

his last employer with such information as to the names and addresses of all the other employers who had employed him during the previous 12 months, as he or they might possess, and if the information was not furnished the employer "upon proving that the disease was not contracted whilst the worker was in his employment shall not be liable to pay compensation." Under the Imperial Act not only had that information to be furnished, but the information had to be sufficient to enable the employer to take proceedings under the next following proviso, so as to recover compensation from the previous employers. The amendment would bring the clause into line with the English law.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. M. L. MOSS moved a further amendment—

*That Subclause 6 be struck out.*

Hon. members had already spoken about restricting the power of the Governor to add to the number of diseases to be brought under the scope of the Act, and this was the subclause which gave that power.

Hon. J. E. DODD: This subclause was found in the English Act and also in the South Australian Act. If it had been reasonable to insert a provision from the English Act which had been omitted from the clause, as had been done in the preceding amendment, it was equally reasonable to retain this subclause, which was contained in both the English and South Australian Acts.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: It is not unreasonable to allow Parliament to say whether you shall add any other industrial diseases.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The reference to the English Act was not a fair argument, because the conditions in regard to industrial diseases in the two countries were entirely different. In regard to accidents, the conditions were the same in both countries, but that could not be said of industrial diseases. The Fourth Schedule included anthrax, which was really an accident and would not occur in the ordinary course of employment. Phosphorous poisoning was also included, but a Bill

previously passed this session had dealt with phosphorous. If the Minister would confine the attention of the Committee to the question of miners' disease, without reference to the English Act, the argument could be narrowed down. The Minister would admit that the question of compensation for industrial disease had been treated most sympathetically by all members.

Hon. J. E. DODD: I do not dispute that.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: If the discussion was confined to miners' disease, and anthrax was left out of the Bill, all reference to the English and New Zealand Acts would be obviated.

Hon. J. E. DODD: One was not prepared to saddle the mining industry with disabilities that other industries were not bearing.

Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 10.25 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Wednesday, 4th December, 1912.*

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 3.30 p.m., and read prayers.

### QUESTION—POLICE CONSTABLE'S BRAVERY.

Mr. McDONALD asked the Premier: 1, Has any recognition been made by the Police Department of the conspicuous bravery shown by Constable Delfs during the recent shooting affray at Denham,

Shark Bay? 2, If not, what action is proposed to be taken? 3, If yes, what?

The PREMIER replied: 1, The bravery shown by Constable Delfs has been recognised by the department, but no monetary recognition has been awarded. 2 and 3, Answered by No. 1.

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. HEITMANN leave of absence for three weeks was granted to the member for South Fremantle (Mr. Bolton) on the ground of ill-health.

#### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Premier: Public Service List for 1912.

By the Minister for Works: Plans of Hotham-Crossman railway extension.

#### BILL — GOVERNMENT TRADING CONCERNS.

Introduced by the Premier and read a first time.

#### PAPERS—ESPERANCE DISTRICT REPORTS.

On motion by Mr. GREEN (Kalgoorlie) ordered, "That Surveyor Middleton's reports on the Esperance District be laid on the Table."

#### BILL—AGRICULTURAL BANK ACT AMENDMENT.

Report after recommitment adopted.

#### BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1, Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage, transmitted to the Legislative Council.

2, Jetties Regulation Act Amendment, passed.

#### BILL — MELVILLE WATER AND FRESHWATER BAY ROAD.

Report of Committee adopted.

#### BILL—WYALKATCHEM-MOUNT MARSHALL RAILWAY.

##### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.  
Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam): It is not the custom of members sitting on the Opposition side of the House to oppose any railway proposition.

The Attorney General: Except the Esperance railway.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I mean any railway to open up agricultural lands, or any railway that is in any way justified. The line we are asked to agree to is a proposition to build a railway from Wyalkatchem to Mount Marshall, and it differs altogether from the recommendation of the Advisory Board. I would like to know from the Minister why the Advisory Board's report has been ignored and why there is no explanation from him as to his action in this regard.

The Attorney General: He did explain.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I do not think he explained it satisfactorily. The proposition is a very extraordinary one. A line now runs from Dowerin east to Merredin and there is also a line from Goomalling to Wongan Hills. The Advisory Board recommended that the district should be served from the line to Wongan Hills by running a railway due east. That line would have been a little longer than the proposed line but it would have served more country. The northern point of Cowcowing Lake is 25 miles from the Dowerin-Merredin line; the nearest point on the Wongan Hills line to the northern point of Cowcowing would be 40 miles, or 15 miles further. It will be seen from the map that the line we are considering serves very valuable country which is closely settled. There is no doubt about the quality of the land through which the line will pass, but it is a fact that the first 30 miles of this line will serve an area of something under 400,000 acres, if you take into consideration the fact that the Cowcowing Lakes cut off the southern portion of the land on the north-west side of the lakes. It will be obvious if you run a line parallel to a lake you are carrying it over country which means that the service will be for a limited number of peo-

ple only. There has been no explanation of this departure, nor any good reason given for the proposal. The line should be run from some point on the Wongan Hills railway to Cowcowing, and it would then serve about a thousand miles of country, but for the sake of 15 miles we are providing a railway that will serve some 600,000 acres less than the line would have served if the route recommended by the Advisory Board had been adopted. When considering the question of agricultural lines in the past we always placed before everything else the merits of the district and the quality of the land, but it would have been much better if we had adopted the system of parallel lines 20 miles apart; then we should have done what would have undoubtedly been best for the State, because it has been found by experience that the land in the wheat belt is more or less equal no matter in what direction we go. Under the present system we are not providing sufficient railway facilities for all the people. It has to be remembered that a few years ago we imagined that only York gum, salmon gum, and gimlet country would grow wheat. To-day it has been proved beyond doubt that much of our lighter land is suitable for wheat growing. As this is recognised the Minister should consider the advisableness of running future lines in the most direct fashion. What is needed is a sufficient number of agricultural lines to serve the whole country. It is imperative that all who settle upon wheat land should have railway facilities as speedily as possible. The Premier intends to bring down his loan proposals and we hear that he intends to borrow 5½ millions of money, and remembering this I cannot help thinking that we should have had notice before to-day of the Government's intentions to bring down further railway Bills. The sum it is proposed to borrow would probably provide for all the lines that are required to open up the country, but so far as the Notice Paper is concerned we are to have very few railway Bills, and their length will be infinitesimal, while in the aggregate they will not open up a great deal of country. I think before we are asked to approve

of the loan proposals we should have before us the railway programme of the Government, because we cannot get away from the fact that the first need of the country is to provide every settler with railway communication.

Mr. Lander: The Yorkrakine people ought to have had that consideration when you were building the Dowerin to Merredin line.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I think it would have been much better if we had taken that line nearer to Yorkrakine. The 30-mile radius was adopted on the recommendation of the Royal Commission which sat on that question, and the members of which were paid fairly high fees. The hon. member who interjected will be interested to know that the Premier was on that commission. It is now found that the 30-miles radius was too much. I suppose in the near future we shall build a railway through the Yorkrakine district in order that all may be brought within a reasonable distance of the railway. We know that a mistake was made but it was made on the report of the commission.

Mr. SPEAKER: I hope the hon. member will discuss the Bill.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I have nothing more to say in that connection. I thought the hon. member ought to have been informed of the position. It will be interesting to know what the people east of Cowcowing, and between Cowcowing and Wongan Hills will do for railway facilities. They have been there for a considerable time and they are called upon to cart more than a reasonable distance, and it will be impossible for them to go on producing wheat under existing conditions. That matter should receive the attention of the Government and the people should be told just when it is intended to serve them. The line as marked on the map is too far from the 30-mile peg; it goes too far north. The line should take a due easterly direction from the 30-mile peg. I notice that there is a five miles deviation provided, and I am sorry that the survey is not made, but I hope that in future Bills the deviation will be omitted, because in the past trouble has arisen owing to the departure from the intention of Parliament,

and a repetition of the troubles which have occurred should be avoided. I am referring more particularly to the line which runs from the Great Southern to Merredin. However, the deviation in this Bill is limited to five miles, and that will be needed to enable the Minister to place the line in the correct position. I do not know why the Minister stops at Mount Marshall. What is the object of introducing a Bill for a line that will only do half the work which the line, when completed, must do? Settlers at Mount Marshall are in need of a railway but to no greater extent than the settlers east of Mount Marshall. What are the intentions of the Minister; where is the line to junction up; and is it to be a loop line? It is wrong to put in a spur line to go in the direction of the line we are now considering. The line should run to Burracoppin which seems to me to be the correct place, and when it is remembered that our duty is to serve the land that is open for sale in the south-western division, hon. members will realise that their duties will not be complete until we do serve the land to the eastward of Nangeenan, and to do that we shall need to run through the country to the north of Nungarin, and into Burracoppin. The people in those parts have been struggling for a considerable time and they are entitled to a railway. The question of building railway lines is a simple one if the money is available. According to the Premier money will be available if the five and a-half millions are borrowed; then these people should receive some consideration. It seems to me a strange thing that we should be called upon to build a line that will only do half the work that the completed line will be called upon to do, when we remember that settlement and development is just as great from Wongan Hills right to Burracoppin. I have no hesitation in agreeing with the Minister as to the quality of the land through which the line will run. I notice that the line is to go to a point near Dennis Crossing on the Cowcowing Lake. That will enable settlers within 10 miles of that point to get their produce in in a fairly convenient fashion. And the Minister has said

that it is his intention to make the crossing suitable for heavy traffic. So far as the people there are concerned the proposal will suit them, but we should interest ourselves in opening up the country generally. For the life of me I cannot see why the proposal now submitted is for a line from Wyalkatchem first, then north-east, instead of a line from Wongan Hills due east. It goes without saying that the people to be served by this line will appreciate the effort of the Ministry and I believe it is a fact that approval has come from the district to this proposal. But that approval was given because of the promise of the Minister to run a second line to serve the people in the belt to the north of Dowerin. I think the House should be informed in this connection. Members on this side are not going to vote against this railway but before agreeing to the proposal we shall want information with regard to the continuation of the line. We want to know where it will junction and we want to know that justice will be done to all the people settled in that country from Wongan Hills to Cowcowing and the land which lies north from Goomalling to—

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: The Minister said yesterday it was not decided where it would junction.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It is strange that the Minister should not be able to tell us. This is part of a loop line and the Ministry have a definite policy, and if that policy is to build loop lines—and that should be the policy wherever possible—they should know where it is intended to go. I congratulate the Government on the fact that they are proceeding to carry out the policy of their predecessors in connection with agricultural railway construction. I remember when the first railway Bills were brought down by our Government they were strenuously opposed by the present Minister for Lands and those who were then sitting with him in Opposition.

The Minister for Lands: You are absolutely wrong.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I am pleased to have that interjection because I have taken the precaution to look up *Hansard*.

If the Minister cares to refer to *Hansard* he will find how he voted on the division.

The Minister for Lands: I want you to read my whole speech.

Mr. SPEAKER: These remarks are out of order. If we were discussing the whole principle of agricultural railway Bills they would be in order.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: We are discussing the general question.

Mr. SPEAKER: We are discussing the construction of a railway from Wyalkatchem to Mount Marshall.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I am sorry. I should have liked very much to refer to the divisions which took place on those early lines.

The Minister for Lands: You took up the same attitude.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Oh, no.

The Minister for Lands: It was not an objection to agricultural railways, but to the methods adopted.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The division lists will show that the Minister voted against the proposal generally. However, since you, Sir, have ruled that we cannot discuss the views our friends then held. I may be permitted to congratulate Ministers on having changed their opinions.

The Minister for Lands: You know that is absolutely wrong. The hon. member knows that his statement is absolutely incorrect, and I object to that kind of deceit.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Surely the Minister must withdraw that?

Mr. SPEAKER: It is not a proper expression.

The Minister for Lands: Well, I wish to take exception to the hon. member's statement, and to say that it is absolutely incorrect, and to ask that it be withdrawn.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I withdraw, and I ask that the Minister withdraw the statement that I knew that my statement was incorrect, together with his reference to "this kind of deceit."

The Minister for Lands: I will withdraw the reference to deceit.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I simply wished to congratulate Ministers; that was all. I did not wish to provoke any trouble.

I wish to congratulate them on the fact that they are bringing down this railway Bill, and thus continuing the policy of their predecessors in opening up the country. We have made great strides during the last few years, due largely to the fact that we have had an active policy of railway construction. This year, probably, we shall export a million pounds' worth of wheat, and it is something to the credit of Parliament that the activity in connection with the building of agricultural railways has so speedily met with this magnificent result. I am sorry the Advisory Board's report has been ignored, and I shall want to know from Ministers what they intend to do for the country which has been left out of the Bill. Otherwise I am pleased to support the second reading. I wish it to be clearly understood that I have not the faintest objection to the continuance of the policy of the past. My only objection is that we are going far too slowly. This five and a half million pounds should include money to construct far more railway lines than appear on the Notice Paper, and I hope that the next day or two will disclose the fact that other railways are contemplated by the Government. I have pleasure in supporting the second reading.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE (Toodyay): First I would like to express on behalf of large numbers of struggling settlers now living in the portion of my district which it is proposed to serve by this railway their sincere gratitude to the present Government for having brought forward this measure. The railway is in fulfilment of a long-standing promise to the people of the Cowcowing district, and further north, and we are indeed grateful for the action of the present Government. Naturally the question of route will cause some discussion. At the outset I wish to say that the route proposed in the Bill is undoubtedly in the best interests of the State, and in the best interests of the people living in that district in particular. As has been pointed out by the Minister, it will serve a considerable settlement. In fact, I may say the first 25 miles of the country is wholly alienated—except that portion which is lake-bed—and is now closely set-

fled. This year it is anticipated that the wheat harvest in that district will average 9 bushels, and to-day there are people carting their grain from 19 miles up to 25 miles. This railway is an absolute necessity for these people, for without it I fear they would have to abandon grain production and go in for stock. I am glad to learn that if the measure is carried it is the intention of the Government to give early consideration to the construction of the line, because I maintain that it is due to these people, owing to the fact that the country is closely settled. The member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) has thought fit to refer to the Advisory Board's report as proposing a line going east from Wongan. I am sure from my knowledge of the country that that line would not serve the whole of the settlement. To the east of Wongan there is a large area suitable for settlement which may be better served by a separate line, and which must of course include the eastern side of the lake. The present Government are alive to the interests of these people settled to the east of Coweowing lakes, and will, I hope, bring forward a proposal giving railway facilities to that particularly good country also. On both sides of the lake the country is first class. It is extraordinary how productive this country is, even with a light rainfall. Last year saw a six-inch rainfall, and from fallowed land an average of 18 cwt. of hay and 11 bushels of grain was taken. Even the second class-land has proved highly productive, and will fully justify the expenditure for the construction of a line of this class. I hope it is not the intention of the Administration to stop the line at Mount Marshall. I hope that at no distant date a proposal will be brought forward to serve the country lying to the south-east, coupling up with the gold-fields line. A reasonable proposition would be a connection at Carrabin. The lakes are so situated that they compel this loop and, fortunately, we have it from expert officers of the Railway Department that this is a safe and economical proposition. The land is first-class,

and the rainfall is not so risky as some would imagine. Certainly we have occasional dry years, but reliable records show beyond doubt that the rainfall is good, and the land safe from an agricultural point of view. The people who are living to the North of this lake will be served by this line to a reasonable extent. Most of them will be brought within the 10-mile limit, but I hope that power will be given to the Government to deviate the line when turning east, because I feel sure the present position of the line is rather much to the north. I would like to see the line brought down three or four miles. This would bring it parallel to the present Dowerin-Merredin line at a distance of 22 or 23 miles which, to my mind, is the limit. I feel sure a serious mistake is being made in the construction of these lines, in fixing the parallels at 25 miles apart, which is much too far. I am sure it only needs reflection to realise that cartage of  $12\frac{1}{2}$  miles almost bars the profitable sale of the bye-products of the farm. It is all very well for wheat, but when it comes to by-products such as eggs—none can say how soon they may be dairying in that district—profitable sale of these by-products is barred. I maintain that 20 miles is the maximum distance apart at which the parallel lines should be built. There is ample room, and that the country fully justifies it is proved by the fact that it is already surveyed and cut up into areas. In the country lying to the north of the Dowerin-Merredin line and situated between Coweowing lake and the Wongan-Mullewa railway, there is a stretch of the finest land that can be found. That must ultimately be served by a railway, and I hope the present Government will see fit to forecast a line running parallel with the east Wongan, something after the manner in which they have forecasted the Yilliminning-Carrabin line. I feel sure it is in the interests of the country that this line should be forecasted. It is an opportune time for the Administration to take into serious consideration the question of railways, and to mark the country for future construction. There

are no engineering difficulties, and it simply rests for the parallel to be decided upon. The country justifies the construction of the line, and I hope that ultimately the Bolgart line will be extended to connect with the Wongan-Mullewa line, making a loop line east of the Wongan-Mullewa to Dowerin-Merredin. This is a big order, and means a large expenditure of public moneys, but I am confident from what I have seen of the country and its crops, and the soil, that the State will be fully justified in building the lines I have mentioned. I have pleasure in supporting the second reading, apart altogether from the fact that I represent the district. The proposal is a sound one, the route is the proper one, and we have the right class of people to ensure the early success of the line.

Mr. GREEN (Kalgoorlie): I have pleasure in supporting the Bill. I have been in this particular district, and I recognise that the Dowerin-Merredin country contains some of the finest looking land in the State. I regret that the route is in the position outlined on the map, because the railway as it stands is not a Wyalkatchem-Mount Marshall railway, going as it does five miles to the north of Mount Marshall. If the railway really went to Mount Marshall the settlers to the south, owing to the peculiar configuration of the country, would not have to cart their wheat uphill. There is a much thicker settlement five miles south of the proposed terminus than there is at the proposed terminus as shown on the map. The present terminus is in fairly large blocks of sparsely settled land. If the line had its terminus five miles further south it would be in fairly thickly settled country, and, as I mentioned before, the necessity for the settlers carting their wheat in many instances 10 and 11 miles uphill through sandy country would be entirely obviated. On the other hand, if the line is taken further south the settlers further north would have a downhill haul in taking their produce to the station. It seems to me that the Government are repeating the sins of all their predecessors in placing the rail-

ways rather far apart. In the Argentine the Government recognise that an interval of 12 miles is sufficient for railways, and while we cannot compare the Argentine country with Western Australia inasmuch as in the Argentine the country is so fertile that it is possible to make a living on a much smaller block, yet at the same time it appears to me that a necessity does exist for the Government to recognise that railways should be built closer than what appears to be the present system, so that the mistake of the Dowerin and Merredin line, for instance, in connection with the Eastern goldfields line may not be repeated in a lesser degree. I trust the Minister will take into consideration my remarks with regard to the route, and if possible, even at this late hour give some consideration to the placing of the railway terminus in Mount Marshall where there is thickly settled country and where there would be no necessity for the teams to pull their loads uphill. I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY (Moore): I welcome a measure such as this which has for its object the opening up of such a fine belt of country, a belt of country already occupied by a large number of settlers. Still I hope the Government will not be unmindful of the settlers immediately to the east of Wongan Hills and between the Wyalkatchem-Mount Marshall and Wongan Hills-Mullewa railways. Those people in the past have been living under the impression that the railway would be extended westward from Mount Marshall to some point in the vicinity of Wongan Hills. I hope the time will not be far distant when the Government will be justified in making an extension to link up those people with this Wyalkatchem-Mount Marshall railway. The Government having thought fit to make this extension from Wyalkatchem to Mount Marshall at the present time, I trust they will do everything in their power to assist those settlers living to the east of Wongan Hills to reach either the Wongan Hills-Mullewa line or the Wyalkatchem-Mount Marshall line by means of roads. The great objection of the settlers lying to the north-west of

the Wyalkatchem-Mount Marshall line and to the east of Wongan Hills is that they are cut off from this railway by a long chain of salt lakes, and, as members know, these salt lakes are very difficult to traverse. I hope the Minister will take into consideration the necessity for seeing that a good crossing is made at a place called Dennis crossing so as to enable the settlers to the east of the Wyalkatchem-Mount Marshall line to cross the lakes and reach the railway. No doubt if that is done it will assist those settlers to a great extent for the present. Whilst regretting in their interests that the Government cannot see their way to carry out the extension from the Wongan Hills line, I still recognise that the line from Wyalkatchem to Mount Marshall will tap a very fine area of country which, moreover, is occupied at the present moment. It is not necessary to induce people to settle on it, because it is already settled and all that is necessary is to provide a railway to carry the produce of these people to market. Still, whilst welcoming this line, I trust the Minister will do all he can by means of a substantial grant to make roads to assist the people to the north of Wyalkatchem and between there and Wongan Hills to get their produce to the railway line. If that assistance is given, the settlers will be encouraged to go on with their work of production, and I hope the time will not be far distant when the people will be able to justify by their work the construction of a railway line extending from Wongan Hills railway to the Wyalkatchem-Mount Marshall line. I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (in reply): One or two points have been raised in connection with this railway proposition which I would like to reply to. I regret that I was not present during the whole of the remarks of the hon. member who represents this district, but I gathered from him that he desired some announcement to be made as to the further extension of the line to serve Lake Brown and other places further along from Mount Marshall. When introducing the Bill, I stated that this was

only the first section of a line which must ultimately be extended to serve those areas. It would be unwise on my part to define any particular route. The matter must be investigated. There is ample time for investigation, which can be made during recess, and we can next session introduce a Bill to serve that area in a thorough manner. I am of opinion that before ever we reach the end of the construction as proposed in this Bill, the other line will have been submitted to Parliament and approved and we will have authority to continue the construction from Mount Marshall. The object of introducing this Bill is simply to get a start and later to get Parliamentary authority to continue the line, but where the extension will be has yet to be determined. The hon. member for Moore (Hon. H. B. Lefroy) spoke of the necessity for building roads to give those people, who are to an extent isolated to the north-west of this line, access to the railway. It is the policy of the Government to construct feeder roads to give people access to all sidings, and in regard to this particular railway proposition arrangements will be made so that Dennis crossing will be put in a thorough state of repair by the railway construction people when the line is in course of building. I recognise that crossing as part and parcel of the railway construction. We must afford a proper crossing there so that there will be no difficulty in the way of the people to the west of the lakes. Then again we as a Government recognise that there are a number of people who will be beyond the 12½ miles limit, even if the route is placed as we propose to-day. The route brings Badgerin within carting distance, but there are other places outside the carting distance, and ultimately a line will have to be put out striking the Geomalling and Wongan line somewhere and running out 25 miles from the Wyalkatchem-Mount Marshall line. It is the intention of the Government to introduce some such proposition to Parliament when we are ready. There is no advantage in introducing too many lines at once, but we want to continue with the railway construction until all people on



the land are brought within the recognised radius of railway communication. I mentioned on the second reading that this line is only the first section, and that the other portion which the hon. member for Moore referred to will be investigated during recess. I am in hopes that another place will pass the Public Works Committee Bill so that we will then be able to have these works investigated. It is not easy to get all the data necessary to justify the Government in assuring Parliament that the route as proposed is the best to open up the country. We gathered all the information possible in connection with this particular railway, and the member for the district lent us very valuable assistance, but after all it is a very difficult matter for the Minister, even with the assistance of his departmental officers to collect all the information he should have in his possession before a proposition is submitted to Parliament. Therefore, I trust in regard to the further extension of this line and the serving of the people to the north-west, we will have the assistance of a Parliamentary Public Works Committee so that we may be assured that the best possible route is submitted to Parliament. I do not think I need take up any more time. The Bill generally has met with the approval of hon. members, and I hope before long we will be able to start the construction of the line so as to help those people who are undoubtedly doing good work in that part of the State.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee.*

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

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Deviation:

Mr. MONGER: In all previous railway Bills the deviation clause had read—

Notwithstanding anything contained in the Public Works Act, 1902, it shall be lawful for the Minister for Works to deviate from the line as described in such schedule to the extent of 10 miles on either side thereof.

In one instance the Minister had availed

himself of the extreme limit to carry out what he (Mr. Monger) had frequently described as one of the most unfair pieces of legislation that had ever been attempted in this or any other Parliament. This clause was worded in an absolutely different way, for it gave the Minister power to deviate to the extent of one mile on either side thereof for the first 20 miles, and to the extent of five miles on either side after the first 20 miles. We heard a lot, in connection with one proposition, of the desire of the House to straighten out the line; but there never was a more crooked line than the one now under review; and seeing that the Minister only wished to deviate for one mile for the first 20 miles and for five miles for the next 30 miles, one was perfectly justified in asking for some reasonable explanation from the Minister why on a previous occasion he had deviated practically to the full 10-mile limit on a line which was by no means so crooked as the proposition before the Committee. One would also like from the member for Subiaco (Mr. B. J. Stubbs) who kept yapping and quacking—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MONGER: One would like an explanation from that hon. member as to his recommendation for the deviation of the other line referred to.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: True, the clause provided a change from what was usually introduced, but it was an alteration in the right direction. It had been his endeavour to have lines surveyed before introducing the Bills so as to get away from the constant agitation for the alteration of routes: but, unfortunately, this line could not be surveyed permanently for more than 20 miles, in which distance, though there might be need to deviate for a short distance, there was no need to deviate for more than a mile. Thus the people would know that Parliament had decided on the route, and that there could be no agitation for an alteration. It was impossible, however, to say what engineering difficulties would be met beyond the 20 miles, so it was provided that the surveyor could deviate for a dis-

tance of five miles for the balance of the line beyond the 20 miles. Inquiry showed that there was no need to deviate to the extent of 10 miles, and it was desired to make the limit as small as possible to get away from the agitation and wire-pulling indulged in by various progress associations in trying to get members and Ministers to alter the route. This line for 20 miles had been vouched by the Engineer-in-Chief as a practical survey for railway purposes.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Minister should give an assurance that the line would not run more than 25 miles from the Dowerin-Merredin line. Even a distance of 25 miles was too far north. Notwithstanding anything done in the past, to go beyond 25 miles was too far for carting. Where lines were 30 miles apart we could, with advantage, later on divide the distance by running a second line; but since we had determined on the 25 miles limit, the Minister should not go beyond it. Practically he would need to go due east from the 20-mile peg to maintain the proper distance. There ought to be a line from the Wongan Hills line to junction with this railway at about the 20-mile, which would make it an almost east and west line. Of course it was the desire of the Minister to give these people the shortest possible route to Perth. The member for York (Mr. Monger) quite rightly objected to any further 10-mile deviations being possible, but there must always be some give and take for the surveyors to get the best line. By giving a 10-mile deviation on the Wickepin-Merredin line, and by the power given in this direction being fully used, a good deal of heart-burning was caused, and it occasioned the very strenuous opposition of the member for York to the attitude the Minister took up; but it was to be hoped some proposition would be brought forward by the Minister to rectify the trouble caused. Before Parliament prorogued the Minister might see fit to bring down another Bill to do justice to the people towards Mount Arrowsmith. The Mount Marshall line should not be taken where it was marked on the map. It must be deviated to the south.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: The Minister should try to keep the unsurveyed portion of the line closer to the Dowerin-Merredin railway because, from information gathered during the investigations of the Wickepin-Merredin route select committee he was convinced that a 20-miles limit was just as great a distance as we could build these agricultural railways apart. With lines 25 miles apart only one or two favoured individuals on the 12-miles radius between the two lines could reach the sidings in 12 miles; because, owing to the circuitous nature of the roads, it was impossible for most of the people to get to the sidings under 16 or 18 miles. There must be some strange twist in the mind of the member for York (Mr. Monger) in objecting to this line having a curve, when it was impossible to build it without one, because objection was taken to another line, which was curved, being made to run straight as was intended by even his own Government.

Hon. J. Mitchell: No.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: The whole of the evidence before the select committee showed it.

Mr. Monger: Nothing of the sort; no one knows better than yourself.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: With the remarks of the member for Northam (Mr. Mitchell) he agreed. He had already expressed the opinion to the surveyor that he should go down a little bit to the south with the curve past the 25-mile. At 25 miles the question should be considered of whether the curve was not too far north, and it was in order to get down the five miles that he asked that this power of deviating for five miles be permitted. And deviation would be to the south. In any case the terminus as shown on the plan must be the terminus of the line. That was the difficulty in connection with the Wickepin-Merredin line. The terminal points of the Quairading-Nunajin line having been definitely fixed, that line had to be built from Quairading to a point at Nunajin, whereas had it been possible to deviate about six miles from Nunajin, it might have served the Emu Hill and Kuminin people, and the difficulty in regard to the Wickepin-Merredin line would have

been overcome. The Mount Marshall railway must go to the point shown on the map, but there was power to deviate in between the starting and terminal points, and where the route took a turn to the north there was power to alter it for five miles.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: It was regrettable the terminal point could not be altered. He had thought that the five-mile deviation would give power to raise or lower the terminus. This line was 25 miles north of the Dowerin-Merredin line, but the natural features of the country, such as lakes, had forced the curves in the line. The deviation asked for was a very modest one, but it was to be hoped that power would be given to alter the terminal point as required.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4—agreed to.

Clause 5—Purchase money to be determined under Public Works Act, 1902:

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: During the construction of some of the more recent railways very little consideration had been given to the question of improvements previously effected on lands resumed by the department. For instance, the department had not recognised cleared land as being improved, neither had it recognised claims for the value of fencing which might be taken upon the land so resumed. He did not for one moment suggest that the Government should make themselves liable for heavy compensation in considering these railway proposals, but he thought that it would be only common justice to those who might suffer a loss that they should be recompensed for the value of any improvements effected on land resumed for the purposes of the railway. Under the terms of leases, or deeds of Crown grant, the Government had power to take a certain area of land, but for all land beyond that area compensation had to be paid. It had often occurred that improvements were taken with the land resumed. In one instance a new railway ran parallel to a road, and the usual two or three chains of land was taken in one straight line for several miles, and the owner's fence along the road was also resumed. On being applied

to for compensation for the fence the department notified the owner that he had permission to remove his fence. Surely that was not fair treatment.

Mr. Lander: The enhanced value of his land through the coming of the railway will pay for the fence.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: There were many instances in which hardship had been imposed by the taking of improvements with resumed land. In such a case as that instanced the department should remove the fence and place it on the amended boundary; and, further, the Government should be prepared to pay the cost of clearing in the case of the resumption of cleared land. In his opinion the Government should also rebate the rents which had been actually paid upon land so resumed, for notwithstanding that the owner had had the previous use of the land for a certain period, he should not lose the whole of the rent paid. The Lands Department had agreed to remit the rent as from the date of resumption, but certainly some allowance should be made by way of rebate upon the rent previously paid. In some instances, of course, settlers would be glad to give the land and the improvements in exchange for the railway, but people who were not going to benefit by the construction of the railway, who indeed would be losers by the severance caused by the railway, should not be put to any loss through the resumption of improved land.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): They benefited by some other person previously having the same thing to contend with.

Mr. A. E. PESSE: The people he referred to might be within four or five miles of an existing line. In such cases, when their land was cut up and resumed all the improvements taken ought to be compensated for.

Mr. LANDER: The hon. member had not put up a very good case. Probably the hon. member had in his mind the Kojonup-Katanning railway. The majority of farmers would welcome any railway, and in many cases would willingly give the improvements to get the line. It was not a fair thing that the hon. mem-

ber should try to split straws and harass the Government in this way. If he (Mr. Lander) had a block of land he would gladly give up, without claim for compensation, all of such land as might be required for a railway.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** In regard to resumptions the department was guided by the Public Works Act, and to make any amendment in respect to the extension of railways, and compensations to be paid therefor, would entail an amendment of that Act. There was a difference of opinion as to whether or not the department should pay greater compensation than it was doing. That was a matter for the Crown Law Department and the land resumption officials whose direct responsibility it was to compensate to the full extent they considered Parliament had authorised them to do under the Public Works Act. There would be some soundness in the argument for compensation for improvements taken with resumptions if we had a betterment tax on the land improved, but whenever we built a railway we increased the value of the contiguous lands by at least 50 per cent.

**Mr. A. E. Piesse:** Some of them you decrease.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** Of course scarcely ever was a law passed which did not injure someone. In every railway proposition a few isolated instances could be picked out of the land being so subdivided as to decrease the value of the farm from an operating point of view; but, speaking generally, railway communication always enhanced the value of the land. In other countries a betterment tax existed, under which the increased value went into the public purse. If such a tax was in existence here full compensation most certainly should be given, but in the existing conditions he did not think Parliament would agree to an amendment of the Public Works Act with a view to increasing the compensation paid.

**Mr. A. E. Piesse:** Do you not agree that payment should be made for clearing?

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** At the present time the department paid compensation where genuine clearing had

been done, but it did not pay the full compensation that those who had previously held the resumed land would like to get. There was always a wide difference of opinion as to the compensation to be paid. This was due to the fact that immediately the Government resumed land the previous owners reckoned that they were due to get ten times its value. The Government were regarded as fair game, and the previous owners always put in outrageous claims in regard to resumed land. This applied to both city and country lands.

**Mr. A. E. Piesse:** I referred only to the value of improvements.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** The department had paid for improvements. Every case was taken on its merits. Of course there were cases where the improvements claimed for were not recognised by the department as being worthy of compensation. No injustice was being done unless, indeed, the Public Works Act was wrong, in which case it should be amended. Personally he was not prepared to admit that the Act was wrong. He thought the department was doing a very fair thing by the people, and in the absence of a betterment tax the Government should not be called upon to pay any more for resumptions than was being paid.

**Hon. J. MITCHELL** moved an amendment—

*That at the end of the clause the following be added, "Provided that severance may be taken into consideration in fixing such value."*

This would enable the Minister to take the question of severance into consideration. As a rule the man who secured a railway through his property was a lucky individual, but there were cases in which some injustice would be done. It was not likely that there ever would be a betterment tax in connection with the building of railways in Western Australia. Our system was to make the users of the railway pay for the use of the line, and it would be unfair to make them pay twice. The price of land was not increased at the expense of the general taxpayer.

**Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister):** Is not an extra price put on the land?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Yes, extra price is put on the land in close proximity to the railway. We had constructed over 2,000 miles of agricultural railways, and it would be a belated idea to have the betterment tax put on now. If the Minister would accept the amendment the difficulty would be overcome. In exceptional cases where severance did an injury the Government should pay.

Mr. S. STUBBS: At times an injustice was done to persons who had cleared land through which a railway line was carried. A case came under his notice of a person who had simply claimed out-of-pocket expenses for clearing land which was taken for a railway. It was a long narrow strip extending through the best part of the man's land. The officer in charge of land resumptions stated that under the public Works Act he could not pay a penny. For the benefit of the whole community it was necessary to take land without compensation, but it would only appear an act of justice to pay for improvements which had been effected.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The amendment could not be accepted for the reason that if we had to alter the method of resumption and the payment of compensation this was not the Bill under which to do it. The resumptions were made under the Public Works Act and consequently an amendment of that Act should take place before any alteration was made in the present methods. We could not possibly insert into the Bill methods of resumption which were applicable only to this railway, for if the principle was a good one it was good for all railways, therefore it should be inserted in the Public Works Act.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Public Works Act notwithstanding, it was provided in the Bill that the purchase money should be assessed at the probable and reasonable price which the land with any improvements thereon or the estate or interest of the claimant therein might have been expected to realise if offered for sale at the date the land was taken. Having provided that, it was not unreasonable to say that sever-

ance also might be taken into consideration.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 6, 7—agreed to.

Schedule :

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The terminal point shown on the map was that part of Government Reserve 14503 and extending two miles south of the point shown. The Minister had said that he might have to make a deviation, therefore he (Hon. J. Mitchell) moved an amendment—

*That in line 7, the words "in or near" be struck out, and "within three miles of the South-West corner of" be inserted in lieu.*

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: As had been already stated when discussing Clause 2, he did not wish to be bound down to the terminus which he would be bound down to if the schedule was passed as printed. He had suggested that the member should move in the direction indicated, but after looking at Clause 3 perhaps it would be better to allow the schedule to pass and he (the Minister) would consult the Parliamentary Draftsman and see if an amendment would not also have to be made in Clause 3 as well as in the schedule. He suggested that the schedule should be passed as printed, and he would recommit the Bill to carry out the desire of the hon. member, making it possible to deviate from the terminal point suggested.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Under the circumstances he would not move the amendment.

Schedule put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment.

## BILL—ROADS ACT AMENDMENT.

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam): There is very little to object to in this Bill. I understand the Act is to be altered to meet the views of the Roads Board Conference.

The Minister for Works: They desired a lot more than we have here.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: As far as it goes. There is an amendment in the Bill to make it possible for roads board funds to be spent on agricultural halls, museums, libraries, and reading rooms. As a township may be included within a roads board area, it would be unfair if the funds of a roads board district, contributed in order that roads might be made, could be taken and expended on museums, libraries, and reading rooms for the benefit of a few of the people within a roads board area. Another point, which perhaps is a matter for Committee, is in connection with the timber on roads. Do I understand that the Minister intends to hand the timber on the roads to the roads boards? If so, I think it is perfectly fair. The roads boards should control the timber. They will want it in time, and they should reserve it. And does this provision refer to any reserve within a roads board area? I suppose it does not. The provision dealing with public roads is hardly right. If a road is taken from a man and eventually closed, the road is restored to the man. This Bill provides that if a road is closed one half of it is to go to the owner and the other half to the Crown. If the road originally came from any block of alienated land it should go back to the block from which it was taken.

The Minister for Works: Often when we resume a road we give land in lieu of that resumption.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Then the land should be sold to the owner of the block from which it was taken. It is a small matter, but might cause much heart-burning if half of the land taken for a road is handed to the owner of adjacent land and the other half is taken by the Crown. There seems to be no good reason for that provision. I am also sorry to see the abolition of the exemption from rates in regard to conditional purchase leases. It is provided that conditional purchase leases should not be subject to roads board taxation for two years. The Minister should realise that taxation ought to come from the profit

earned from the land, and it is impossible to obtain profit from land for two years. If a man is beginning to work a block he will not use the roads to any extent for some time and will not earn anything from his land, and if the taxation comes out of his pocket he gets no immediate benefit. When land is subdivided before sale, provision is made for the clearing of roads and in some cases for the making of roads. The contribution in this way is more than sufficient to cover any loss the roads boards may sustain by reason of the exemption; in fact, it is very much more than they could possibly get. As the land has paid an increased price because of railways, water supply and roads, it is wrong to tax the settler in the earlier years. The conditional purchase holder in my opinion should be exempted for three years. It is a pity that the Minister insists on this exemption from local taxation for two years being abolished.

The Minister for Works: It has been unanimously desired. Instead of doing good service you are penalising them.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: If the Minister spends more on roads during twelve months than can be collected by taxation imposed against a conditional purchase holder for five years, he is relieving the roads board of considerable expenditure. We have helped the boards in every possible way to compensate them for this loss of revenue, and after all it is revenue which they never had. There is very good reason why the conditional purchase selector in the early years should be exempt from local taxation. I hope the Minister will agree to the abolition of that provision in Committee. I am pleased to notice that the charge of £3 per chain against all roads in a subdivision has been removed. The Minister has rightly reduced it to £1 and made it to apply to subdivisions which include an area of only half an acre or less. I agree entirely with this amendment because I believe that in the past it has prevented subdivision. Three pounds per chain was altogether too heavy a charge to impose against subdivisions of large areas into farming blocks. Otherwise the Bill is an improve-

ment on the present Act and I have pleasure in supporting it. When in Committee I hope the Minister will not insist upon the exemptions introduced a year or so ago being cancelled.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE (Katanning): I am very pleased that the Government have found time to bring in this amending Bill. The Minister pointed out that there are not many important amendments, but the amendment relating to the subdivision of lands is to my mind most important, inasmuch as the provision in the existing Act really deters the subdivision of land, which we really want to encourage. I well remember when this section was introduced into the present Act. I was of opinion at the time that Parliament did not understand the effect of that amendment, otherwise I am sure Parliament would never have agreed to it. I am glad the Minister is amending that section in the direction of making it optional for the board to decide upon the amount that shall be lodged with each subdivision. This I think is fair as it allows boards, where subdivisions take place in sandy areas, to fix a fee at perhaps a higher rate than for those subdivisions which take place on firmer land. I would like to say that the fact that the Minister has introduced so few amendments to the existing Act speaks well for the framers of the measure, particularly when we take into consideration that the Act has been in existence for two years and has worked, on the whole, admirably. There are other minor amendments proposed by the Bill in regard to which I do not wish to take up the time of the House at this juncture, but I hope to have an opportunity of moving one or two small amendments in Committee. I notice that provision is made to enable roads boards to erect and maintain agricultural halls or buildings. I think this is a very necessary provision and one which in some districts will certainly be very much appreciated. At the same time I think there should be a proviso limiting the amount of expenditure by the board or making it compulsory on the part of the board to submit such a proposal for expenditure when it exceeds

a certain amount for the approval of the ratepayers. If we pass the clause as it is printed it will mean that the local authority would have power to incur an expenditure to an unlimited amount for the erection of buildings. It is necessary that there should be some safeguard so that it will be mandatory on the part of the board to submit such a proposal for erecting a building costing say, over £100 to the ratepayers before the board engages in that particular work. I have pleasure in supporting the Bill.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY (Moore): I notice that this Bill contains little which is of a contentious character, and there is no need for me to take up much time of the House at this juncture, more especially as we are now getting towards the end of the session. In introducing any amendment of the Roads Act members might be prepared to bring forward much which is of a contentious nature, but I am not desirous of creating any contention at the present moment. I recognise the fact that the present Act, which was passed in 1910, was passed very hurriedly through this House, and hence I conclude this amending Bill is introduced mainly to correct errors which crept into the principal Act. At the same time I think we are going rather far when we give power to roads boards under this Bill to devote a portion of their revenue to erecting halls, museums, libraries, and so forth. This no doubt may be an excellent provision for those who are residing about a townsite, but those who pay the rates and live a considerable distance from the townsite would gain very little use from such a provision, and the rates of a roads board are collected primarily for the purpose of constructing and maintaining the roads. Consequently I think we ought to be careful before we give power to divert these funds from the channel for which they are primarily intended. Under the Act there is a provision whereby roads boards are empowered to subsidise hospitals or nursing homes to a certain extent of their revenue, but that is an entirely different thing from building halls or museums or libraries. The hospital is for the benefit of the whole district,

and persons from all portions of the district may at times find the need for utilising the hospital. Consequently the money would be expended towards an object which was of general service to the whole district, but money expended out of rates for the erection of halls, etcetera, is not for the benefit of the ratepayers as a whole, and moreover a roads board has power, with the approval of the Minister, to borrow money for any work which the Minister may in his opinion consider advisable. The roads boards might ask the Minister after having taken a vote of the ratepayers for permission to erect a hall in the district and the Minister may give approval to the board to borrow the money for that special purpose.

The Minister for Works: It must be a roads board hall. Money could not be raised for a mechanics' institute or for a library.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: The Minister has already given permission in a certain case for the board to borrow money for erecting a public hall without any provision being made as to a roads board office whatever. The Minister will find that the Act gives him power to authorise a board to raise a loan for any purpose whatever which he may consider advisable after certain formalities have been gone through and the ratepayers have given their approval. Apart from that, we are going a little too far when we allow the rates, which are primarily collected for the purpose of constructing and maintaining roads, to be spent in building halls and for other buildings in the townsite. If the time had arrived for the abolition of our land tax we could make the roads boards entirely dependent upon their rates, so that they should not go to the Government for funds for the maintenance of the roads. Then we would be in a different position. I consider that the work of road construction in this country could be better done if instead of giving subsidies to the boards the land tax were abolished altogether, and the boards were obliged to provide their own rates. This cannot be done in newly-settled districts, but in older-settled districts the work

could be carried on much better, and there would be no need to have continually to go to the Government and ask for funds. With the exception of the provision to which I have referred I am pleased to welcome this little measure, which has for its object the improvement of our Roads Act, and making it more workable than it is at the present time, and the correcting of a few errors which crept into the Act in the first instance. When we get into Committee we will be able to deal with the various clauses, and hon. members will find that perhaps some of them will be altered in a manner which may make them more acceptable to the House and to the roads boards.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin): I congratulate the Government on deciding to alter Section 328 of the existing Roads Act. This section has rendered it necessary for £3 a chain to be paid on all new subdivisions, and it has had a very bad effect all through the country in stopping the land from being subdivided and thrown open for sale. At the present time in my own district there are dozens of surveys completed and people are unable to register the plans of those surveys without paying this prohibitive fee. I am glad indeed that this section is being amended. It is in accordance with our policy that the large landholders should have the opportunity of selling these blocks. I regret that the Government are removing the exemption from the roads board rates that has been afforded to new settlers for the first two years. I would have preferred that this particular exemption should have remained.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee.*

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

Clauses 1 to 4—agreed to.

Clause 5—Amendment of Section 23:

Mr. BROWN: Would the Minister explain why he was substituting the words "31st October" for "30th September."



**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS :** When the present Act was before the Chamber the date of nomination was altered, and in fact every date was altered but this particular one, so that now it was a month out of joint with the other dates. It was purely an omission.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 6—Amendment of Section 29:

**Hon. J. MITCHELL :** Why were the words "on demand by and any person interested" being deleted from the Act?

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS :** It was not necessary for people to make a demand to get their names on the roll, and it was wrong to say that people should demand that they should be placed on the roll. A board should have the right to place their ratepayers on the roll. The clause would apply in the ordinary way and the people who paid their rates would have their names placed on the roll.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 7 to 11—agreed to.

Clause 12—Insertion of new Section 140a :

**Hon. H. B. LEFROY :** The proposed new section would give a big power to roads boards. It was proposed that a board could appropriate out of its ordinary revenue such funds as it might think proper for providing maintenance or improving halls, museums, libraries or reading rooms. This would open the doors to boards providing or carrying out what was mentioned in the clause rather than constructing and maintaining roads. The boards had power under Section 258 of the Act to borrow money to do anything of this kind if the ratepayers in meeting assembled chose to decide that the boards should erect a hall or a museum or a library. Then if the ratepayers gave their consent the matter was submitted to the Minister for Works, who obtained the Governor's approval for the money to be borrowed.

**The Minister for Works :** It has been decided otherwise by the Crown Law Department.

**Hon. H. B. LEFROY :** It had been done in certain instances.

**The Minister for Works :** Not for the purpose of libraries.

**Hon. H. B. LEFROY :** For a roads board hall. The Minister would agree that the clause was on wrong lines.

**The Minister for Works :** The wording was taken from the Municipal Act.

**Hon. H. B. LEFROY :** It had been noticed frequently that in the Roads Act there were many clauses which appeared to have been pitchforked into it from the Municipal Act. These clauses might apply in municipalities generally, but not to roads boards. A municipality had a confined area, whereas the roads board district often extended into backblocks where the people were many miles from a municipality. We ought to be careful about giving too much power to roads boards in this connection. Where there was a municipality or town-site, naturally that municipality or town-site overshadowed the rest of the roads board district. Members of a roads board were very often largely interested in a municipality or town-site, and those were the members who were always able to attend the roads board meetings, and they were able to overshadow the members who lived a great distance from the municipality in which the roads board affairs were carried on. If the roads boards were to be given power to provide and maintain such buildings as were mentioned in the clause we ought to give the ratepayers a say in the matter. He hoped the Minister would see his way to insert a provision which would allow the ratepayers to have a voice in the question of appropriating moneys from ordinary revenue for such purposes as were mentioned in the clause.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS :** Admittedly it looked like conferring a wide power on roads boards to give them power to construct and maintain museums, but if the power was limited to agricultural halls the objection could not be so great. At Broomehill a committee had desired to hand over a hall as a going concern to the roads board, but the board were informed by the Crown Law Department that they had no power to expend any money on the main-

tenance or general improvement of such a hall. Under the Municipalities Act a municipality had power under a section similar to the clause proposed in this Bill to erect an agricultural hall, town hall, or mechanics' institute. In Toodyay the municipality had erected a hall. Later the municipality wisely decided to disband and become merged in the roads board, but a difficulty was experienced in the fact that the roads board had no power to maintain that hall. Exactly the same thing applied at Menzies, Broad Arrow, and other places where the municipality had gone out of existence and the roads board had taken over control. He agreed with the member for Moore that as much of the roads board revenue as possible should be expended on roads, and therefore he was prepared to make a compromise by limiting the power to maintaining these buildings. The proposed new section could be amended by striking out the word "providing" and also the word "museums."

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: The amendment suggested by the Minister would meet the objections raised by members. He had no objection to provision being made giving roads boards power to maintain halls and to provide libraries or reading rooms. The difficulty about giving the board power to provide halls was that a majority of members of the board might be residing in one locality, and might decide to put up a hall which did not meet with the approval of the majority of the ratepayers. At Broomehill there had been a proposal to erect a roads board office for which the board would have been entitled to a subsidy from the Government. Wisely it was decided to take over the agricultural hall as a roads board office and by that means obviate the necessity for calling on the Government for a subsidy, and at the same time have a hall that would be available for public purposes as a hall and reading room. He understood there was no power under the existing Act for the roads board to maintain that hall, and therefore there was some necessity for that power to be given in this clause.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: It ought not to be necessary for a roads board to take

from ordinary revenue money to maintain a hall, because a hall should be self-supporting to a large extent. The revenue derived directly from it should be more than sufficient for its maintenance. Still he understood that when an agricultural hall was handed over to the board the revenue derived from the hall became part of the revenue of the board, and therefore some such provision as was contained in the proposed new section was necessary. The amendment suggested by the Minister would remove all cause for objection, and do away with the difficulties which had been experienced in the past.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved an amendment—

*That in line 3 of the proposed new section the word "providing" be struck out.*

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The intention of the proposed new section was that a roads board should have the power to expend money in maintaining a hall in its possession or under its control, but the proposed new section as worded would enable the roads board to maintain all the halls in the district.

The Minister for Works: You must give the roads board credit for having some common sense.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It would be ridiculous to allow roads board funds to be spent on all the various halls in a district.

The Minister for Works: The roads board will surely not throw their money into the air.

Mr. Nanson: It might be a very popular action.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It seemed to be giving roads boards far too much power. The money raised was not contributed for this purpose.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There was no objection to limit it to halls the roads boards controlled.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: The clause conferred a boon on Toodyay where the roads board had taken over the town hall but had no power to make alterations and improvements to it. There were instances where trustees of agricultural halls would

be glad if the roads boards would take over the halls.

Mr. S. STUBBS: In the Wagin district there were many halls erected partly by subscriptions from the settlers and in the hands of trustees. It was right that these halls should get assistance from roads board funds. The men elected to roads boards would not so far forget their duty as to spend too much money on the upkeep of any particular hall.

Mr. TURVEY: We should not limit the clause to halls vested in roads boards only. The majority of halls were vested in trustees for the public, and power should be given to the roads boards to contribute towards the upkeep of these halls. There might be a limit to the expenditure as now there was a limit to the subsidy that could be paid by a roads board to the upkeep of a hospital or towards subsidising a medical officer.

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved a further amendment—

*That in the last line of the proposed new section the word "museum" be struck out."*

Amendment passed.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE moved a further amendment—

*That the following be added at the end of the proposed new section—  
"vested in or under the control of such board."*

Unless it be shown how the money was to be expended, roads boards might take it for granted that they could make free gifts of money to all the halls in their districts. In saying this, there was not the slightest wish on his part to reflect on the roads boards. He would be quite satisfied to leave the decision of the matter to the majority of members of roads boards, but there ought to be no misunderstanding as to the wishes of Parliament. The trustees of existing halls would be very glad to avail themselves of the provision and place their halls under the control of roads boards, surrendering their titles to the halls and having them vested in roads boards.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Many people had contributed more than they could possibly afford to have halls erected at distances from townships, and why should these halls have to come under the control of roads boards before they could get any assistance towards the upkeep?

Mr. BROWN: The trustees of agricultural halls in outlying districts relieved the roads boards of a great deal of trouble in the care of halls. If the amendment were passed to get assistance from the roads boards for these halls, the trustees would have to give up their control. The clause was quite good enough without the additional words.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The amendment would be accepted, as roads boards should not spend money on property over which they had not absolute control. To give power to grant sums of money to trustees of halls would lead to trouble. Members of roads boards would work to get halls erected in their wards or localities and others would be left lamenting. Roads boards should confine the spending of money to inside their particular areas and to buildings over which they had absolute control.

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

Ayes .. .. .	26
Noes .. .. .	5

Majority for .. 21

#### AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Bath	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Dooley	Mr. Nanson
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. O'Loughlen
Mr. Green	Mr. A. E. Piesse
Mr. Johnson	Mr. A. N. Piesse
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Price
Mr. Lander	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. Swan
Mr. Lewis	Mr. Walker
Mr. McDonald	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. McDowall	Mr. Underwood

(Teller).

#### NOES.

Mr. Brown	Mr. Turvey
Mr. Harper	Mr. Moore
Mr. S. Stubbs	

(Teller)

Amendment thus passed.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Mr. TURVEY: It had been understood from the Minister that the proposal embodied in the proposed new section was agreed to at the recent roads board conference, namely, that a certain sum of their revenue should be spent in connection with the maintenance of agricultural halls, libraries and reading rooms. Under the proposal as amended the power was limited, inasmuch as they could now only devote the funds to halls which were vested in the respective boards. As a matter of fact, less than one per cent. of the agricultural halls in Western Australia were vested in roads boards. The people in each locality very jealously guarded the powers they had under their trusteeship and through the hall committees, in connection with agricultural halls. It often happened, particularly where there was one big centre in a roads board district, that the representatives were, perhaps, inclined to apply the funds to the upkeep of that one particular hall. Many of the members who had supported the limitation of the clause to halls vested in roads boards must have known perfectly well that they were really defeating the very request that had come from the roads board conference. The powers certainly should be limited, and on a previous occasion he had suggested that they should be limited to 7½ per cent. of the revenue in any financial year. Members who supported the amendment had placed the boards in the position that they could not now devote any of their funds to the upkeep of more than one agricultural hall in a roads board district. The members of the conference would not feel at all gratified when they learnt of the way the Committee had treated their proposal.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No guarantee could be given that the proposed new section as printed was the result of representations made by the roads board conference. What he had said was, that generally speaking the Bill was framed on the requests of the conference: but as to whether this particular provision was in accordance with the ideas of the conference he really did not know. What he did know was

that the proposed new section had been inserted as the result of experience gained by the department in administering the existing Act, it having been found impossible for a roads board to take over halls banded to them by municipalities when the roads board extended their boundaries to include a municipality.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: There is nothing in the report of the proceedings of the conference of July last in regard to the proposal.

Clause as amended agreed to.

Clauses 13 to 16—agreed to.

Clause 17—Amendment of Section 168:

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: Subclause 3 proposed a means of getting over the difficulty of allocating the land which had previously formed part of a closed road, in cases where the said closed road separated the lands of two different owners. If the subclause was agreed to it would to some extent set up a difficulty and a good deal of unnecessary expense in the allocation of the closed road. It was provided in the subclause that one-half the closed road should vest in one owner and the other half in the other. That would be all right if a fence ran down the middle of the road, but while, in many instances, the closed road would be found to be fenced on both sides, in others there would be a fence on only one side. If "A" held land on one side of the road and "B" on the other, each would be entitled to one-half the road: but it might easily happen that the only fence along the road belonged to "A," in which case "B" might have a distinct advantage over "A" in coming to a settlement. What was required was some provision under which the owners concerned would be able easily to agree as to which of them should take the whole of the road, and thus obviate any difficulty with respect to the fencing. The Minister should see if it was not possible to make some such provision.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There might easily be a difficulty in such a case as that instanced by the hon. member. In his opinion it was because of that very possibility that the clause had been worded as it was. In the case of a closed

road which was fenced on one side only it would be foolish to say that one-half belonged to one owner and the other to another. While the fence was on one side only this would be ridiculous.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: It would incur a new survey.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There was no doubt a new survey would be required. He was prepared to have the point looked into with a view to seeing whether some provision could not be made to facilitate the two owners in deciding as to which one should have the whole of the road.

Mr. McDONALD: Would it not be possible for one owner to transfer his half of the road to the other? Presumably from the time the half of the road was vested in an owner that owner would have power to sell or transfer to his neighbour.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If we were to give half the road to the man who had not the fence that man would have an opportunity of taking advantage of the other man who happened to have the fence. The hon. member had suggested that once the half-road was vested in an owner he could sell or transfer; but it was desired to avoid any such complication, necessitating undue expenditure in fees. We should try to amend the clause in a way that would overcome the difficulty.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: If the road originally formed part of a location, when it was closed it would revert to the block from which it had been taken. In the meantime, possibly, the original owner of that block had sold to another person, in which case the road would revert right back to the original owner.

The Attorney General: No. The second owner has bought all the rights in the land which the first owner had to sell.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: That would not affect the position, because the first owner, having previously given the road, had no rights to sell in respect to the land contained in that road.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 18—Amendment of Section 170:

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: In Subclause 8 the words "as prescribed" seemed to be

out of place because there was no indication what was intended by "such" wing fences.

The Minister for Works: We want to prescribe the class of gate.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: Then the word "such" should be omitted.

The Minister for Works: The word is superfluous.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY moved an amendment—

*That in line 3 of Subclause 8 the word "such" be struck out.*

Amendment passed.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: In Subclause 9 provision was made for a notice to be placed on a gate across a road. That might be necessary if it was limited to main roads, but as it was impossible to define a main road it was carrying the thing rather far to make it to apply to all roads. Many unnecessary roads were surveyed in the agricultural areas and in every instance a notice would have to be placed on every road in every subdivision, some of which might not be cleared.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: A notice was not necessary on a main road, but it was necessary where a bush track occurred across which a gate was placed. The object was to let the public know that there was a public road. Numerous gates had been erected over public roads, and the majority of the ratepayers often were not aware of the presence of a public road, and they were going around instead of through different properties. The man who avoided the expense of fencing was as good as receiving a public donation and the little expense of putting a notice on the gate was not much to complain of.

Mr. McDONALD: This applied to the north-western portion of the State. In one instance the public were compelled to travel five miles unnecessarily. In another instance on the road from Mullewa to Cue a barbed wire fence was put across a road which had been used for 20 years. Had the individual concerned been compelled to erect a gate bearing a notice "public road" it would have been a great benefit to travellers.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: A gate was not erected for the convenience of the public, but of the individual, and in the public interests not only should the gates be maintained, but a notice should be attached to each gate.

Clause as amended put and passed.

Clauses 19, 20—agreed to.

Clause 21—Amendment of Section 194:

Mr. BROWN moved an amendment—

*That paragraph 1 be struck out.*

It was not right to impose a hardship on settlers who were just taking up land. The Minister said he had received many requests to abolish the exemption and that ratepayers did not gain any benefit from being exempted from rate for two years. Most of the representatives at the conference came from areas which had been settled for a considerable time. Many of the settlers in the outback areas had not had a shilling spent on the roads. A farmer informed him on Tuesday that he had been paying rates for years and no money had been spent within 25 miles of his place. It would not make much difference to the revenue if settlers were exempted for two years. They were allowed to take up only a small area and land settlement was not proceeding as quickly as in the past. New settlers had many difficulties to contend with, and the deletion of the subclause so far from doing harm would prove a great benefit.

Mr. S. STUBBS: The amendment would have his support. The conditions pointed out by the member for Beverley (Mr. Brown) prevailed in many agricultural centres. If the Minister could see his way clear to accept the amendment it would be in the best interests of the community.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Hon. members were taking an unfair advantage in this matter, inasmuch as they would lead people to believe that the Government were desirous of doing an injury to the settlers. The new settlers did not desire this amendment. The member for Beverley (Mr. Brown) had approached him with a view of creating a new roads board in a portion of the country he represented, but when we

came to create a roads board it was generally found that a large number of the people had not been on the land for two years and it was found that if they were all ratepayers we could create a roads board, but because they were not, a board could not be established. The member for Toodyay (Mr. A. N. Piesse) knew of a difficulty the Government had in regard to the Ningham roads board. The progress association there wrote protesting against the election taking place because they pointed out it was limited to a small section who were ratepayers. The others being disfranchised were precluded from voting. Taken from the road making point of view it would be better for the settler to pay rates and get a subsidy from the Government and have the roads made so that he might cart his produce. That would be cheaper to them than the exemption from the roads rate. The amendment had been moved at the request of successive roads board conferences and also at the request of new settlers. It was not his intention to fight this question because the Government were likely to be misunderstood, but it was desired to meet the request of the people by deleting this paragraph.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: In regard to the incident the Minister referred to, the reason why the people were anxious to become ratepayers was that they were going to have a roads board for their particular little township. As these people were not leaseholders of two years' standing they had no vote. People had frequently been found sheltering themselves behind the exemption and thus not paying rates. If it were possible to take a vote of the people it would be found that the majority were in favour of the two years' exemption. The Minister should accept the amendment because it was in the best interests of the new settler.

The Minister for Works: The settlers themselves say otherwise.

Mr. A. N. PIESSE: If it were possible to take a vote it would be found the majority were in favour of the two years' exemption.

Mr. TAYLOR: It was doubtful whether the knowledge of the Minister re-

garding the farmers was accurate. When the Minister said he believed the farmers would prefer this clause so that they would be able to pay their rates for no other reason than to secure representation on the roads board, it was indeed strange. His (Mr. Taylor's) experience of the farmers was that they did not have very much desire to pay too much, and his opinion was that they would forego their vote even for this House if we would only relieve them of some of their taxation. It was time the Minister for Works realised that some of these people ought to be out in the weaning paddocks because they had been spoon-fed long enough. Contrast the attitude of these people with that of the Esperance people! Was there any feeling of *esprit de corps* between the farmers of these parts and the struggling settlers located on the Esperance lands, settlers who were waiting for railway communication. Here now we wanted to exempt them for two years and then they came along to the Government cap in hand for further subsidies. The Treasury could not stand it and it was about time the farmers commenced to walk alone.

Mr. Brown: You start and make them.

Mr. TAYLOR: If he were representing some of them he would tell them it was their duty to contribute to the Treasury.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: So they do.

Mr. TAYLOR: It was absolutely tiring to hear of the appeals that were constantly being made. At any rate he would not be prepared to place the Treasury at the disposal of farmers to the detriment of other sections of the community and he hoped the amendment would not be carried.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: It was satisfactory to hear the Minister for Works say he did not propose to fight this question, and that being so, the Minister might accept the amendment. The Minister said that new settlers had not asked for the exemption. He (Mr. Johnston) had not met one who had not asked for it.

The Minister for Works: Down in your district they do not pay anything.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: They paid the highest rates of any district. It

would be a good thing if every other section of the community were made to do their duty to the public Treasury as the people in his district were doing. The Minister for Works knew perfectly well that hundreds of these settlers who went out on the land had to set to work to cut their tracks, and in company with the Minister not long ago he travelled through from Wickepin to Merredin, and right along they met settlers who complained that they had been on the land for three or four years and had paid rates to roads boards 60 and 70 miles away and had not had a penny spent in their districts. The member for Mt. Margaret (Mr. Taylor) it was always understood, was one who came to this Chamber representing the pioneers from out-back, the people who had opened up the country.

Mr. Taylor: My pioneers get no assistance.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Wherever it could be suggested he would be prepared to give these people every legitimate assistance. Why did not the member for Mount Margaret bring forward proposals to help these people? It ill-became that hon. member to sneer at the men who were doing pioneering work.

Mr. Taylor: I do not know where the sneer comes in.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Whilst he admitted that the prospector had done a good deal for the country it also had to be admitted that the people who were going on the land to-day were those on whom the permanent prosperity of Western Australia would depend.

Mr. S. Stubbs: The remarks of the member for Mount Margaret should be taken exception to. A number of men who came down from the goldfields owing to the climatic conditions took up land, and it would be interesting to see the member for Mount Margaret at the present time stand up on a public platform at Lake Grace and repeat what he said in the Chamber. If he did that he would get the warmest reception he ever had in his life.

Mr. Taylor : You provide the platform, I will do the speaking.

Mr. S. STUBBS : The hon. member for Mount Margaret did not realise the position these men were in. They were miles away from any centre, and this exemption for two years was only a fair thing.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It would be a breach of faith if this Bill was to be retrospective and to include purchasers of land already sold. The member for Mount Margaret was always opposed to anything for the farmers, but the agricultural members had always supported measures for the development of the gold-fields. The Minister for Works said that, if the clause was not carried as printed, he would refuse to clear any more roads. The increased price of land justified the Government in clearing roads, and the new settlers in the outback areas had a perfect right to have all the roads cleared for them. It was the policy of the present Government, as it had been of their predecessors, to clear roads, and if that work was left to the roads boards, it would never be done. Many of the settlers in the back blocks were anxious to have boards formed, but he doubted if they realised what they were asking for. They were not making any revenue from their farms yet, and until they did, they should not be called upon to pay roads board rates. The exemption asked for was a reasonable thing. If the Premier was retaining the exemption in connection with the land tax, and it was a good thing there, it was a good thing in this Bill.

The Premier: I am not doing anything of the kind.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It was to be hoped the Premier would stand by the present Act.

The Premier: Then why should I want to introduce another one?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: An amendment should be made. The Minister should keep faith with those who had taken up land. It would be a monstrous thing to go back on the arrangements which had been made.

The Minister for Works: Two roads board conferences have requested this.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Minister had stated that these people who were exempted were not rated, and were not represented on roads boards; therefore, they could not have been represented on the roads boards conference.

The Minister for Works: You say you know better what is wanted for roads boards than the roads boards' conference.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: If the Minister was prepared to be dictated to by organisations outside, he (Mr. Mitchell) was not. The conference represented, not the man who was exempt, but the other man.

Mr. TAYLOR: The remarks of the member for Northam regarding the attitude of mining members towards the agricultural industry were ungenerous and contrary to fact. He drew the attention of the Committee to the assistance given to the farmers by the Government in the form of water supplies, seed wheat, and seed potatoes. What members on the Government side had opposed was the attitude of the farmer to his employees. The farmer was prepared at every turn to get his work done for as little money as possible, and the discussion showed that there was a desire on the part of the Opposition to delete the provision which compelled the farmers to pay rates to the roads boards for services rendered. The farmers had been more than generously treated, and he hoped the Committee would realise the necessity for placing the Bill on the statute-book to enable roads boards to collect fees from those people who were dilatory in paying up their rates for services rendered. They were rated under the Act by their own representatives, and yet hon. members would ask that they should be allowed to go free of rates for two years. He hoped the Minister would not accept the amendment.

Mr. FOLEY: The clause should stand as printed. He had no desire in any way to hamper the farming industry, but if the amendment was inserted, it would confer an advantage on one industry which was not enjoyed by other industries. Members on the Government side had always given support to those who were opening up the agricultural



areas. There were pioneers in the mining industry who required good roads, but if they opened up a mining show they must pay rates from the very jump whether they made a penny profit or not. Mining pioneers were not in so favourable a position as farming pioneers, because the latter had almost a certainty of being in an independent position in a few years; whereas mining pioneers might never secure a return for their industry. Those who represented farming districts should take into consideration that their districts were not the only localities needing consideration. It would be placing no undue hardship on new settlers to ask them to pay rates; because already the roads were provided for them and in the near future they would have a certainty of reaping a reward. In other industries pioneers had not the remotest chance of doing so.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): Hon. members who represented large areas with several road districts in their electorates could not get into touch with the great majority of the new settlers as closely as could members of roads boards. No doubt it was the demand of the new settlers for roads that had induced the roads board conference to ask that those who were to-day exempted should be allowed to contribute so that they might get roads for the conveyance of their produce to the railways. It might take a man four years to get a sufficient crop. If he did not contribute to the roads board in that time in order to get roads made, by the time he was ready to cart there would be no roads for him. Many roads boards had not struck rates, and the late Government had to make provision in the Roads Bill compelling the striking of a rate. The new settlers would have nothing to fear. Roads boards endeavoured to keep down the rates as low as possible, and it was in the interests of the new settlers to be charged rates to enable them to get roads over which to cart their produce when their development required it.

Mr. BROWN: The amendment was moved as the result of experience gained in travelling among the settlers in his electorate. The member for Mount Mar-

garet (Mr. Taylor) accused the farmers of taking all they possibly could from the Government and giving nothing in return, but the man on the land never got anything for nothing, and paid to the revenue as much as any other man in the State. In fact, the Premier was looking forward to a bountiful harvest to pull him out of his difficulties, showing that the revenue derived from the farmers must be enormous. If in the past the roads boards had not struck rates the blame rested with the Administration. Certainly the Beverley roads board had always struck a rate of 1d. in the pound from the time it was legal for roads boards to strike rates, and even now the rating was 1½d. in the pound on the unimproved value and the valuations were double the Government valuations. Unless outback settlers had capital they would have nothing to cart for several years, and long before they would be ready to cart produce the exemption period would have passed. In the meantime they were quite satisfied with the roads at present cleared by the Government. The revenue that would be derived from these settlers if the amendment were not carried would be very inconsiderable.

The Premier: You can have your amendment.

Mr. BROWN: The Committee should deal with the amendment as they thought fit and not with the idea of relieving the Ministry from blame in connection with the construction of roads in outlying districts.

Mr. McDOWALL: One would imagine that the people of the goldfields paid nothing and that the farmers were carrying the whole burden of the country.

Mr. S. Stubbs: We never said that.

Mr. McDOWALL: It was said that the future prosperity of the State depended on agriculture. Farmers were only a small factor in the development of the country. The present harvest would be less than ten million bushels, and this at 3s. a bushel would be a million and a half pounds, only about a quarter of the value of what the gold and other mining industries would be to the State. If the money was

intended to be spent in the interests of other sections of the community it would be different, but it was to be spent on themselves, and in addition to what they raised the Government handsomely subsidised them out of Consolidated Revenue. They were spoon-fed and pampered in every possible way, and yet they asked for this rate to be waived for two years. Nearly two millions of money had been spent on the development of agriculture, apart altogether from the construction of railways. The money spent on the development of the goldfields had not amounted to anything like the sum. The whole country was being used for the purpose of pampering our agricultural settlers who, nevertheless, objected to pay a small rate. There was no comparison between the amount of assistance given to the gold mining industry and that given to agriculture. Moreover it was to be remembered that the goldfields had repaid over and over again what had been done for them. Why should the agricultural districts be pampered to such an extent? Joking apart, a lot of time had been wasted over this question of exemption of rates for two years. It was to be hoped the Minister would adhere to the clause as printed.

**MR. HARPER:** The amendment was in every way justifiable. The new settler had but very little money at his disposal, and was deserving of every encouragement. The agricultural areas were paying their full share of taxation. The railways made a huge profit, and a large amount of that profit was derived from the agricultural areas. The member for Coolgardie had told the Committee that some two millions had been spent on agriculture; but it was to be remembered that two millions was but a small proportion of the 23 millions of debt owing by the State. Agriculture was the principal industry in the State at the present time, and hon. members should be careful not to do anything to obstruct its development. The roads question was a very great problem in the State, and the roads boards had a difficult task in securing their revenue. There were no more

deserving people in Western Australia than those on the land.

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

Ayes	..	..	16
Noes	..	..	13

Majority for .. .. 3

#### AYES.

Mr. Allen	Mr. A. N. Plesse
Mr. Broun	Mr. Price
Mr. Harper	Mr. S. Stubbs
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Wisdom
Mr. Mitchell	Mr. A. E. Plesse
Mr. Moore	(Teller).
Mr. Nanson	

#### NOES.

Mr. Collier	Mr. Munslie
Mr. Dooley	Mr. O'Loughlen
Mr. Foley	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Turvey
Mr. Lander	Mr. Walker
Mr. Lewis	Mr. Carpenter
Mr. McDowall	(Teller).

Amendment thus passed, the clause as amended agreed to.

Clauses 22 to 28—agreed to.

Clause 29—Repeal of Section 328 and substitution of new section; notice of subdivision to be given:

**MR. S. STUBBS** moved an amendment—

*That in line 4 of Subclause 3 the words "one pound" be struck out and "ten shillings" be inserted in lieu.*

Ten shillings a chain for new roads would be ample to cover all the cost incidental to a subdivision of a block of ground in any roads board area.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS :** There was no need for the amendment. The clause distinctly provided that the roads board should decide. Surely the members of the board could be trusted to decide whether the fee should be sixpence or one pound. There were occasions when a pound would be little enough, and there were occasions when it would be too much. The Bill proposed that it should be left to the discretion of the board. When a piece of land was being cut into small blocks it was fair that something should be contributed towards the roads, but the amount would vary in different localities, and in

order to meet the variation the board should decide what the amount would be. The maximum could not exceed one pound.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The remarks of the Minister were beside the question. The point was how much should the boards be allowed to collect. If they were allowed to collect sufficient to clear the roads that was all that was necessary, and a road could be cleared very well for ten shillings a chain.

The Minister for Works: Supposing the subdivision took place in Maylands, a macadamised road would be wanted.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: A pound a chain would not provide a macadamised road.

The Minister for Works: It will contribute towards it.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The amendment would have his support. If the man who subdivided land paid for the clearing of the road, nothing more was necessary. Every subdivision meant an increase of rates to the board.

Mr. TAYLOR: The attitude of the member for Northam (Mr. Mitchell) was remarkable. The existing law passed in 1911 by the very Administration in which the member for Northam was a Minister fixed the charge at £3, and neither more nor less. The Bill proposed that the maximum should be £1 and yet the hon. member who had agreed to £3 wanted to still further reduce it to 10s. To adopt such an attitude was absurd.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: There was nothing unreasonable in the proposal to make the amount £1. He was surprised at any attempt to reduce it. It was not mandatory and the board could decide what amount should be collected not exceeding £1. The amount collected under the Bill must be spent on the roads in that subdivision, and those who cut up the land would gain the advantage from disposing of it. The clause was fair, seeing that it applied to town lots of less than half an acre. It was in the interests of the roads board and of the large body of ratepayers that the subdivision should be made.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: It was to be hoped the member for Wagin (Mr. S. Stubbs)

would withdraw the amendment. The clause was a reasonable and fair reduction, especially as the whole of the money was to be expended in making the roads within the subdivision. That provision was not made in the present Act, and an advantage of the Bill was that the local authority would have the option of fixing the rate in accordance with the circumstances of the case. Subdivisions were taking place frequently around Perth, and as it was costly to make streets, it was only fair that the people who were owners of those lands, and who were benefiting to a great extent by the subdivisions, should contribute some fair quota towards the construction of the roads.

Mr. NANSON: The amendment, if anything, was too liberal. It was provided that where lots were cut up in less than half an acre this charge should be made. Where land was being cut up close to large centres of population, no hardship was imposed upon an owner to compel him before cutting it up to contribute a substantial sum of money for the purpose of making roads. There were instances of estates being subdivided within 20 miles or so of Perth, but quite remote, possessing no conveniences of access and unsuitable for small subdivision. If there had been this provision in the old Act and owners had been compelled to spend £3 per chain to make roads, those estates would not have been put upon the market, and many of the people who bought them in ignorance of the exact locality would have been pleased. Bona fide investors would have no objection to spending a reasonable sum, but speculators who cut up land miles away from means of access, and sold it to a confiding public, would be the people who would object to pay £3 a chain for the purpose of making roads. We had no need to sympathise with that kind of speculator. While he was in the old country he had an opportunity of seeing what was being done in regard to town lands. There was no doubt about it that here we were tremendously behind compared with what was being done in England. He visited one estate within

50 miles of London on a main line of railway, possessing a frequent and fast train service, and on one side of that estate there were very fine golf links and on the other side public parks, electric light, gas, water, deep drainage, roads and everything of that kind provided by the vendors, and they were able to sell at a minimum price of £5 per foot. It was an extremely low price when we considered all that had been done, and the purchaser of a lot, an estate of that description knew that when he went there he went to a place where all the conveniences were provided. If here, where we were subdividing land within four miles of the General Post Office, there was a provision in our Roads Act or a special Act providing that conveniences in the shape of made roads should be afforded, it would be no hardship to a bona fide land seller, and it would be of enormous advantage to the buyer, who ultimately would pay a small increased cost for the land to defray the expenses of road making. The only person who would find it a disadvantage would be the speculator who was placing upon the market estates that were not suited for subdivision. He merely made these remarks to show that so far as suburban lots were concerned the provision in the Roads Act of £3 a chain was by no means extravagant.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved an amendment—

*That the following stand as Sub-clause 5:—"No person shall sell or dispose of or offer for sale land set out in any district after the commencement of this Act in a subdivisional plan which has not been submitted to and approved by the board of the district, or received, registered, or deposited pursuant to the direction of the Minister on appeal from the board as aforesaid."*

The object was to stop at once the traffic in land where the subdivisional plan had not been submitted to the board for approval.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: There were subdivisions existing now and land had

been sold and the plans approved by the Titles Office. Did the Minister wish to deal with those plans?

The Minister for Works: It will only apply to future subdivisions.

Mr. A. N. Piesse: How will this apply to subdivisions within the municipal area?

The Minister for Works: It will not affect municipal areas.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Will it apply to subdivisions already existing?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: On that point he was not very clear. The amendment had been sent to him with the suggestion that it should be inserted, evidently to meet some difficulty that had presented itself during the last day or two. He was of the opinion that it had been submitted by the Crown Law Department because of a recent difficulty. It was evidently inserted deliberately to block a subdivision that had been rushed through. He could not say exactly what the particulars were in regard to it, but it had conveyed the impression that it had been sent along to deal with a subdivision.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: Under the B. 1 Section 328 of the Act was struck out and a new clause was inserted. It appeared that the draftsman had omitted to put in Subsection 2 of Section 328, which read—

Any person who sells or disposes of land set out, after the commencement of this Act, in a subdivisional plan which has been submitted to and approved by the Board, or registered by direction of the Minister on appeal from the Board as aforesaid shall be guilty of an offence against this Act, and liable to a penalty not exceeding fifty pounds.

It was merely inserting in this new clause a part of the old section which was left out of the draft of the new one.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Apparently that was so. It had been noticed within the last few hours, and the draftsman had sent it along when he found that it had been omitted.

Mr. NANSON: It was already provided that a subdivisional plan must be submitted to the roads board and it could not be received or registered in the Titles Office until it had the approval of the board.

The Minister for Works: There are many plans deposited to-day which have not the approval of the board.

Mr. NANSON: According to Section 328 of the Act of 1911 no subdivisional plan of any land could be registered until such plan had been submitted to and approved of by the roads board. The obtaining of the approval of the board was one of the first things a person subdividing his land had to do, and only then could he go to the Titles Office and get his plan registered. The Minister would have an opportunity of recommitting the Bill and it would be just as well to ascertain what was the object of this proposed addition before he inserted it.

The Minister for Works: It is purely to reproduce the section in the existing Act.

Mr. NANSON: But the amendment did not follow the wording of Subsection 2 of Section 328.

The Minister for Works: It is reproduced with the amendment necessary to fit in with this Bill.

Mr. NANSON: It seemed to be putting the cart before the horse for the Minister to insert an amendment the purpose of which he was not sure of with the idea of recommitting the Bill, if the amendment was unnecessary. The better course would be to defer the addition until recommitment and then the Minister could be ready with reasons for moving it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: An omission had evidently been noticed since the Bill had been drafted and the draftsman had sent along this addition in consequence. Immediately this Bill passed Section 328 became a dead letter, and this provision must be inserted in this Bill in order to make Clause 29 effective. The amendment was purely to insert what had been omitted in the drafting of the Bill.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Subclause 4 seemed to provide all the power that was

necessary. The Minister should promise to recommit the Bill if after consulting the draftsman he found the amendment was unnecessary.

The Minister for Works: I will see if there is any difficulty.

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

Clauses 30 to 33—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

## BILL—HOTHAM-CROSSMAN RAILWAY EXTENSION.

### *Second Reading.*

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. D. Johnson) in moving the second reading said: This is a slight extension of the Hotham-Crossman railway that is now under construction, and the object of the extension is to bring this line more closely in touch with the old-established settlement of Wandering. The original Bill authorising the construction of the Dwellingup-Hotham railway was passed in 1910, the total length authorised at that time being 25 miles. In 1911 a Bill for the extension of this line, known as the Hotham-Crossman Railway Bill, was passed providing for a further extension of ten miles, the estimated cost being: for construction, £13,500; for rails and fastenings, £6,500; or a total of £20,000 per mile. This section of the line is now nearly complete, the expenditure on it and the preceding section having been £46,391. The further extension now proposed, namely,  $5\frac{1}{2}$  miles will bring the end of the line within seven miles of Wandering. The length of the line, as I have already said, is  $5\frac{1}{2}$  miles. The distance from Perth to the commencement of the line is 106 miles, the ruling gradient is 1 in 40, and the estimated cost of construction is £8,500; rails and fastenings £4,100, or a total of £12,600, equal to a cost of £2,291 per mile.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Is that an increase on the last section?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is an increase, because unfortunately rails and fastenings have gone up in price,

wages have been slightly increased, and the cost of construction is a little bit higher than it has been up to date. Of course, this is only an estimate, and I am pleased to say that generally speaking railways are constructed under the estimate. This line of course is constructed to serve the old settlement of Wandering and we are only going to a point that will enable the Government to consider and investigate fully as to where the ultimate junction of this line will be with the Great Southern. There is a difference of opinion as to whether this line should run down to junction with the Collie-Narrogin line at Williams or whether it should go straight on and junction direct with the Great Southern at Narrogin or run out and junction somewhere near Pingelly. All these matters have to be investigated, but we find we are safe in taking the line to the point now proposed, seven miles south of Wandering, without interfering in any way with the various propositions submitted to the Government as the best alternatives for opening up this particular area. The work is actually in hand now because the Government desired to go on and complete this line to the point as suggested without taking away the construction gang. It is undoubtedly a good line and should have been constructed many years ago. It would have enabled us to construct our agricultural lines on a better basis than we are constructing them to-day, but although it is brought forward late in the day, I think it is one of the best propositions that has been submitted to the Chamber. I have much pleasure in moving—

*That the Bill be now read a second time.*

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam): I have very much pleasure in supporting the construction of this line, and I am delighted that the Wandering people are at last to be brought within reasonable distance of a railway. The country fully justifies this undertaking, and my only regret is that the Bill is only for a line of 5½ miles. I am sorry that the Minister is unable to determine whether the line is to junction with the Great Southern or the Collie-Narrogin line.

The Minister for Works: We want to know where the Transcontinental railway is going.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: From Northam.

The Premier: We do not want to repeat some of your mistakes.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Premier has no time to repeat anybody's mistakes; he has enough of his own. It is a pity that the House cannot be told what the Government policy is in regard to this extension. To-day for the second time we have been placed in much the same position. We had a report from the Advisory Board on this project but I notice that the report is not attached to this plan.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: It is on the Table of the House.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It is quite true that the present Ministry do not pay much heed to any advice offered by that board. I do not know why, because it was a board constituted of the very best and most capable of our Government officials, best qualified to give advice in connection with the route of railways. I do not think it is wise for the Government to take the full responsibility in connection with these railway routes. The Minister says he must first determine where the trans-Australian railway is to be built. I ask how far the trial survey has progressed. I am convinced that a better route than via Northam cannot be obtained, but the route should be determined because, as the Minister says, we are holding up the development of the State awaiting the surveyors' reports. In regard to this railway it is certainly a good thing while we have the gang on the spot to go on with the additional 5½ miles. It is a pity the Minister cannot introduce a similar Bill to supply the people to the east of Nunajin, while the gangs are there on the spot.

The Minister for Works: It will be some time before we are through to Nunajin.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: But we will have the line completed to Nunajin before Parliament meets again, and while the plant is on the spot it is easy to do it.

The Premier: Why did you not introduce it in the first instance?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: If the Premier would come over to this side I would have pleasure in introducing the Bill from that side. I have no wish to detain the House. I hope before very long there will be an extension of this line to junction with the Great Southern railway or with the Collie Narrogin railway in order that the systems may be linked up and the country served.

Mr. FOLEY (Leonora): While at all times willing to support the opening up of our agricultural areas, I trust that the Minister in charge of this Bill will see his way clear to study the men who are opening up and farming the areas of the State. A perusal of the map of the country this railway is to traverse will show that in one part there are men opening up the agricultural areas, and we find on one side of the line already constructed there is a vast tract of country which is held, whether for pioneering purposes or for purposes of a speculative nature I have yet to learn; but I have my own opinion. There is no doubt this portion of the railway is going to cost a great deal more per mile than the completed portion has cost. I am sorry I did not look at the Advisory Board's report in connection with the extension. I trust the Minister has gone fully into the matter. If agricultural railways are to be built I trust they will be built for the sole purpose of assisting genuine men who are going to settle on the land with the intention of doing some good for themselves and incidentally a great amount of good for the State. There have been railway propositions debated in the Chamber and we have found hon. members making up their minds that a certain belt of country is not worth an agricultural railway. We have found, no matter whether those gentlemen were possessed of a knowledge sufficient to enable them to say whether the country was worth settling or not, they have gone directly in opposition, particularly in one instance.

Mr. Monger: What was that?

Mr. FOLEY: I refer to the Esperance line. I do not wish to block the passage of this Bill, but still I think there are railways in other portions of the State

which should be built before this line is constructed. I believe that if Parliament took into consideration the merits of each and every railway from the point of assisting settlers alone, other railways would have been constructed, but I do not wish that opinion to act as a bar to the construction of this line, though hundreds and hundreds of acres of the land are shown on the map as held with very little settlement on it. There have been lines debated in the House where members of Cabinet have been charged with diverting a line for the sole purpose of keeping a railway outside the scope of usefulness to one gentleman. I trust that this line will not be a repetition of circumstances like that. I cannot but comment on this aspect of the question, and again I urge on the Minister to see that each and every settler in the district has his full share of any good the railway is likely to do him, and also that every means available to the Minister will be taken into consideration and that the words of men who have been over the country and know from their expert knowledge that the line is thoroughly justified will be followed. I have no doubt the Minister is only desirous of assisting those men who are opening up the country, and, as I am supporting the Government who on every occasion have given sole and whole-hearted support to agricultural railways, without promising too much I am going to vote for the second reading of this measure.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE (Katanning): I have pleasure in supporting this measure, and I desire to offer my congratulations to the Government on bringing down the Bill providing for the extension of the line from Hotham to Crossman. The member for Leonora (Mr. Foley) has made a statement that he has his own opinion as to the bona-fides of this large settlement held in this particular locality. I feel sure the hon. member is not possessed of all the facts concerning these particular holdings. I have not the least knowledge that these people have ever asked for the railway. I know that a very large amount of work has been done in that locality, work which the State should be grateful

for, that is in the eradication of poison in these large areas in that district; and I am satisfied that the gentlemen who have undertaken that work in this locality, if they could only get the money back that they have put into it, would be willing to hand over the land to the Government.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: I wish they would make the offer.

Mr. A. E. PIESSE: They have put a great deal more into it probably than the hon. member understands. So far as the district of Wandering is concerned, I would like to say that there are no settlers in any part of Western Australia who have a greater claim to a railway. Numbers of the residents in that locality are descendants of old settlers who settled in the district 60 or 70 years ago, and it is hard to understand why that particular locality has been left so long without railway communication. I am very glad to know that some action has been taken to extend the line to give the facilities so much needed by these people. I regret the Minister has not seen fit to bring down some comprehensive scheme of railways so far as this portion of the State is concerned. Those who are resident on the Great Southern railway, more particularly from Narrogin southward, have been looking forward to the distance between that portion of the State and the metropolis and port of Fremantle being shortened. It is well known that the present route from Perth to Albany travels round an elbow, and for many years past the people resident in these localities have had to pay a very much higher freight upon their produce than they should have done had they a more direct route to the port of Fremantle. I hope that as soon as finances will permit the Government will see fit to bring down a measure providing for the construction of a main trunk line of railway from Narrogin to Armadale. By this means I understand, according to the Advisory Board's report, we will be saved 55 miles; and when members take into consideration what that means so far as the carrying of produce is concerned, they will see it will be a very considerable help to the settlers in those localities. I would also draw attention of

hon. members to the fact that so far as the passenger traffic is concerned for all time there will be a very heavy traffic between these districts and the city, and we should take into consideration not only the expense of it but also the loss of valuable time that is incurred by making the journey a couple of hours longer than it need be. I have every reason to believe that the Government are anxious to see that this work is carried out, and I hope that in the very near future the Minister will see fit to bring down a Bill. I hope that even at this late hour of the session we will have some pronouncement from the Government that they propose to carry out this work at the earliest possible date.

Mr. HARPER (Pingelly): As I am very interested in this railway I have to congratulate the Government, at any rate on this occasion, for extending the Hotham-Crossman line. This extension has been advocated, and deservedly so, for very many years, and I am glad to see so many hon. members giving it their hearty support. The people of Wandering, as pointed out by the member for Katanning (Mr. A. E. Piesse) and other members, have done very great service to the State in the pioneering of agriculture, and everyone recognises as soon as he visits these parts the great necessity for railway communication there. I would like to see, if it is possible, the railway extended a further 5½ miles. It is a very profitable railway so far as traffic is concerned. It has been remunerative to the Government.

The Premier: Not from an agricultural point of view.

Mr. HARPER: I agree with the Premier on that point, but it is starting now on the area where it will be of great service to the agriculturists. Anyone can see by looking at the plan that it is just entering the boundary of the fertile land of that part of the State. A little further on it will do very great service to the people who have been for so long isolated from railway facilities in that locality. There is certainly more closely cultivated land ahead of the line.



The Premier: How far ahead?

Mr. HARPER: All along to the Great Southern.

The Premier: But how far ahead?

Mr. HARPER: If extended five miles now it would serve a large area of good agricultural land. I see by the Advisory Board's report that it will serve 200,000 acres of good land. That being so, I would like to see it extended a little further. The people in that neighbourhood are delighted with the treatment they are receiving from the Government. Although an Opposition member I myself appreciate the action of the Government in respect to this line, and I hope they will go a little further. I only wish the Government would do something towards getting this large area of land down there cultivated. It is a great disadvantage to the district to have a huge block of land lying idle. I like to see people holding land, but I like to see them make use of it.

The Premier: We are introducing a land tax later on.

Mr. HARPER: I do not mind if the Premier imposes heavy taxes on unimproved land. It is not fair to the settlers in the immediate neighbourhood to have a big area like that lying idle. Under closer settlement one settler considerably assists another, and the work he does encourages others to further develop their own lands. Needless to say, this line will have my support. I wish I could induce the Government to extend it another five miles. I am sure it will be of invaluable service to the State, and particularly to the people in that immediate district. In regard to the remarks made by the member for Katanning (Mr. A. E. Piesse) I think the Advisory Board is to be commended for its advocacy of a line from Armadale to the Great Southern. This would be one of the most valuable propositions any Government could take on. It would save a long distance in freight, and would be of invaluable assistance to settlers along the route, in addition to which it would open up a large area of good wheat land. No railway could be more productive than a direct line from

Armadale to the Great Southern at some advantageous point along the trunk line. It would represent a saving of 50 miles each way. I hope the Government will see their way clear to carry out this project at an early date. It is surprising that it has not been warmly advocated long ago. I hope it will be taken in hand, and a Bill passed for its construction.

Mr. MONGER (York): I intend to support the railway. I again desire to enter a protest against the privilege accorded to the Minister in the matter of deviation, and I desire to call the attention of hon. members to the crooked course of this five and a half mile railway proposition. I am sorry the member for Collie (Mr. A. A. Wilson) is not here to give us his views on crooked lines, and his reasons for having had a previous railway straightened up. I fail to see why these little five and a half mile railway communications should not be built in the way suggested by the member for Collie. When I look at these crooked concerns I again ask hon. members to give fair and reasonable consideration to my protest, which will again be heard from me on the Loan Estimates. I think Ministers should explain their reasons for introducing these zig-zag agricultural lines of railways instead of bringing in Bills for straight lines. I sympathise with these people who have been so long neglected, and I am pleased to support the second reading. I am glad to learn from the Minister that whilst he has the working gang out there he intends to proceed with the early construction of this line, and I am going to ask him now to consider these people whom I say he has deprived of the fulfilment of a promise by a previous Administration. I ask him to adopt the same policy as regards them and, whilst he has a working gang available, to proceed at an early date with the further construction of that line to the point which has caused and is causing such considerable doubt in the minds of settlers in these parts as to the honesty of purpose of the Minister for Works and of the Minister for Lands.

I ask the Minister to give fair and reasonable consideration to the just and legitimate claims of these people. I do hope that when considering other railway propositions the Minister for Works will give the same consideration to the further extension of the Nunagin line as he has given to the line we are now dealing with, and which he informed us was to be proceeded with immediately. I ask him to give the same consideration to the people whom he and his Ministry have treated in the most unfair manner ever meted out to any section of the community which accepted in all good faith the promise of a previous Administration.

Mr. TURVEY (Swan): I am glad to give my support to this extension of the Hotham-Crossman railway. I realise it is going one step further towards granting railway facilities to a portion of the State in which these facilities have been so long delayed. The old settled district of Wandering, as most hon. members are aware, contains some of the finest agricultural tracts to be found anywhere in the State, and I am glad the Minister has brought in a Bill with a view to tapping part of the Wandering district. I think the Minister would have gone even further, but for the fact that he realises it is most probable the trans-Australian railway will intersect somewhere about this particular point. At any rate the Advisory Board, some years ago, furnished a most favourable report on the Narrogin-Armadale or Narrogin-Wickepin railway, projects, and I believe the only reason that has restrained the present Government from introducing a Bill for the construction of such a line is the uncertainty that still prevails with regard to the route of the Trans-Australian railway. When that is decided and if it should be determined not to construct it along the Armadale-Swan Valley route I have not the slightest hesitation in saying the present Government will take the earliest opportunity of introducing a Bill for the construction of the Narrogin-Armadale railway. I realise with the member for Katanning (Mr. A. E. Piesse) that such a railway would be

a boon to the people of the Great Southern district. It would not only open up splendid fertile land but would also lessen the distance by 40 or 45 miles to the people of the Great Southern district. The Ministry are seized with the necessity for the construction of such a line, and I have no doubt that they, together with members who are particularly interested in these districts, regret there has been delay in the construction of the railway along the route indicated. But when considering such a proposition we have to take into account the probability of the Trans-Australian railway going along that route. I congratulate the Minister on the introduction of this Bill. Though it is for but a small extension, still to the people of the Wandering district it is indeed an extension which will be welcomed throughout that particular area.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not think there should be any more discussion on railways contemplated. The discussion tonight has not been largely on the Bill but on railways which ought to be built. I did not want to interrupt members unnecessarily, but I want them to discuss the Bill.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin): In deference to your remarks I would like to say this is really a Bill for a few miles of railway into a district which must be served by other railways which have a strong relative bearing on the proposal, and I hope you will not refuse me the opportunity other members have enjoyed in this respect.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is always the danger of allowing latitude.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: We have a report from the Advisory Board on this proposal, which also deals with railways west of the Great Southern generally. The plan shows the whole thing, and it is utterly impossible for me to speak on the matter intelligibly unless I am allowed to refer to them.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member knows full well that the only matters which may be discussed are the general principles of the Bill. The Bill provides for the construction of a railway from Hotham to Crossman. All that can be

discussed is that which comes within the provisions of the Bill. I shall not unnecessarily limit the hon. member, but we have had the Estimates and two or three other railways and I am wondering when this is going to stop.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I am very glad the Government have introduced this proposal, although it is only for  $5\frac{1}{2}$  miles of railway. The last report of the Commissioner of Railways shows that the portion of the line already constructed is one of the best paying railways in Western Australia. Although only a portion has so far been taken over by the Working Railways, up to the 30th June a profit of £3,523 was made on that particular railway, and it speaks well for the extension of the line into the rich agricultural country which it is now tapping. I am sorry the Government are terminating the railway if only for the present, at a pool in the bush. It is necessary that the line should be extended to connect with the Great Southern railway, and to serve this country properly, I have always contended that the Dwellingup-Hotham railway should be extended to the town of Williams, and that the Narrogin-Armadale railway should be built. If the Narrogin-Armadale railway is built also, that will serve the whole of the district and the whole of the people in the district will be satisfied. The extension of this railway to Narrogin via Williams—if we take it to Williams it will really be a connection with Narrogin—will reduce the distance between the Great Southern districts and Fremantle by 37 miles, and it will be no small thing for the whole of the producers in the wheat belt east of the Great Southern railway to find themselves brought 37 miles closer to the metropolitan area and to the port of export for their wheat, namely, Fremantle. The Government can afford the settlers great help by the immediate construction of the first section of the Narrogin-Armadale railway from Narrogin through Minigin and the 14-mile Brook to connect with this railway which I also recommend. The Premier has promised a survey of the Narrogin-Armadale line as soon as the route of the Trans-Australian railway is

decided upon. I hope the Minister for Works will do something to get the route of the Trans-Australian railway fixed up before he goes away to New Zealand, so that this important and necessary survey of the Narrogin-Armadale railway, which has already been promised nearly a year, can be put in hand without further delay. The Premier has told us that a loan of  $5\frac{1}{2}$  millions is to be floated by the Government. I hope that with that money the Government will do something at once to extend the railway now under review and to carry out their promise and the recommendations of the Advisory Board with regard to the early construction of the Narrogin-Armadale railway. If I may be permitted, I would say that even then the district south of that which this railway is approaching would not be served. The Quindanning people are asking for a railway also, and we have not been able to get even a report made on their request.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is discussing the general principle of railway construction and the necessity for railways.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I abide by your ruling, and will content myself with supporting this very small instalment of what is required in the districts west of Narrogin, this miserable  $5\frac{1}{2}$  miles of railway.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

The Minister for Works laid the plans of the proposed railway on the Table.

#### *In Committee.*

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

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

### BILL—ROAD CLOSURE.

#### *Second Reading.*

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. T. H. Bath) in moving the second reading said: This is a measure which each year is usually left until the end of the

session in order that all the road closures which require the sanction of Parliament might be included in the Bill. I might state for the information of members that each of these roads closed, included under Clause 2, have the approval of the local authorities, and they have been consulted in each instance, so that members need have no fear that the proposal will do any injustice. In regard to the first, I may point out that the Victoria Park municipal council provided for a deviation in the existing road, which was duly approved. As the old road was within a municipality it required an Act of Parliament before the closure could be effected. In connection with the second road closure, the Commonwealth applied for a rifle range at Narrogin which includes a portion of two streets, and this made it requisite for these streets to be closed before the rifle range could be used. This action was approved by the Lands Department and also by the Narrogin municipal council. The third closure deals with the area which has been acquired by the Commonwealth for the purpose of a store site, and as they have taken the whole of a three-cornered position which includes the area to Samson-street, it was agreed that this portion should be included in the area which has been acquired by the Commonwealth. The street has been rendered unnecessary by reason of the fact that the whole area has been secured by the Commonwealth. It is a small triangular area in East Perth. The next is a road closure in the townsite of Greenbushes. It was agreed to grant to the Roman Catholic Church authorities land comprised in a right of way in exchange for another right of way of equal area, and this also requires Parliamentary authority before the exchange can be completed and the road closure approved. The next is in connection with the closure of portion of Clifton-street, North Fremantle, rendered necessary in connection with the erection of abattoirs. It is included in portion of the abattoir site, and the street is to be diverted over a piece of land granted by the Commonwealth from the fort reserve. It has the approval of the Lands Department and of the local authority.

The next is also in the municipality of North Fremantle. An area in the vicinity of Buckland Hill was resumed by the Public Works Department for water supply purposes. It, however, included a portion of a public road, and as it is necessary that this portion should be included in the reserve the road closure has to be effected. The transaction cannot be completed until that road closure is approved by this measure. These are the various road closures approved in the Bill, and no objection has been raised, but if hon. members desire to investigate them further I have no objection to the second reading being adjourned and to laying the papers on the Table for the time being in order that hon. members may peruse them.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam): If the Minister will make the papers available I think we might pass the second reading, so long as he postpones the Committee stage until to-morrow. I know these Bills are provided each session and I know they are necessary, and I am willing to take the Minister's assurance that the local authorities in each case have endorsed his action. As a matter of fact, these roads are usually closed at the request of the local authorities or with their approval. In connection with the North Fremantle closure, which the Minister says is necessary because we propose to erect abattoirs, I would be the last member in the House to object to anything that would bring about the establishment of abattoirs for the metropolitan area. However, that is apart from the measure. What we are prepared to do now is to pass the second reading, and to have the papers laid on the Table and to take the Committee stage to-morrow.

Mr. Price: When you were in office you did not make the papers available, but you passed the Bill straight through on all occasions.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: There is nothing to prevent the hon. member saying that if he wishes, but the Minister has very rightly said that he would make the papers available and adjourn the second reading. We are willing to pass the second reading and take the papers be-

fore the Committee stage in order to bring an end to the session.

The Minister for Lands: These Bills usually went through in one day.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I know one the Minister objected to. He was always anxious when he was leader of the Opposition to see that things were done in order and to make close inquiries into every measure. I have no intention of delaying the passage of the Bill because we know it is a formal one and that it has been carefully inquired into before being brought down.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

## BILL—LAND AND INCOME TAX.

### *Message.*

Message from the Governor received and read recommending the Bill.

### *Second Reading.*

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan) in moving the second reading said: It is not my intention on the second-reading stage of this measure to enter to any great extent into the question of the equity of a land tax or the justice of an income tax or into the reasons why it is found wise to alter the provisions of the existing law, because it will be discovered, on looking through the measure, that it is essentially a Committee Bill, and because we have already decided, as a Parliament and as a State, that it is desirable to obtain revenue by the taxation of land and incomes and the profits of companies. But there is a marked difference between the policy of the two parties in connection with the method of levying a land tax and levying an income tax and deriving revenue from the profits of companies. The main points of difference, so far as land tax is concerned, are that the party on the Government side of the House consider not alone that it is an equitable form of tax, but that it is only equitable when it is levied against all landowners without exception. Thus we have introduced this measure providing for a land tax without exemption, except in the case of municipal and roads board lands, parks, reserves, and land occupied by

churches, charitable institutions, mechanics' institutes, and like bodies. We provide that all other land shall pay a tax on its capital unimproved value. The income tax in the past has provided a uniform rate of 4d. in the pound on all incomes over £200 per annum, with certain deductions, of course, some of them having been altered in this measure; but we believe the more equitable form of an income tax is to levy a tax on a basis that will be more equitable by causing the person who is in a better position to pay a larger proportion towards the revenue of the State to pay a higher rate. Thus we have introduced that part of our policy in the direction of making it a graduated income tax. So far as dividend duties are concerned, in the past it will be found that under the provisions of the Dividend Duties Act a number of companies refrained from declaring dividends but distributed their profits for the purpose of avoiding the necessity of having to pay one shilling in the pound, doing it by paying 4d. in the pound through the income tax. The present Bill before the Chamber is one that amalgamates the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act, 1907, and the Dividend Duties Acts of 1902 and 1906, and also the annual Act which fixes the rates of the taxes. It will, therefore, be noticed that there will not be any necessity in the future to pass a Bill each session fixing the rates of the taxes.

Hon. J. Mitchell: You are repealing the Dividend Duties Acts.

The PREMIER: We are repealing all the other Acts, as this is a consolidating measure. In order that there may be no misunderstanding in regard to exemptions, I may explain that we are permitting one exemption to continue, because we feel that it is right we should keep inviolate contracts entered into by the Government with any of the State's citizens. For that reason we are exempting conditional purchase lands taken up prior to the passing of the Act, and taken up on the understanding, and on the advertisements issued by the State that induced people to take them up, that they would not be subject to land tax for five

years. We are permitting that exemption to continue, but only so far as conditional purchase lands taken up prior to the passing of this measure. After the passing of this Bill it will be distinctly understood that conditional purchase land will contribute towards the upkeep of the country just as much as any other land. It is unnecessary for me to explain that, so far as our party are concerned, we believe that we can relieve a good deal of the pressure upon the settler in his early stages by exempting him for a period from the payment of his annual rents which will more than compensate him for the amount he will pay by way of land tax.

Hon. J. Mitchell: He will have to pay it some time.

The PREMIER: That is true, but the hon. member will appreciate the fact that we are endeavouring to help the settler during the period when he has great difficulty in making ends meet. In fact for the first three years or five, we all appreciate the fact that he is really paying out and receiving little or nothing in return; and during that period we propose to assist him. It is part of our policy to exempt him from paying his annual rent, subject, of course, to the provisions of this measure passing. Of course it is also unnecessary for me to explain, as it is shown in the Bill, that we propose to make the land tax uniform. We could not possibly provide a tax of one penny in the pound on unimproved land and one halfpenny in the pound on improved land, and at the same time claim that we were introducing a tax without exemption. The present Act exempts the person who improves his holding sufficient to comply with the Land Act to the extent of half the tax, but it has been found, as most members know, that merely to comply with the provisions of the Land Act so far as improvements are concerned is to do little or nothing on the holding. We are desirous of bringing land to its proper use, and if it is not used, then the holder who holds the land out of use and against other citizens of the State who desire to obtain land and to legitimately use it, shall at the same time pay a tax

as though it is held by some other person, and, so far as contributing to the revenue is concerned, he will be put on the same footing as though he is holding the land and using it. It is not equitable to differentiate; all land should be taxed on the unimproved capital value.

Mr. A. E. Piesse: Whether improved or not?

The PREMIER: Yes. The hon. member knows well that the operation of the Land Act at the present time is causing a number of people to subdivide their estates, while others are disposing of their holdings, and with the assistance of the Federal Land Tax which provides for a special impost upon large estates, we are making great progress in Australia in the direction of bringing the land into use. Were it not for the Federal Act and our own Act, we would have great difficulty in settling immigrants satisfactorily in the Commonwealth. These measures are having the desired effect. It will also be noticed that we are making provision that absentees shall pay 50 per cent. more than the owner of the land who resides in the State, and who is cultivating his land. That I contend is a fair tax to impose upon the person who is residing elsewhere and who is receiving profits from the working of the land by the citizens of the State, and who contributes to a very small degree towards the cost of carrying on the Government. We have also introduced what is not altogether an innovation elsewhere, but which is new here, that the minimum tax to be paid by a land holder shall be 2s. 6d. per annum. That is not a great hardship although it might be thought that it is hardly worth while collecting. There is nothing further I need say on the question of the land tax. It will be 1d. in the pound on all land with a 50 per cent. increase on absentees. I would like to point out that we do not propose to make the tax any heavier than it is in the other States. In some cases it is not so severe. For instance, in New South Wales—and theirs is not a modern Act, because it was passed in 1908—the tax is 1d. in the pound on the unimproved value

and the amount of exemption is £240. We believe it is not desirable to have any exemption in connection with the land tax.

Mr. A. E. Piesse: The operation of the land tax is suspended in New South Wales.

The PREMIER: In the event of the local authorities being rated on the unimproved value, but that is the only case I know of where that is in operation. I do not think the Government in New South Wales pay anything like the proportion paid in Western Australia towards the upkeep of local authorities, with the result that the difference in our case is made up wholly by the amount we would pay in excess to the local authorities by way of subsidies. In Victoria the tax is  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the pound, the exemption being £250, but there is no exemption when the land equals in value £500. That of course is really exempting the small holding. Personally I cannot see any comparison between the land values at £250 being exempted in the city and of the value of £500 being exempted in the country. In any case I do not think it is a good policy; neither does it permit the land tax to be levied equitably to have no exemption at all. In Victoria the principles we are putting into operation of a minimum of 2s. 6d. prevails. In Queensland there is no land tax. In South Australia it is  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. on the unimproved value from £1 to £5,000, there being no exemption, and 1d. on the unimproved value exceeding £5,000, and absentees have to pay 20 per cent. additional. In New Zealand it is 1d. on the unimproved value, with graduations when the value reaches £5,000, which makes it severe on the large holders. Ours is to be 1d. in the pound on all lands irrespective of the holding, and, as I have stated, we also provide a 50 per cent. increase on absentees. The Bill provides that every land owner without exception will be required to furnish returns and pay land tax, except of course those I mention, the public bodies. Every land holder will have to make a return and pay the tax. This will assist us materially, as we are discovering under existing conditions that quite a number of

land holders have omitted to make returns and pay the just taxes which are due to the State. When we put into operation the provisions of the present Act calling on them to pay for the years in which they have not submitted returns and levy fines against them, they make considerable complaints and urge that they were not aware that it was essential on their part to do so, and that they were waiting until the department notified them. There will be no mistake about this in the future, because the Bill will provide that all land holders shall submit returns and pay their taxes. The provision of the Commonwealth Act which enables the Crown to claim any land which has been undervalued by a taxpayer to the extent of 25 per cent. or over, at a sum equal to the taxpayer's value, with improvements, plus 10 per cent., is included in the Bill. May I explain that the Commonwealth provision is that they may resume if they are satisfied that the taxpayer after making a return has understated his value by 25 per cent. or more. We are making the same provision. The Commonwealth Act also provides that they can only resume by paying that amount plus the value of the improvements and plus 10 per cent. That is a fair method of resuming land when it is required for the purposes of the State. In our case it is introduced for the purpose of general land resumptions. The question of land resumptions for public purposes must of course operate under the provisions of the Public Works Act until such time as that Act is amended. It compels the land holder to place a fair value upon his land, and does not cause the State to have to go to considerable expense continually in following up the value put upon properties by land holders so as to be satisfied that these holders are paying their fair proportion to the revenue of the State. It is unfair to the citizen who submits his return honestly and who states the true value of his land that someone else should do the opposite without being detected for a number of years, and so, by submitting returns under-stating values, avoid paying to the State what is due by way of taxation. No one will agree with the

conditions which permit that kind of thing to prevail. The Bill will compel taxpayers to become a little more honest. I would not like to explain instances that a good many of us know of where values have been under-stated. Let me state my own case. I purchased a block of land on a large estate not many miles from Perth on which to build a home, and I discovered that the value placed on that land was less than half the amount which I actually paid for it, and, immediately I became possessed of it, the Taxation Department charged me just double what they had been paid previously. The department took my valuation and did not question it. I discovered afterwards that they had not questioned the previous owner's valuation. It may be claimed that that owner was not entitled to pay more because he held his land as part of a large estate, and that the fact that I had built upon it increased its value. That is not the principle of taxation on the unimproved value. Unfortunately, however, that is what a great number of people think, and it is impressed upon them by those who are opposed to the land tax that this is what happens, that immediately there is an increased value he has to pay an additional tax.

Mr. Broun: What have the Government valuers been doing?

The PREMIER: The hon. member ought to know we do not employ Government valuers to any extent.

Mr. Broun: They were at my place recently.

The PREMIER: It is only recently that a systematic valuation of country lands has been made. It has been made on this occasion with the desire of seeing that a true valuation is placed on the land; not like my friend opposite who said all land from here to the sea was worth £2 an acre.

Hon. J. Mitchell: I would like to buy it at that price.

The PREMIER: We fix the rate on the unimproved value and it does not increase to the slightest degree by the improvements which have been made. When a holder makes improve-

ments he contributes to the local authority moneys for the clearing of roads, et cetera; then the unimproved value of the land of necessity increases.

Mr. Dooley: That increases the unimproved value.

The PREMIER: Yes, the expenditure of public funds.

Mr. Price: And the presence of population.

The PREMIER: Quite so.

Mr. Broun: And does not the money the farmer puts into his land improve that land at all?

The PREMIER: Not the unimproved value.

Mr. Harper: It should not.

The PREMIER: It does not increase the unimproved value one sixpence. The hon. member knows that we have magnificent agricultural land at Esperance and it is of no value from an agricultural point of view because it has not railway facilities. You can put all the settlers you like there, but unless you give them railway facilities and expend public moneys so that the result of the industry of the people down there may be turned to account, the land is not worth threepence.

Mr. Broun: Oh, no, so long as you improve the unimproved value must become greater.

The PREMIER: The hon. member does not understand the principles of taxation on the unimproved value.

The Minister for Mines: Read the definition of "unimproved value."

The PREMIER: The hon. member apparently does not know the interpretation of unimproved value as it is in the present Act. If the hon. member will turn to the interpretation of "unimproved value" he will find that it reads as follows:—

"Unimproved value" means—(a)

In respect of land granted in fee simple the capital sum for which such land would sell under such reasonable conditions of sale as a bona fide seller would require assuming the actual improvements (if any) had not been made."

Mr. Broun: That is all right.



The PREMIER : The hon. member admits that much. The interpretation goes on to state that any improvements made are not to be calculated. The land is to be regarded as in a virgin state. It is the expenditure of public moneys which increases the unimproved value, by bringing the land within reach of a market, by providing local conveniences and by populating the district. A few years ago the Mount Lawley estate was purchased for £7,000 or £8,000. What has happened ? By the industry of the people in the agricultural districts, by the expenditure of large sums of public money on the construction of agricultural railways in order to enable those agricultural districts to be settled and developed, a great deal of activity has been manifested in the City and suburbs, with the result that the gentlemen who purchased the Mount Lawley estate for a paltry £7,000 or £8,000 will reap a profit of something like £300,000. Yet they have contributed to the community responsible for the enhanced value of that estate only a paltry few shillings since the land tax first came into operation. That is no fair proportion to be returned to the State.

Hon. J. Mitchell : This is not an increment tax.

The PREMIER : No, it is taking only a very small proportion of the increased value of the land ; still after all it is a method of obtaining a proportion towards the cost of Government. However, I am not going to pursue that question any further. It is not necessary. The hon. member has admitted the equity of a land tax by having supported a Government which introduced it, although he had to somersault to do it.

Hon. J. Mitchell : The hon. member will withdraw that. *Hansard* shows that I supported the tax in order that the deficit left by the previous Government might be made good.

The PREMIER : The hon. member cannot justifiably make that statement. He stood on the public platform in opposition to the land tax after another Government had taken over the reins of office, and when the deficit was already in existence. Why did he not discover it

at that time? He stood on the public platform as an out-and-outer in opposition to a land tax for any purpose.

Hon. J. Mitchell : I did not.

The PREMIER : And then, after he was secure in his place in Parliament, and the Government introduced a Land Tax Bill, he supported it, and one of his strongest supporters, the late Hon. G. Throssell, threatened to trounce him on the public platform for his action. Coming to the question of income tax, we have provided in the Bill that the exemption shall be £250.

Hon. J. Mitchell : I thought so.

The PREMIER : Apparently the hon. member is beginning to discover the equity of an income tax.

Hon. J. Mitchell : Save your own supporters, and tax the poor unfortunate farmers.

The PREMIER : That is absurd, as I shall prove presently. The point is this: The person whose net income amounts to £250, and that only, has to exist in Western Australia on that money by way of wages or salary, and we expect him to live under reasonably comfortable conditions and to rear a family; and we have come to the conclusion that no person can do that in Western Australia on less than £250, or not as well as we expect him to do it. Therefore we have resolved that it is not desirable to extract anything from him more than he is paying at the present time. This is the wage earner, who in an indirect way is already contributing more in proportion towards the taxes of the country than any other person in the community.

Hon. J. Mitchell : To the State?

The PREMIER : In the State and to the State.

Hon. J. Mitchell : To the Commonwealth.

The PREMIER : It is recognised by economists that all taxes are paid by the wage earner. We consider that the cost of living should first of all be exempted. But the exemption will apply to all taxpayers to the extent of £250. The tax being graduated, a man's net income will be decided, and on his net income he will pay the rate provided in the schedule. But he will not pay on the first £250. A

person in receipt of £500 will pay at the rate of fourpence in the pound on £250; if in receipt of £750 he will pay fivepence in the pound but, of course, only on £500. And so on, right through graduations.

Mr. Harper: Why not continue?

The PREMIER: We graduate up to £5,000. All over that pay one shilling in the pound.

Mr. Harper: And over £10,000 pays more?

The PREMIER: For the time being we are not doing too badly if we extract one shilling in the pound on everything over £5,000. If hon. members will turn to the schedule they will there find the graduations.

Mr. A. E. Piesse: Does this apply to civil servants?

The PREMIER: Yes. It will be seen that in respect to the net income of a taxpayer, not being a company, from all sources, which exceeds £250 but does not exceed £500, the rate of the tax is to be fourpence in the pound; exceeding £500, but not exceeding £750 it is to be fivepence; exceeding £750, but not £1,000, sixpence; exceeding £1,000, but not £1,500, sevenpence; exceeding £1,500, but not £2,500, eightpence; exceeding £2,500, but not £5,000, ninepence; and exceeding £5,000, one shilling in the pound, with an additional impost of fifty per cent. on absentees. We are not providing that companies shall get any exemptions. They are to pay one shilling for every pound sterling of their net incomes, without any exemption whatever.

Mr. Harper: It is a pity you cannot tax some of those operating in Victoria and New South Wales.

Mr. Taylor: We are going across after them presently.

The PREMIER: I want to give hon. members some idea as to how the graduations will operate. After making the deductions which are provided in the measure, if the income is £500 the rate will be fourpence, and this will be paid on £250. So a man in receipt of such a salary will only pay to the revenue, by way of this tax, £4 3s. 4d. If hon. members will calculate the amount under a land tax of one penny in the pound

they will see that if a person is the holder of property of the unimproved value of £1,000 he will pay just a similar amount, namely £4 3s. 4d., so that the man in receipt of an income of £500 is placed in the same position as a man in the possession of property of the unimproved value of £1,000, and if he was an absentee he would pay 50 per cent. more, or £6 5s. If he was in receipt of an income of £750 the rate would be 5d., he would pay on £500, and his contribution would be £10 8s. 4d.; if the income was £1,000 the rate would be 6d., he would pay on £750, and his tax would amount to £18 15s.; if it was £1,500—take my own case as one in point—the rate would be 7d., he would pay on £1,250, and the amount of his tax would be £36 9s. 2d. If the net income was £2,500 he would pay at the rate of 8d. on £2,250, or a tax of £75; if the income was £5,000 he would pay at the rate of 9d. on £4,750, which would amount to £178 2s. 6d.; if the income was £6,000 he would pay at the rate of 1s. on £5,750, which would amount to £287 10s. per annum, and so it would continue at a definite rate of 1s. in the £ on all amounts above £5,000. In order to show that we have not forgotten that it was our duty while in receipt of what may be termed a decent salary to contribute a little more than the person just on a living margin, I may mention that five Ministers of the Crown would pay without deductions £32 1s. 6d. each, whilst in my own case the tax would amount to £36 9s. 2d.

Member: What about members?

The PREMIER: Members will be let off much lighter, because they have only to pay at the rate of 4d. on £50, if there are no deductions to be made. I believe that there are still one or two members who will be able to make little or no deduction, and that is a disability which I hope they will remedy at the earliest opportunity. One point I think I ought to mention is that of the minimum payment. That provision would operate in this way: if a person was in receipt of a net income of £252 he would only pay tax on £2 at the rate of 4d., which would mean a contribution of 8d. That amount

would not be worth while collecting. It would not pay us to call on the taxpayer to make a return, send out his assessment, and call upon him to remit his 8d., probably through the post office. Therefore there is no hardship in requiring that person to contribute 2s. 6d. which will be worth collecting. Thus, we make a minimum rate of 2s. 6d. even though the actual amount he would pay according to the rate would be only 8d.

Mr. Price: Where is that shown?

The PREMIER: In the Third Schedule.

Mr. Price: That is for the land tax?

The PREMIER: It applies in both instances. If members will turn to Clause 16 they will note that we continue the present conditions in regard to exempting the person who has paid land tax by allowing him to set that tax off against the amount he would have to pay in income tax. The clause is self-explanatory, and for that reason I propose to read it. It is slightly altering the wording of the present Act, which has been abused in a direction Parliament never intended. The clause reads—

Whenever any person is assessed for income tax on profits derived directly from the cultivation of any parcel of land, such person may claim and shall be allowed an abatement of so much of the amount payable for income tax on such profit as equals the amount paid by him for land tax in respect of the same parcel of land.

That will only permit this deduction to be made by those actually in occupation and cultivating the land. Unfortunately, we have had the position tested where certain taxpayers claimed the deduction who have not done anything in the cultivation of their land, but are really deriving their income from rents of land they were in possession of. That was never intended by Parliament to be taken as income directly derived from the land.

Mr. A. E. Piesse: Has that been allowed?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. Taylor: Has it been tested at law?

The PREMIER: It has been actually put into operation in a way that was never intended by the Act. I think I

may say that it has been tested in the court successfully, with the result that we are now providing that the deduction shall operate only so far as it affects persons in occupation of and cultivating their holdings, and will not be permitted to be used by those owning land and deriving an income from rent.

Mr. Broun: If a man's land tax is £8 and his income tax £10 he will only pay income tax on £2?

The PREMIER: Yes. The position was that there were quite a number of people who were carrying on business in the city and in towns, and were claiming that the income derived from business was income derived directly from the land, and they made a deduction which we had to admit, but which was never intended by Parliament. We are making the law clear under this Bill so that such deductions will not be permitted in future. I may refer to the recent case of Mr. Septimus Burt, on which an appeal was made from the Supreme Court to the High Court. This was a claim for a deduction from the income of the sheep station of four per cent. of the value of the land and improvements. The High Court held that he could make this deduction, although it was never intended to be made by Parliament. That it was never intended is shown by the fact that the Commissioner of Taxation, with the consent of both the previous and the present Administrations, refused to make the deduction and fought it strenuously until it reached the High Court. An amendment is made in the present Bill so that such a claim cannot arise in future. We have also provided for an increase of the deduction per child wholly dependent on the taxpayer from £10 to £20. A lot of people imagine that this is really a deduction from the amount payable in tax, and that if the tax payable was £20 the parent might deduct £10. What is meant is that this amount per child can be deducted from the total income before assessment. As I have said, we have increased the deduction to £20, and after all that amount is nothing like sufficient for the purpose of providing for each child in a family.

Hon. J. Mitchell: The deduction amounts to 6s. 8d., a lawyer's fee.

The PREMIER: Then we make provision to meet the special circumstances of ordinary taxpayers engaged in mining. The Bill allows the full cost of all development work in any single year to be deducted from the income for the purpose of arriving at the amount they shall pay on their profits. That of course is only fair. It is very much in the same form as expenditure by a farmer on clearing land for the purpose of permitting him to cultivate it. While developing a mine he is not earning anything, but immediately it becomes revenue-producing and shows a profit then he must pay a shilling in the pound on the profits derived from such operations. It includes all labour and material incurred in the sinking of the shaft and the timbering and opening up of the workings so as to produce profit. In order to stimulate taxpayers to furnish their returns with one month of the time fixed, a percentage increase is provided of 10 per cent. for over one month due, 15 per cent. for two months, 20 per cent. for three months, and so on. That is to stimulate taxpayers to pay in the proper year. Unfortunately under existing conditions taxpayers are not too prone to consider it their duty to the State to be prompt with their payments, and unless the Taxation Department is continually following up every taxpayer quite a number are able to evade payment for a number of years and some by eventually leaving the State escape without paying at all. We provide further, that the commissioner may remit this increased percentage if he deems it just to do so. Similar provision is made in most of the States where land and income taxes are in operation. As I stated at the outset, I do not think it necessary to explain anything further at this stage more than to say that the Government are satisfied that the time has arrived when we must receive further revenue, and the best source we know of from which we can receive it without inflicting any hardship on the people, is by means of the land tax as now proposed, and through the medium of a graduated income tax. An-

other point which I almost omitted to refer to is the object of bringing the Companies Dividend Duties Act under the Land and Income Tax Act. There are local companies which are distributing profits without declaring dividends. I have in mind a number of them, among them being newspapers, where they pay large fees for different purposes to their shareholders and also by way of directors' and editorial fees, and the persons benefiting only pay on the income at the rate of 4d. in the pound, whereas if they paid the usual rate for such work as might be performed and distributed the rest by way of declaring a dividend, they would have to pay a shilling in the pound on the profits. Quite a number of other business people have been doing the same thing, and in order to put them all on the same footing, and to prevent any evasion of the payment of the proper amount they will have to pay, of course after making the proper deductions, at the rate of a shilling in the pound on the balance.

Mr. Carpenter: Who will decide what is a fair salary?

The PREMIER: That does not operate in this case because they will have to pay on their profits, and the result will be that they will have to pay at the rate of a shilling in the pound on their profits. It will be noticed, too, that the definition of "business" has been altered. This is an important alteration and one which will have a far-reaching effect. The definition is similar, to some extent, to Section 30 of the present Act, but it is intended to treat the transactions carried on by a club under the authority of a license granted under the Licensing Act as a business, and similarly any club, company or association formed for the purposes of horse racing or trotting will be regarded as a business. This is important in view of paragraph (a) of Subclause 1 of Clause 13, which levies income tax on any person wherever he is residing, from any profession, trade, business, employment, or vocation carried on in Western Australia, and also in view of Subclause 6 of Clause 14, which exempts institutions when no profits are divisible among the members, but so far only as such income

is not derived from a business. It will be remembered that the Full Court decided that the W.A. Turf Club was exempt from income tax because it was deemed not to be carrying on a business for profit or gain. The Bill makes the club liable for the payment of income tax on its net income, and that will appeal to most members as a fair burden to be put on that particular club, or other clubs of a similar nature. I will take an opportunity in Committee to point out other differences which I have not mentioned, and which after all are of very minor importance. The main points are those to which I have drawn attention, the alteration in the incidence of the land tax, the graduations of the income tax, and the bringing of companies under the provisions of the income tax in order that they shall pay on their profits instead of on dividends declared. As far as companies are concerned, there is quite a number which, instead of declaring dividends, utilise the profits made in Western Australia to open up business in other parts of the British dominions and even outside of the Empire.

Mr. Monger: You are only referring to an odd mining company.

The PREMIER: No. I am not. Quite a number of people who are carrying on businesses other than mining are doing likewise, and yet the profits made in Western Australia are being employed to add to their businesses in other parts of the world.

Mr. Dooley: The sugar combine.

The PREMIER: Yes, and we are not receiving a penny under the Dividend Duties Act. But in future the profits made on business operations in Western Australia will have to pay the tax which we are now imposing.

Hon. J. Mitchell: We said so before the last election.

The PREMIER: That is the provision we are making, and I trust the House will see the wisdom of obtaining further revenue to meet the extra demands on the Government. We could have met the position by increasing the charges for services rendered, but that would have meant that the producer on the one hand

and the consumer on the other hand would have been compelled to bear a heavier burden and a further proportion of the weight of government. This is the most equitable way to adjust the present position in Western Australia, and we hope that Parliament will appreciate the position and give us an opportunity to put the measure into operation at an early date. The new taxation will not have any great effect during the present financial year because it will operate for only a few months, but when in full operation it will affect our revenue materially.

Hon. J. Mitchell: When will it come into operation?

The PREMIER: As soon as the Bill is passed, but there will be such a little time for making the necessary assessments and collections that we shall not receive a great amount during the present financial year. It will date from the 1st of January. Under the land tax the amount is payable by the person in possession at noon on the 31st December, and a portion of the increase from the 31st December to the 30th June will be received into this year's revenue. Next year the full amount will be received. As far as the income tax is concerned it will be paid on the year now expiring so that we shall not receive any great benefit from the operations of the measure during this financial year, but we will receive greater benefits during the succeeding financial year. I have pleasure in commending the Bill to the House, and I move—

*That the Bill be now read a second time.*

On motion by Hon. J. Mitchell debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 11.30 p.m.*