bigger sum than that entailed in the interest and sinking fund on the capital cost of the connecting link. In addition, there are all the advantages that would be afforded to the people of the goldfields. The rate of wage paid to miners in Kalgoorlie does not by any means represent more than a fair living wage. I do not know that it can be reduced very much under the existing conditions of living, unless indeed, the men engaged in the industry are very hard up. If the Esperance railway be linked up with the main system, and so with the goldfields, it will tend to reduce the cost of living, and thus will be of great assistance to the Government. If flour mills are to be established somewhere between Esperance and Norseman, where the wheat will be produced, it will represent an enormous benefit. Surely it is never intended that wheat grown along the established railway should be railed down to the port and sent around the coast to Bunbury

and Fremantle milled, and shipped back to Esperance! How much better will it be to have it milled on the spot and send it direct to the centre of the goldfields population! Moreover, the linking up of the line will provide for the goldfields people—who require more relaxation and recreation than do the people of the metropolitan area—easy access to a fine seaside resort, and that at a comparatively small railway fare. All things considered, the expenditure of money on this proposed linking up of the established railway will be well warranted. Although not an agricultural expert, I firmly believe the Esperance land to be very good. We have been told by many experts that there is a large area of valuable land in that district. If we can afford huge expenditure for the settling of relatively small communities, surely we can afford a small expenditure on a population of 40,000 or 50,000 people. For instance, I can imagine that on the Peel Estate half a million of money has already been sunk. It may provide interest and sinking fund in the future. I hope it will. But if the Government can provide that large sum of money for the settlement of 200 people, surely an additional £100,000, conferring all the advantages I have enumerated, can be expended on the linking up of the Esperance railway with the main system. Although previously opposed to the construction of the Esperance railway, immediately the first portion of the line was authorised, I made up my mind I would not vote against the inevitable proposal for the extension of the railway to connect up with the main system. The Minister for Education knows what a dead-end of 60 miles means to railway administration. Instances can be quoted of freights being paid over and over again for lack of connection with the trunk railway. There is the inconvenience, the cost of operation, and the impossibility of operating under a roster. On the Hopetoun-Ravenshoe railway the men are working roughly 32 hours per week, yet of course they have to be paid full time. The same thing occurs at Marble Bar, and will occur on the Esperance railway unless the line be connected up with the main system. Therefore, the saving to be effected by the extension of the line to Norseman will fully warrant the Government in going ahead with the proposal. Although, as has been suggested, the motion if passed may be regarded as a pious resolution, at all events, it will show the Premier that the House is not likely to raise any objection to the proposed authorising Bill.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE (Metropolitan) [5.45]: For a quarter of a century or more this has been a burning question on the goldfields in the vicinity of Kalgoorlie, and whilst I was a resident of that part of the State I opposed the construction of this line. But seeing that such a long period has elapsed, and that of late the goldfields railway has had a chance to recover its interest and sinking fund, and that the conditions have changed in that part of the State, we may now look at the construction of the suggested line not

and Fremantle, milled, and shipped back to Es-railways to Kalgoorlie, but to keep the goldfields alive by settling people on the land in the Esperance district. The areas there have been reported on favourably by a Royal Commission, and more recently the quality of the land for agricultural purposes has been proclaimed, not only by our own Minister for Agriculture, but by visitors from the Eastern States. Therefore, while my opposition of 25 years ago was for a definite purpose, and was on definite lines, to-day I can look at the matter from the point of view of the railway being a business proposition. The Government must have had in mind the advisability of constructing a linking line from Esperance or Grass Patch, or wherever they are making the terminus. When the subject was first mentioned to the House by Mr. Kirwan, I made up my mind to give it support. I recognise that the Minister for Education is in somewhat of a difficulty on account of the message from another place dealing with the same subject, and which is now before this House. I have a good deal of sympathy for him in connection with the matter, and I should have liked to see Mr. Kirwan accept the Minister's suggestion to amend the motion in conformity with the Assembly's Message. But whether he will do so or not, I intend to support the motion before the House, because I regard it as necessary that the Legislative Council should give some expression of its views with regard to this work. I agree that the Minister's hands will be strengthened by the knowledge that this House, and particularly members representing the Metropolitan Province, regard favourably the proposal to construct the 60 miles of line. The Minister will know the attitude coastal members intend to adopt when the Bill is submitted, either this session or next session.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER (East) [5.49]: There are two strong reasons why this line should be linked up with Norseman. The first is that explained by Mr. Lynn, that it will do away with dead-ends, which double the expense of working; and the second is that it will open up new land for settlement. The position in regard to virgin land in this State at the present time is that there is very little open for selection unless one goes to the outer areas. The country to be served by the proposed railway may be regarded as one of the outer areas, and to my mind it is a good area. It will be found, however, that the best land in that district lies out of reach of the present length of line. A great deal has been said in the past about the quality of the land adjacent to the Esperance railway. A large proportion of that land is not in the same position as the land in our wheat belt, inasmuch as it will take a number of years to bring it into working order. Mallee land does not respond right away to cultivation; it takes some four or five years before you can get results, and there is a big percentage of mallee land in that district. Something has been said about salt in that country, but even in the wheat areas we can find localities that are

affected by salt. Though there may be some proportion of the Esperance lands that carries salt, still, generally speaking, the land is good. Unfortunately, where the land has been opened up in the Esperance area, progress has been retarded through the Government foolishly entering on a scheme which, from the very first, was doomed to failure. It is that failure that is working to-day against the extension of the railway. I do not know any man who, understanding the position, would stand behind the Government in their policy of sending big plants and tractors down there for experimental purposes on 200 acres. The whole thing itself is wrong and can have only one result, that of failure. In this way, settlers are put in a far worse position than if they had not put a single acre under crop.

Hon. A. Burvill: Why?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Because a scheme like that being carried out by the Government, cannot hope to be successful. If the settlers in the district are to pull through, they must do so by commencing on their own foundation. The money that has been expended there should have been advanced to them to enable them to secure their requirements, as has been done in other districts. This may have cost more, but it is the only way to establish ultimate success. The Government's proposals will certainly mean disaster. I am astonished to find that the Leader of the House has lost confidence in his colleague, the Minister for Agriculture.

The Minister for Education: What nonsense!

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: When the Minister was replying to what I said about this proposition, he took me to task bitterly and even took exception to the little joke that I made by the way. These are the Minister's words—

Reference has been made to the so-called discovery by the Minister for Agriculture in the Esperance District. He has done great service to the State and he has satisfied himself that good land is there. The Minister as a wheatgrower knows what he is talking about. He is right to conclude that the land is there, that it is good, and that the rainfall is satisfactory.

To-day the Minister stated that nothing should be done until the land was classified.

The Minister for Education: I repeated to-day what you have quoted, but you were not in the Chamber.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Reverting to the motion before the House, I am in favour of it up to a certain point, but I would like the member who moved it to agree to strike out the word "this session." I do not think it right that the last session of a Parliament should commit a future Government to a work of this nature.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: It has been done by previous Parliaments.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Yes, but it is wrong. This Parliament has no right to tell future Governments what they should do.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Then will you oppose all railway Bills this session?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: We know that there is no chance of the work being carried out immediately, and therefore we should not commit a possible future Government to the construction. I stand to-day in the same position that I occupied 10 years ago, when I strongly advocated the construction of the railway. For the poor results that have been obtained from this part of the State we must not blame the land. We must blame the way in which it has been handled. We put settlers there who knew nothing about farming in Western Australia and much less about farming land like that at Esperance. If we can get South Australian farmers, whose methods are good, and farmers from the dry districts of Victoria, to take up areas in that part of the State, there will be no doubt about the result; others who go down there can only succeed after initial failures. The settlers who went down there did not have the benefit of the advice and assistance of Government officials. That in itself mitigated against their success. The Esperance district needs to be developed on proper lines and to be given railway facilities, and then its success will be established. I trust that the words "this session" will be excluded from the motion.

Hon. H. SEDDON (North-East) [5.57]: The point that has been missed up to the present is why the mover of the motion has insisted on the retention of the words "this session." In support of their retention, I wish to point out that time is the essence of the contract with regard to the opening up of this district. The Premier himself has stressed the desirability of carrying out a 10-million scheme in connection with settlement in this State. Can anyone imagine a country, having discovered a new province of three million acres, not being desirous of booming it all over the world so as to attract the best type of settlers? With such an asset would not any country do its best to bring about the development of that area, even to the extent of declaring in England, "Here is a new province which we have to open up and on which we can settle all the people you want us to take"! Experienced and successful farmers from the mallee lands of Victoria have visited the Esperance country and have been greatly impressed by what they have seen. If we can induce those people to come here with capital, they will demonstrate to us the value of the Esperance areas and they will speedily show to the world what can be done in those parts.

Hon. J. Duffell: Then induce them to come here.

Hon. H. SEDDON: They have been here and have gone back greatly impressed by what they have seen, and have told their friends of the wonderful opportunities existing in that part of our State. We cannot have a better opportunity of successfully settling and developing our wheat lands than if we can induce these experienced mallee farmers to come to this country. We must first give them complete railway communica-

tion so that they may connect up with the rest of the railway system, and so that we may then be able to say to them, "Give us the benefit of your capital and experience, and open up this country straight away."

The Minister for Education: That is what the Government intend to do.

Hon. H. SEDDON: An opportunity is afforded here of requesting the Government to open up this country immediately.

The Minister for Education: It cannot be done.

Hon. H. SEDDON: If this motion is carried, we shall be able to show the Old Country, to which we have applied for assistance, that we are pushing on with this work as quickly as possible because we appreciate the value of our newly discovered province.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY (East) [6.1]: I had hoped that the words "this session" would have been deleted from the motion. It would be a great mistake to leave the Esperance railway in its present form and the gap unbridged, but I do not think it is fair that we should proceed first with the resolution sent to us from another place. We should not pass this motion ahead of that one. The Premier has announced his intention of bringing in a Bill for the linking up of the two lines at an early date. We shall shortly be facing a general election. The House should remember that the Government have kept faith with the people of Esperance by constructing a railway for them for some considerable distance. In view of what has been said in another place, and the undertaking of the Premier, upon which we can rely, and in view of the approaching general elections, when it will be decided definitely who shall be in control of the affairs of State for the ensuing three years, it would be preferable that Mr. Kirwan should not force this motion to a division. We should be exceeding our duty if we tried to override the resolution that has come to us from another place.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN (South—in reply) [6.4]: I regret I cannot adopt the suggestion of the Leader of the House to amend this motion. For the last quarter of a century we have been listening to speeches almost identical with that of the Leader of the House. The people of Esperance have been fooled by Government after Government. There is a certain amount of feeling that even yet the district has not received the treatment to which it is entitled, and which has been meted out to other parts of the State. On the goldfields there were many people who would have settled in the district, because they like the climate and the country. Instead of going there, because they have no faith in the assertions of the Government that they will carry out the requirements of the settlers, they have gone elsewhere. I could give the names of scores of people who have left the goldfields and purchased land in the Eastern States, because they have not had confidence in this or any other Government extending to

that district a measure of fair play. In the interests of the settlement of the district, and the opening up of this new and fertile province, intending settlers should have a guarantee that, in this House at all events, it is desired that the railway shall be built as speedily as possible, and that a Bill shall be introduced for the purpose during this session. If that Bill were on the statute-book I and others would be in a position to say to intending settlers, "You can go there now, because you have an absolute guarantee of fair play." I am extremely disappointed in the attitude of some members of the Country Party. There will be a feeling of bitterness and soreness on the part of the goldfields people towards the members of that party, who have always enjoyed the respect and confidence of the goldfields community.

The Minister for Education: They have had it.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I thank the members representing the West Province for their manly and generous attitude towards this motion. It will be received with a great amount of satisfaction and pleasure in the district when the people there read the speeches of those hon. members. There were two parties that the people of Esperance always felt were their friends in this matter—the Labour Party and the Country Party. The district will, therefore, be greatly disappointed in the attitude of some members of the Country Party. The passing of this motion will ensure that there will be no dead-ends on this line. The plant is there and the men are on the spot ready to go on with the work. If they are taken away it will be a long time before they can be re-assembled. Innumerable Government reports have been issued concerning the land, and not a single authoritative or official report has condemned the country. That justifies members in asking the Government to introduce a Bill this session so as to give heart and hope to those battlers in the district. Perhaps the passing of this motion may induce the Government to alter their minds on this question, and arrange for the immediate construction of the railway that is so much needed.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	16
Noes	..	..	..	..	5

Majority for .. 11

AYES.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh	Hon. A. Lovekin
Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. R. J. Lynn
Hon. A. Burvill	Hon. J. M. Macfarlane
Hon. W. Carroll	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. J. E. Dodd	Hon. G. Potter
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. J. A. Greig
Hon. J. W. Hickey	(Teller.)
Hon. J. W. Kirwan	

Noss.
 Hon. J. Duffell
 Hon. J. Ewing
 Hon. J. Mills
 Hon. H. Stewart
 Hon. V. Hamersley
 (Teller.)

Question thus passed.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I move—

That the resolution be transmitted by message to the Legislative Assembly for its concurrence.

Question put and passed.

MOTION—SANDALWOOD TRADE MONOPOLY.

Debate resumed from 31st October on motion by Hon. E. H. Gray—

That all papers (including tenders) relating to the proposal of the Government to grant a monopoly in the trade of sandalwood be laid upon the Table of the House.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. J. Ewing—South-West) [6.8]: The papers asked for by the hon. member have been laid on the Table in another place. This does away with the necessity for debating the question any further. The papers are now available to all members of this Chamber. I, therefore, ask Mr. Gray to withdraw his motion.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: With the permission of the House, I will withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

RESOLUTION—ESPERANCE NORTHWARDS RAILWAY EXTENSION.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Legislative Assembly, requesting the Council's concurrence in the following resolution, now considered—

That in the opinion of this House the Government should obtain the necessary authority as early as possible to extend the Esperance Northwards railway line (now in course of construction) so that it may junction with the existing lines of the State at Norseman.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. J. Ewing—South-West) [6.12]: I move—

That the Assembly's resolution be agreed to.

It would be only courtesy on our part to agree to this resolution, notwithstanding the fact that we have already carried a motion dealing with the same subject. Mr. Kirwan wishes to send his motion to the Assembly for its concurrence. In view of the vote that has just been taken it seems that this House has agreed that the railway should be built as early as possible.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN (South) [6.13]: I protest against this House being put into such an absurd position as to be asked to agree

to a resolution which is entirely contrary to the motion that we have just carried by the overwhelming majority of 16 to 5. If the resolution of the Legislative Assembly is to be sent back to that Chamber, we should send it back amended in conformity with the motion we have just carried. It would be an extraordinary thing if two motions so distinctly contrary to one another left this House as if we had agreed to both. We cannot agree to both. The difference between the two motions is vital. I protest against the action of the Leader of the House in asking us to pass this resolution in its present form. I could not vote for that. The best course to adopt is to send the resolution back to the Assembly in an amended form, with the request that they should concur in that amendment. The position is somewhat difficult. We have already decided to send our own motion to the Legislative Assembly. It is, therefore, difficult to know what is the best course to pursue, but the best course is not that suggested by the Leader of the House, which would place this Chamber in a curious position.

On motion by Hon. J. Duffell, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.15 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 8th November, 1923.

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

CONDOLENCE—THE LATE LADY WITTENOOM.

President's acknowledgment.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have received the following letter:—

Dear Mr. Stubbs,—I have duly received your letter of the 1st November, conveying to me the sympathetic resolution which was passed by the members of your House in