

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 3rd October, 1933.

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

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read, notifying assent to the undermentioned Bills—

- 1, Road Districts Act Amendment (No. 1).
- 2, Mining Act Amendment.
- 3, Health Act Amendment.

QUESTION—TENANTS, PURCHASERS, AND MORTGAGORS' RELIEF ACT.

Hon. H. SEDDON asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Has the report been received from the Commissioner or Commissioners dealing with the operation of the Tenants, Purchasers, and Mortgagees' Relief Act? 2 If so, will he make the report available during the discussion of the Bill now before the House?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, No, only information of a departmental nature. 2, Answered by 1.

BILL—WILUNA WATER BOARD LOAN GUARANTEE.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 28th September.

HON C. F. BAXTER (East) [4.36]: the purpose of the Bill is to authorise the Treasury to guarantee the loan to be raised by the Wiluna Road Board. It applies to one particular district. It is questionable whether we should not put on the statute-book some measure to give the Government power to guarantee amounts in other similar

directions. It is very necessary that the Wiluna district should have an ample water supply. This has been a source of worry for some years. We are told by experts that the Wiluna goldfield has a life of at least 30 years. The people of that district have been fortunate in that they have been well supported by both the Federal and State Governments. The principal mine there is now well established, and has already redeemed some of the bills representing the money that was advanced to it. I understand the balance owing will be redeemed shortly. In the past the responsibilities of a water supply there have fallen upon the shoulders of the Government. It is a pleasing departure from the usual practice that the local water board will now be doing their own borrowing. It may be said there is enough security for the bank, which is advancing the money, without any guarantee from the Government. Financial institutions, however, seldom lend money for goldfields ventures. Possibly that is quite right. These financial institutions are handling money belonging to other people, and a good deal can be said for the request that the Government should guarantee this goldfields area. In the case of the Harvey and Moora Water Boards, they borrowed money without any guarantee. Of course, they are in a different category from Wiluna. There is a degree of permanency about agricultural areas which does not apply to gold-mining districts. As gold mining is so important to us, and the policy of financial institutions is not to lend money to mining districts, it is quite right that the Government should step into the breach and provide the necessary guarantee. The Bill applies especially to Wiluna. The people there are very much alive to their own interests. Some 3½ years ago they tried to improve their water supply. When I was Minister responsible for the department, I scoured the State to get second-hand pipes for them to assist in augmenting their supply, but unfortunately I was unsuccessful. We are told that the area to be served will be rated on the basis of 1s. 9d. This will redeem the loan in 10 years. Given that the life of Wiluna is 30 years, the proposition seems a safe one. If the life did not extend over five years, only half the amount would be left owing. There are other districts in the State which have not anything like the promise that appertains to Wiluna, and yet the Government have

found the money for water supplies which are not entirely efficient, and the rates for which are as high as 3s. in the pound. With the guarantee of the Government, everything should be safe. The district is progressive and full of promise. It is a good thing to get away from the old system of the Government doing all the borrowing. Governments to-day can only borrow through one channel, and activities are very much restricted.

Hon. G. W. Miles: That is just as well.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: In some ways, but not in all ways. In the present instance, the proposition is quite a good one. Indeed, the Government would be neglectful of their duty if they did not assist this particular district. By agreement with the Loan Council, outside bodies such as water boards, may borrow money for their own purposes. That principle might well be extended, and other boards might be allowed to borrow for their own requirements. We know that water schemes and other works carried out by Government departments have been twice as costly as they ought to have been, and not very successful. The cost has fallen upon the local ratepayers, and very often the Government have had to step in because the ratepayers could not find the necessary money. The rate of 1s. 9d. will enable the loan to be redeemed in 10 years. Power is given to the Treasurer to request the board to impose a maximum rate of 3s. if necessary, and the higher rate would redeem the loan much earlier. Seeing that the district will return the whole of the money plus interest in 10 years, I cannot foresee any danger in passing the Bill. The system is a better one than we have had in the past. Unfortunately the Bill applies to Wiluna only. Knowing how the people of that district are prepared to handle their local services, and how they have acted during the past three years; knowing, also, that the district is so promising and that the Government should do all they can to assist such districts to secure adequate water supplies. I hope the House will agree to the Bill. It is certainly warranted, and we should see to it that we help people who are prepared to help themselves.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central—in reply) [4.46]: I appreciate the remarks of Mr. Baxter. The one thing that has surprised me in connection with the proposal is that a national bank,

like the Commonwealth Bank of Australia, should have asked for a Government guarantee. Here we have a world-famous gold-field, turning out monthly large quantities of precious metal, with a guaranteed life of over 30 years. That prospective life was evident five or six years ago when legislation was before this Chamber. Despite that, we find the Commonwealth Bank demanding a Government guarantee. It is all the more surprising seeing that the district is concerned with the production of gold, which is especially valuable to Australia at the present time. It may be, of course, that the bank is restricted by certain rules or regulations and their action has become necessary. Mr. Baxter suggests that general power should be given to the Government to guarantee loans raised by other boards in similar circumstances. That is a matter requiring a great deal of consideration. The only object, so far as I can see, to be attained in that regard, is the reduction in the rate of interest charged. The banks, from what I can learn, would be prepared readily to provide necessary money for districts with an assured future at a certain rate of interest, but, with the Government guarantee, that rate of interest would be appreciably reduced. That is the position as I understand it. I shall refer the point raised by Mr. Baxter to the Treasurer, and no doubt it will be given due consideration.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

BILL—MINE WORKERS' RELIEF ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 19th September.

HON. C. B. WILLIAMS (South) [5.52]: The Mine Workers' Relief Act was passed some years ago, and made provision for certain payments to mine workers who were prohibited from continuing their operations in mines owing to tuberculosis. Later—I think it was about 1926—the then Labour Government introduced amended

rates of payment for the men who were taken from the mines under the conditions I have referred to. I believe that legislation was endorsed by the Council and the payments authorised represented half-wages to the mine worker, £1 a week for his wife and 8s. 6d. a week for each child up to a maximum equivalent to the then basic wage on the goldfields, which at that time was £4 6s. That basis of payment was continued until last year when the Government of the day secured an amendment of the Act, which operated to the detriment of the mine workers. The Government altered the method of payment from the basis I have quoted and provided that the maximum amount to be received by any mine worker and his family placed in the position of those referred to, would be £3 10s. a week, with a maximum of £150. It is true that provision was made that, should necessitous cases arise, the parties concerned could call upon the Mine Workers' Relief Fund to make up the balance to the amount of the basic wage, which is to-day £3 17s. 6d. on the goldfields and on the mines £4 6s. The Government eliminated the provision for the payment of £1 a week to the man's wife and also the pension of £2 a week for life to the widow of a man who died from tuberculosis, which generally takes place three or four years after the man is taken away from the mines. The Bill before us merely contains provisions calculated to clarify some of the sections of the amending legislation passed last year. There is no provision for any payment to a widow on the death of her husband, and I am not too sure how the widow will get on if her husband dies before he draws the full £750 to which he is entitled under the Workers' Compensation Act or the Mine Workers' Relief Act. I draw particular attention to the action of the previous Government and to the fact that the present Government propose to continue along the same lines. They also are going to allow the pension rights to be taken away from the widow and those unfortunates will be thrown upon the Mine Workers' Relief Fund, which has been in operation for 20 odd years. That fund is a contributory scheme to which the miner, the mine owner and the Government each contribute 1s. 6d. per pay or 3s. per month. Although the relief fund is conducted by a board comprising two representatives of the workers, two of the mine owners and the resident

magistrate, who is the chairman, it is anything but a charitable institution. It is true that people who are thrown on the fund will be in receipt of perhaps 10s. or 15s. a week, but that is a big drop from the payments made under the legislation of 1926, the benefits of which nearly a thousand people are enjoying to-day. I take exception to such a position, but I recognise that it is useless. I did not do so last year when the trouble occurred, for a very pertinent reason. When the Bill was being discussed in another place, I and two other goldfields members voiced strong opposition to the legislation. As a result, a conference was held with the executive of the mining branch of the A.W.U. at Boulder. To that conference the Minister for Mines (Mr. Munsie), Mr. J. Cunningham and Mr. F. C. L. Smith were invited. I did not get an invitation for reasons best known to the persons concerned. I consider that I have as good a knowledge of the matters that had to be discussed at that conference as has any other individual in Parliament because I have been for so long associated with the mining industry and in the early days took a prominent part in securing those benefits that the mine workers now enjoy. Despite that, I was ignored; the result is to be found in the legislation that is on the statute book to-day. I blame the secretary of the mining branch of the A.W.U., Mr. Triat, and the president, Mr. Taaffe, who are members of the Mine Workers' Relief Fund, for allowing the rights of the mine workers to be filched from them. That result followed because the representatives of the A.W.U. were not au fait with the matters to be discussed at the conference I have referred to. In consequence they have allowed the miners to be taken down. There can be no question about that, because a large number of men were formerly permitted to receive up to a maximum of £4 6s. or £3 17s. 6d. a week, while widows were allowed to draw a pension of £2 a week. Those benefits were available for life for the widow or until she married again. Those rights have been taken away from the workers as from February last, since when the maximum amount they are entitled to is £3 10s. It has been said that it is possible for an individual to receive £3 10s. a week under the provisions of the legislation and £3 10s. from somewhere else, so as to make up the full basic

wage. I have yet to learn that it has been done. Married men without children under 16 years of age who prior to the passing of the later legislation were earning £5 a week are now in such a position that all they can receive is £2 11s. a week from the fund. If they had been taken out of the mines in January or December, 1932, they could have received £2 11s. a week for themselves, with £1 a week for their wives. So that there is a difference there of £1 a week, or after their death £2 a week for life for the widow. I am surprised and disgusted that any union representing the mine workers would allow such a thing to happen. It was not done with my assistance, because I was not invited to the conference to which I have made reference, and I opposed it at the party meeting.

Hon. E. H. Harris: It went through without a division.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Yes, because some members had been invited to attend the meeting and they were at fault with the requirements of the miners. This Bill is really beyond my comprehension. There is the case of the man Johnson, who is in necessitous circumstances and who has contributed to the relief fund 9d. per fortnight for the past 20 odd years. He has to depend on the relief fund to give him something, that is, if the members of that fund choose to do so. It is really a matter of their choosing to do so, notwithstanding the fact that he has contributed 9d. per pay for so many years. I should like to read a letter that a lady in Perth received to show to what extent one has to go before being able to get assistance. The letter is from Mr. Barnett, secretary of the Mine Workers' Relief Fund, and he wrote—

Your application for reinstatement of benefits has been considered by the board of control, and I have been directed to advise that as you are suffering from a condition of ill-health, it has been recommended that you immediately make application for the invalid pension, and acquaint this office as to the result.

The lady in question is a widow. Her husband died some 15 years ago and after she had received payment for a considerable period, a notification was sent her that she would no longer be paid. The woman is 58 years of age, and that is how she is treated. That is why I regret that the Act was ever amended. I wish now to deal with a phase of the matter to which Mr. Cornell refer-

red freely, and that is the miners' settlement near Southern Cross, where there are quite a number of what are known as dusted miners. In 1926 the men who are now there were served with notices from the Minister for Mines advising them, in the interests of their health, to leave the mining industry and to follow some other occupation which might be the means of prolonging their lives. A considerable number of men took the advice of the then Government. As president of the union, I also tendered my advice, and suggested that it was a good proposition for them to take on the life of farming. Of course nobody imagined at the time that there would be such a slump in farming values. At the same time, I consider it was a good move, and a number of men went to the settlement. Unfortunately, some of those men are now in a very bad state of health. I have discussed the matter with the Minister for Mines and I know he is very sympathetic towards those cases, but he finds he is up against the Act as it is at present. I was hoping that the Act would be amended so that those men might be brought within its provisions. The men, as I have already said, took the advice of the then Government in 1926 and got away from the mines. I told them that in order to keep their ticket good, they should go back to work on the mines once in every 12 months, even if the period were only for a day or a week. That would have enabled them to receive compensation. Some of the men adopted this advice and so safeguarded their position. In that way they are able to claim compensation under the Workers' Compensation Act, or from the Mine Workers' Relief Fund. As a matter of fact, when I was in Southern Cross last Wednesday, I fixed up the papers for one man. Those men who did safeguard their interests by working a day or a week or a fortnight in the year, are all right, but the man who did not do that and remained on the land, is out of it. Many of those unfortunate men did not have enough money to enable them to leave their farms to take on a day or a week's work on a mine, and some of them are now practically in the last stages of the disease, and they find themselves without compensation of any kind. They very properly claim, and I claim also, that as they took the advice of the Government of the day, and left the mining industry, they are

now entitled to receive compensation. If the men had been examined in time, say within two years, they should have been told and they should have received a percentage of compensation under the Workers' Compensation Act. Those men have genuine grievances and now they have reached the stage where they are entirely helpless. Were it not for their children, who are growing up into young men and women, they would be in a desperate position. Their children are assisting them on their properties without pay and the parents are attending to the supervision. Really, the former miners are only supervisors now on their farms.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Do they not get any compensation at all?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: No. When the Government brought the men under the Miners' Phthisis Act there was a stoppage of work at the Horseshoe and Ivanhoe mines and some hundreds of men were thrown on the labour market. Mr. Collier's Government, then in power, sent some hundreds of the men to work on the roads in the Norseman district, and also clearing land. Quite a few stayed there until the railway went through. There is a section in the Miners' Phthisis Act setting out that if a man develops tuberculosis up to 12 months after leaving a mine, he can get compensation. Some men developed tuberculosis 15 months after leaving the mines and they have not been able to get compensation. We had a conference with Mr. Collier and Mr. Munsie and both were very fair. They agreed it was not right for those men to lose their compensation just because of a matter of two or three months. We were asked how many men would be affected. At that time it was a matter of half-a-dozen. The Government were asked to extend the period to 15 months. That was agreed upon and the half-a-dozen men were placed under the Act. After that, there were more similar cases and they had to go by the board. It was agreed that 15 months was a fair time to allow for the disease to develop after a man had left the industry. That is the position of the men on what is known as the dusted settlement. All men there were dusted, and if they had had their dues, they would have received compensation five years ago. They received none, however, and I contend it is not fair to pay compensation to those who were able to go back to the industry for a

day or a week in the 12 months, and not give it to those who were not able to comply with that condition. Many of them could not do so because they had not the necessary money to enable them to go to Kalgoorlie. Why should they be deprived of compensation? I trust the Government will take steps this session to bring those people under the Mine Workers' Relief Fund. The insurance of a mine worker is pretty heavy, amounting as it does to about 9s. 6d. a week. The miner himself contributes 9d. to the relief fund. That is pretty heavy insurance, especially if one looks at the amount of money the State Insurance Office receives under the Third Schedule of the Workers' Compensation Act. It is a very remunerative proposition. I trust the Government will see their way to do something for the men at Southern Cross. I should like to read a letter I received from one of them—

A few months ago a dusted miner-settlers' association was formed on the miners' settlement to attempt, among other things, to fight for the amendment of the Mine Workers' Relief Act in order to bring under it the men on the settlement. You will remember that when the Act itself was going through last year, I wrote you with reference to our grievances; and we were disappointed that no result came of it. The members of my association had said that the man who put up such a wonderful fight against Parliamentarians ten years ago in defence of the diseased miner would surely see justice done, and an opportunity is again presenting itself to you to help us. As you know, the miner-settlers left the mines in 1927 and 1928 after having developed early and advanced silicosis. They were advised to do so, and offered blocks on the miners' settlements. It was necessary under the Miners' Phthisis Act of 1922 for these men to again visit the mines and work for a fortnight once a year in order to keep their tickets alive and be eligible for a pension. One or two carried out this farce, and are drawing their pensions to-day, whilst the majority, who either could not afford the trip out of the small amount of money earned from clearing or to whom the very thought of entering the mines was abhorrent, remained on their blocks, with the result that when examined by the Commonwealth doctor in Southern Cross in 1931 some of them were found to have contracted tuberculosis, but were ineligible for a pension under the 1922 Act. Naturally, when the Mine Workers' Relief Act was mooted in Parliament in 1932, we were certain that the matter would be righted; but we found that although miners in a similar position in the future were fully provided for, the Act was only retrospective to 1931. A man ticketed with early silicosis can, if he is examined regularly, come under the provisions of the Act if he develops t.b. more

than one year after he ceased work as a mine worker. That is exactly the position of the members of my association, and the present amendments to the Mine Workers' Relief Act do not help us. Can you do anything in the matter? Yours faithfully, J. W. Crowley, secretary, Dusty Miner-Settlers' Association.

I have already drawn attention to the position of these men. There are not many of them; Mr. Cornell said eight, but I think the number is slightly greater. It would not be hard to ascertain the amount of dust from which the men suffered when they were recommended to leave the mines. The original X-ray photographs would show that. If they could only get the amount of compensation to which they were entitled at the time they left the industry, their situation would be much better than it is at present. Surely it is the duty of the Government to amend the Act further, and place all men affected on the same footing. In supporting the Bill, I again express the hope that the Government will bring the miner-settlers at Southern Cross under the scheme.

HON. R. G. MOORE (North-East) [5.20]: I support the Bill, which is merely an amending measure designed to rectify anomalies in the principal Act. To me it appears that the memorandum attached to the Bill is somewhat confusing. Referring to Section 48 it says that a miner would be entitled to £3 10s. a week from one fund by way of lump sum and also to compensation at a rate not exceeding £3 10s. per week from another fund. I am not able to reconcile those statements. I do not know whether the Honorary Minister can clarify the position when replying. I am quite convinced that the mine workers would rather have the law as it now stands, without any amendment. However, the amount is to be raised to that of the basic wage in cases of extreme hardship. Under the section as it stands every disabled miner could get the amount of the basic wage, which I take it is not intended. With regard to the miner-settlers at Southern Cross, who were induced to leave the mining industry and try themselves out on the land, I am quite prepared to support any amendment which would bring them within the scheme. The only trouble is that if the door is opened to admit those miners, we shall find it very difficult to know when it is to be closed again. I remember that 31 or 32 years ago

the Government sent around a lecturer on the possibilities of the land in Western Australia, to advise men to leave the mining industry and take up land. The lecturer was blind; I think his name was Wilbur. In any case, he was a capable lecturer, and many miners, taking his advice, went on the land. However, it turned out to be a case of the blind leading the blind, and most of those miner-settlers were glad to return to the mining industry. If the Government see their way to allow the miner-settlers at Southern Cross to come in, I raise no objection; but it will seem hard to exclude others who are just as worthy of consideration.

On motion by the Honorary Minister, debate adjourned.

BILL—TENANTS, PURCHASERS, AND MORTGAGORS' RELIEF ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 28th September.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [5.24]: I secured the adjournment of the debate for no special reason. The Bill is a measure of two clauses, and essentially one for Committee. One clause must be agreed to if we wish the existing Act to continue. If we desire that certain contracts should remain, we must strike out the other clause. Thus the whole Bill is one for Committee.

On motion by Hon. H. Seddon, debate adjourned.

BILL—SOUTHERN CROSS SOUTHWARDS RAILWAY.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 27th September.

HON. J. J. HOLMES (North) [5.25]: From one aspect I regret that the Chief Secretary is not in his place while I address myself to this Bill. I thought that in moving the second reading the hon. gentleman did not quite reach the standard of eloquence which he attained in connection with the Yuna-Dartmoor railway measure. Nevertheless, the Chief Secretary satisfied me that he had missed his vocation in life, that he really ought to have been a scenic artist painting railway pictures. He could draw

a wonderfully good picture of marvellous land on one page, and, on the next, of a prosperous farmer tickling the soil with a hoe and causing it to laugh at him with a harvest. He could also express in picturesque form the average yield per acre under existing conditions, and what the yield would be but for the destruction caused by galahs. Members sat back in silent admiration while the Chief Secretary spoke. Not a word was said on behalf of the railway, not even by members representing the province. The Bill was just about to pass the second reading when I secured the adjournment of the debate. The proposal, as I understand it, is to build a railway for a distance of 28 miles south of Southern Cross. The cost of construction is now estimated at £3,500 per mile. The estimate was £4,000 per mile, I think; but now it has been cut down to £3,500. That represents an expenditure of approximately £100,000 for 28 miles of railway. What the estimate may be worth is matter for consideration. In the past, railways have been built by day labour; and I presume this railway, if authorised, will also be built by day labour. With reference to the value of the estimates of cost, I need only draw attention to the fact that on the Pemberton-Denmark line, which was to have been built for £300,000, over double the amount of the estimate, or £665,000, has been spent and one section is not yet completed. The Southern Cross southwards line, I understood from the Chief Secretary, who was not quite clear, will serve either 150 settlers, as he said at one stage, or 90 settlers, as he said at another stage. He also stated that the 90 settlers had already received from the Agricultural Bank advances to the extent of £115,000, or an average of £1,300 each. He also told us that the Government had been paying those wheatgrowers £5,000 per annum as subsidy for carting their wheat to the nearest railway station. We must bear in mind that they are 28 miles from a railway station and growing wheat in what may be regarded as a treacherous area from the rainfall point of view. After all is said and done, rain is the first essential to growing. Rain is of more importance than soil, because one can fertilise soil and get results if one has the rainfall, but if one has not the rainfall it matters little what one does with the land, as it is impossible to get production. The Minister did not tell us—it would

have spoilt the picture—that out of the 90 settlers, 85 had just been brought under the Industries Assistance Board. I have no wish to exaggerate the position, but from the reports on the Table, which I have not fully read, I am led to believe that 85 of the 90 settlers are now under the Industries Assistance Act. I am not surprised at that fact, seeing that they operate at such a distance from the railway and, what is of more importance, at such a distance from the port for the carriage of their wheat overseas. I can quite imagine that 85 out of the 90 settlers would be under the Industries Assistance Board. The cruel part is that they were ever sent there to attempt to succeed in such conditions. I understand the maximum railway freight for wheat is 6d. per bushel, irrespective of the distance from the port, while people in some districts get through for about 3d. per bushel. That is the point, I should say the only point, in favour of the Yuna-Dartmoor railway, namely, its proximity to a port. But to send people 30 miles south of Southern Cross and expect them to rail their wheat to Fremantle under what will be normal conditions in the future would, I think, keep them on the Industries Assistance Board for ever. I am told the value of wheat to-day at Southern Cross would be about 2s. per bushel. It would be about 2s. 3d. at any siding within reasonable proximity to a port, therefore nothing better than 2s. could be expected at Southern Cross, because of the long haulage, which has to be taken into consideration. Then the growers have to find the equivalent of 3d. per bushel for bags, to say nothing of the carting from the farms to the sidings. If I visualise the position correctly, it will be very many years before we get a better price for wheat than 3s. per bushel. On big farms in this State, properly farmed with proper appliances, wheat can be profitably produced at 3s. per bushel. That, of course, is within reasonable distance of a port, and with a proper rainfall. But to attempt to keep these people out there south of Southern Cross with wheat at, say, 2s. per bushel less 3d. for bags, would be, I think, a bad advertisement for the State. Because when people succeed we never hear anything of them, but when they fail we hear of it from one end of the country to the other. I do not think that in that area, where the rainfall is doubtful, even when wheat gets back to 3s. per bushel—which I fear will be the maximum for many years to come—people will ever suc-

ceed. The freight is an important factor, not only in the haulage of the wheat to the port, but in the hauling of everything out to the settlers. For instance, super plays an important part in the production of wheat, and it is a long way to haul super to those people at Southern Cross, and probably there is a long way to cart it after it reaches the siding. In the figures submitted to us we find the land classified as 365,000 acres of first and second-class. No information is given as to how much is first-class and how much second-class. Then we are told there is 774,000 acres of third-class land. So if we combine the first and second-class land, we find that only one-third of the area is first and second-class, while the remaining two-thirds is third-class. Third-class land is no good to anyone, unless there is a permanent and adequate water supply for stock. We were not told whether water is obtainable in that area by sinking or otherwise, but I noticed that the Chief Secretary remarked that water supply for the railways was included in the estimated cost of construction of the line. That, presumably relates to railway dams. But two-thirds of the area to be served by this line is classified as third-class land, which of course is no good for stock unless there are permanent adequate water supplies spread all over the area. I have no hesitation in saying that that classification does not justify the construction of the railway through such an enormous stretch of country. While the Chief Secretary was speaking, Mr. Cornell interjected that 75 per cent. of the land to be served by the railway was completely cleared.

Hon. J. Cornell: That is the first-class land.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Cleared by whom?

Hon. J. Cornell: By the men on it.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: But we should like to know how many acres of first-class land there are. Because if 75 per cent. of it has been cleared by the men on it, and if the quantity of wheat they have produced be taken into the calculation, it would supply interesting information to the House, information which the House is entitled to have. If this handful of men have cleared 75 per cent. of the first-class land, and if the wheat they have produced is taken into consideration, we can work out a result that will show us whether the Agricultural Bank is justified in advancing them £115,000, and

whether the House is justified in authorising the building of the railway. The Minister did say that the haulage of wheat could be started six months after the commencement of the construction of the railway. That was news to me. It takes me back to the construction of the Pemberton line, which was to be built in ten-mile sections, and the next succeeding section was not to be built until the first section was properly settled, and we were to place 800 settlers on each 10-mile section. That was 10 years ago, and although we have spent £665,000 on the job, without finishing it, I think there is very little more settlement there now than when we authorised the building of the railway. So when we get such a statement, as that six months after the commencing of the railway, haulage will begin, it is, presumably, put up to show us that the Government will save the £5,000 cartage subsidy, which they have been paying to those unfortunate settlers as a sort of compensation for having put them out into such a locality. I have referred to the cost and haulage of super. Then there are wages, seed, petrol—for presumably they must have machines in a country where there is little or no water—oil, insurance, machinery, machinery repairs, land purchase instalments, rates and taxes, railway freights, wheat bags and carting to the siding. Assuming that there are 200,000 acres of first-class land, and that 200 settlers are each given 1,000 acres, that will absorb all the first-class land; and if the settlers farm that properly, they will farm only about 350 acres each per year. Farming 350 acres out there and paying all the charges I have enumerated, plus the railway freight from 30 miles south of Southern Cross to Fremantle,—I have no hesitation in saying it would be a wicked thing to carry on this proposition any longer. In any event, if they are to succeed out there, they must have a good crop every year. When a farmer is running on a fine margin in the production of wheat, as the farmers are doing now, he must have a good crop every year, or he is down and out. It is of no use going to all the expense for four years in succession and getting three good crops and one failure in that time, because the one failure would absorb any profits made in the other three years. Then there is the question of the sale of land along these new railways. As we know, sums are taken into a separate

account and reappropriated under the heading "Sales of Property." From time to time we have some members advocating that that money should be used to reduce the capital cost of the railways. However, we seem to have reached a stage when it is too late to do anything, for I noticed in the Supply Bill we passed the other day that instead of as in the past, approximately one and a quarter millions of money being appropriated under the Property Sales Account, there was an amount of only £1,000. There, again, we have been selling the assets of the country, and taking the proceeds into revenue, and still over-capitalising the railways, if we go on constructing lines as is proposed in this Bill and in another Bill before the House. In view of the present outlook, I do not think we are justified in building any more new railways, particularly when there is so much unoccupied land adjacent to existing railways that ought to be producing. The owners should be made to produce from their holdings so that railway revenue may benefit and the prosperity of the State assisted. Railways have already been authorised as far back as seven and ten years ago. They were brought before Parliament with even more eloquence than was the case with the Yuna-Dartmoor Railway Bill, with more eloquence than that which the Leader of the House used. We were told that these Bills were urgently needed so that settlement might proceed along each mile of railway constructed. In view of our previous experience, I ask members not to be led away by flowery speeches. No doubt the Leader of the House brings down these Bills in all good faith, but I do not think he knows quite enough about the job to go out and see whether the railway is likely to be a paying proposition or not. I have suggested that a select committee be appointed to inquire into one of the other railways. Before this particular line is built, I hope the route will be inspected by a select committee to prove whether we are justified or not in going on with it.

Hon. G. Fraser: We would welcome an inspection.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I propose to vote against the second reading of the Bill, especially as so far not one member of the Province concerned has supported the remarks of the Leader of the House.

Hon. G. Fraser: You took up the debate after the Leader of the House had spoken.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [5.47]: Evidently Mr. Holmes and I hold opposite views on this matter. He says that no member of the South Province, in which it is proposed to construct this railway, has followed the Leader of the House. Why waste time when there is no opposition? Since, however, a Richmond has entered the field, I will have a tilt at him. Early in this session I spoke briefly on the Supply Bill. There was no indication then that the Government proposed to bring down the Yuna-Dartmoor Railway Bill or this one. What I said then I still subscribe to. If Western Australia and the British Empire are to get out of their troubles, we must follow the excellent advice of Lloyd George, take the long view, and continue to build up as if we were coming out on top. If we take the pessimistic view, and curtail our operations, we shall get nowhere and will become a country of pessimists. The only thing we can do is to move forward. Once a nation becomes stationary, it must begin to retrogress. It is infinitely better for a Government to take the long view, and build for the future. It is better to employ men on sustenance, and to expend loan funds on works that would have to be put in hand if we were around the corner and actually going ahead. If we were not going to turn the corner, we would not need to concern ourselves whether this line or the Dartmoor line were going to pay working expenses. We would need to concern ourselves with the whole network of our railway system, as to whether it was going to pay its way.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: We are concerned about the network already.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Yes. If we are going to take the short view, decline to take risks, and postpone works (that could well be carried out) until such time as we have actually come out of our troubles, we shall be facing a collapse and will have no permanent structure on which to build up. Unfortunately our industries cannot supply work for all who need it. Many men are in dead-end jobs, probably shifting sand backwards and forwards. Some measure of relief must be given to them, for they cannot be allowed to starve. No matter to what price wheat may fall, we must continue to grow it. We must finance amongst our-

selves and render ourselves as secure as we can. We must tax ourselves, and must continue to grow wheat, even if we do so at a loss. Unless we grow those things that we can export and sell abroad, how are we going to meet our commitments overseas?

Hon. Sir Charles Nathan: Meet them with a loss?

Hon. L. B. Bolton: It is easy to see you have never done any farming.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I wish I now had all that I have put into it.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Go farming now and see what it is like.

Hon. J. CORNELL: For the last three years wheat and wool have been grown in Australia at a loss.

Hon. J. Nicholson: For how long can that continue?

Hon. J. CORNELL: My pessimistic friends throw out their chests and point to the position Australia now occupies in the eyes of the world, because of the manner in which we have stood up to our obligations and failed to repudiate our just debts. This fine record has been achieved by producing at a loss the commodities Australia is most fitted to produce, and selling them overseas. We must continue to do that. A 4½d. bonus has been given to the wheatgrowers, and we may have to give more than that next year. We must keep on producing even at a loss. We do not turn out enough gold to meet our oversea commitments, and yet to-day we are the envy of the world for the manner in which we have stood up to our obligations. It is now said we must call a halt and should not build more railways.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Only in good places.

Hon. J. CORNELL: They have all gone.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Don't you believe it.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Members of the Chamber of Manufactures and of the Chamber of Commerce will also have to take the long view, and be satisfied in these times to do things at a loss.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: I have stood up to that on the land.

Hon. J. CORNELL: And the hon. member is looking well enough for it. If the State is not justified in building a railway like this, is it justified in keeping open the Kulja line, the Esperance line, or the Karlgarin line? Is it justified in keeping open any railway line other than the eastern goldfields railway, which is really

the only line that is paying its way and is indeed carrying the whole system on its back? Members argue that the settlers concerned should not be given this railway because it will not pay working expenses and return the capital expenditure. Why then should we continue to run railway services to other parts of the State at a loss?

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Your argument is that if we have railways which do not pay, we should build more.

Hon. J. CORNELL: If we are not going to give a railway service to a settlement that warrants it, why should we continue to give it to other areas similarly situated?

Hon. Sir Charles Nathan: To an area that warrants it.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The reason given for the opposition to this line is that it will not earn interest, sinking fund and working expenses. Why should we continue to run other lines when they are not paying working expenses? The only honest thing for us to say to these settlers is that under present conditions Parliament is not justified in giving them a railway. We are not justified in allowing these people to be ruined.

Hon. Sir Charles Nathan: They should never have gone there.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Mr. Holmes has not yet said what he would do with these people.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: I would put them on land between Perth and Southern Cross.

Hon. J. CORNELL: They are better off where they are.

Hon. G. Fraser: Much better.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I do not know of any better land that is available between Perth and Southern Cross unless it be the cemetery at Northam. Members who want to veto this proposition should advance some helpful suggestion as to how these people are to be served in the future.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Has it not been suggested that the majority should be put on the phthisis fund?

Hon. J. CORNELL: It will be seen from the map that these settlers are in a better rainfall area than are other communities along half-a-dozen lines which have already been constructed.

Hon. Sir Charles Nathan: Shame!

Hon. L. B. Bolton: But further east.

Hon. J. CORNELL: They are further south than Merredin and the rainfall is better than it is there. After we get a little

away from Southern Cross the land too, is better than it is at Merredin, taking it all round. I have travelled over a good deal of this State. If the Minister, or the members of a select committee, were to consider the position under the Bill, I believe they would come to the conclusion that acre for acre there is more first-class land in this particular area than is to be found in any other portion of the wheat belt.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: What is the acreage of the farms there now?

Hon. J. CORNELL: Does Mr. Macfarlane know what area was put under wheat there, for three years in succession? The Yilgarn district produced 3,000,000 bags of wheat.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: I wanted some information.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I can tell the hon. member that 75 per cent. of the good land is cleared and 75 per cent. has been cropped. The Minister has told members that there are 365,000 acres of first-class land in the district.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Nothing of the sort; he said that represented the first and second class land.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Then we will assume that there are 200,000 acres of first-class land. I assert that in respect of 90 per cent. of the blocks proposed to be served by the railway, there are not less than 700 acres of first-class land on each block.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Tell us about the wheat yield.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I know the district from A. to Z. The wheat yield of the district is greater since it came under cultivation than the average yield for the rest of the State. Does Mr. Holmes know that during the year before last, the Yilgarn district produced 3,000,000 bags of wheat and that the average for the district was 18 bushels to the acre? At Westonia the average was 19 bushels. The portion to be served by the railway is 25 per cent. better than the land to the north or east of Southern Cross.

Hon. H. J. Yelland: Was that production due to an exceptional season?

Hon. J. CORNELL: If the hon. member takes the records for the last five years, he will see that the Yilgarn district has averaged 2 bushels an acre more than the Bruce Rock district. If Mr. Yelland were to take

the trouble to make the necessary inquiries, he would find that the average area of first class land on each holding to be served by the Southern Cross Southwards railway was equal to, if not greater than, the average of first class land of holdings in the Bruce Rock district.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: In view of all this prosperity, why are the settlers on the I.A.B.?

Hon. C. B. Williams: Because so many of them started too late.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I do not think either Mr. Holmes or the Chief Secretary was right in the statements made regarding the number of settlers to be served. Mr. Holmes said that he was not sure whether the Minister mentioned 150 or 90 settlers who would be served.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: In one part he referred to 150 settlers, and in another part of his speech he referred to 90 settlers.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I assert that there are more like 200 settlers to be served than 150 as suggested by the Minister. The 85 settlers to whom Mr. Holmes refers are in the miners' settlement, and they were forced on to the Industries Assistance Board. I know miners on holdings there who did not owe more than £1,400, and yet they were forced to go on to the Industries Assistance Board. Why was that? Men were put on the settlement when they had no right to be sent there. When they got to the district they found that they had to fallow the first year, without getting any crop. Men were taken from the Kalgoorlie and Boulder mines and were provided with houses that cost £200. The house provided for an ordinary settler is worth about £50. When I took up my block, I had no provision made for a house at all.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Did you lose your little lot?

Hon. J. CORNELL: No, but someone else is looking after it. Under the scheme governing the settlement of the miners on the land, provision was made for finance up to £2,000, which is the limit to be advanced under the Agricultural Bank Act. Later on the Government of the day found themselves in the position of having to do one of two or three things. They either had to force the men on to the Industries Assistance Board or introduce special legislation to deal with

them, seeing that no more money could be advanced, or else put them off their holdings.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: And are those settlers up to their limit under the Agricultural Bank Act?

Hon. J. CORNELL: They are over the limit, and that is the reason why they have been forced to go on to the Industries Assistance Board. Nevertheless, many of these miners represent just as good a proposition, and are just as valuable to the State, as are other farmers who have borrowed £2,000 from the I.A.B. and £1,000 or more from the chartered banks. I want to draw attention to what happened under the alleged wheat scheme last year in the Southern Cross areas. According to the publicity given to the incidents I refer to, one would have thought that the only people who indulged in stealing wheat were in the Southern Cross area and on the miners' settlement. That is not the position at all. That sort of thing went on elsewhere. However, in all the circumstances, the trustees of the Agricultural Bank could do nothing but place the miner settlers on to the Industries Assistance Board. Failing that, they would have to inform the settlers that nothing further could be done for them. Personally, I am not very much concerned if the House should refuse to sanction the passage of the Bill. To many it would be a matter of indifference whether they carted to Moorine Rock or to Frog Rock, so long as the carting subsidy was continued. On the other hand, we are discussing a district in which the settlers have been allowed to continue, and many were induced to go there in the first instance. Many went from Perth and Fremantle and relinquished good positions to take up holdings in which they invested some of their own capital. Quite apart from the miners, it seems extraordinary that in the district to be served by the railway, there have been comparatively fewer settlers to throw up the sponge than in any other part of the State. I hope the Minister will, in confirmation of what I have said, ask the trustees of the Agricultural Bank how long a property that has been abandoned or repossessed by the bank in the Southern Cross area, remains on their hands. If he were to make that inquiry, he would find that the area to be served represents the one bright spot in the State to-day, in that farms that have been abandoned, or in respect of which

the Government have foreclosed, are re-selected rapidly.

Hon. E. H. Harris: What is the reason for that?

Hon. J. CORNELL: It is because the area presents better possibilities than any other part of the State at the present juncture, in view of the capitalisation of the blocks. The average capitalisation in the district is £1,300 per block. I have already pointed out that 75 per cent. of the land has been wholly cleared. On that basis it will be seen that between £850 and £900 of the capitalisation is accounted for by the total clearing of the land. I assert that wholly cleared land in any part of the State is a permanent asset, so long as the work is not carried out in the mallee country, because there the mallee grows up again. In the area under discussion a capitalisation of £1,400 would be made up of £150 for machinery, £50 for a camp, £150 for fallowing, £100 for fencing, and the balance for clearing. That represents the full amount of capitalisation per block applying to an area extending east of Noongaar.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Did you not say that all the settlers owed more than £2,000?

Hon. J. CORNELL: I pointed out to the hon. member that at the miners' settlement the men had been supplied with houses at a cost of £200, which represented a greater amount than that provided for settlers elsewhere. Then, again, their families were transported at the expense of the State, and the settlers were paid 5s. an acre more to clear the land, if they carried out the work themselves. In fact, consideration was extended to the miner-settlers that did not apply elsewhere. That applies to 85 of the settlers who are under the I.A.B. and they are not bankrupt and their indebtedness is not over £2,000.

Hon. C. B. Williams: One man told me that he owed the bank £350.

Hon. J. CORNELL: And there is not a vacant block in the miners' settlement area.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I was dealing with the capitalisation of the holdings that the proposed line will serve. On Mr. Holmes' own showing the capitalisation will be £1,300, and this figure is represented by almost a fixed asset. I was also showing how the land in this locality was sought when it became available. I asked the Chief Secre-

tary at the tea adjournment to get this fact confirmed by the Agricultural Bank, and it turns out that what I said was quite correct. It will be found, if a proper search is made, that what the Chief Secretary actually said, that the railway would serve 150 farms, is perfectly correct. He told us that already there were 90 settlers associated with the scheme and that they represented a population of 380. I presume the Chief Secretary was alluding to the 90 settlers in the miners' scheme alone, and, as we all are aware, those men went there with their families, and so it is fair to assume that the population can correctly be given as 380. Again, during the tea adjournment, on looking at the litho. on the wall of the House, I found that there are approximately 180 locations that will be served by the line. Ninety-eight per cent. of the locations are to-day occupied. If we continue our examination to Glenelg Hills, now known as Holleton, it will be seen that quite a fair number of settlers in this district are obliged now to cart wheat 43 miles. These settlers will have their carting distance shortened to about 20 miles after the proposed railway is built. Some of the people who are now on the settlements below Mt. Hampton and Gibb Rock are carting 40 miles to the Narebeene railway. Personally I consider the railway should have gone further down to help them, but as it is, they will be assisted to a certain extent. On the subject of the population of these districts, I know of three farms, not in the miners' settlement, where the families, inclusive of the parents, number 11, 10 and eight respectively, practically 30 people in three families alone; and if they are all like the Watsons, the Murphies and the Pages, one cannot estimate what the population eventually will be.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: They have been too busy to grow wheat.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The three families that I referred to all went there, and I think there has been only one addition since their arrival in those parts. I have made a conservative estimate of 180 farmers, and I have taken 1,200 bags of wheat per farmer. Those figures nearly square with the figures quoted by the Chief Secretary. I venture to say that the railway will carry at least 220,000 bags of wheat in an ordinary season; that works out at about 120 tons of wheat per crop. Mr. Wittenoom and Mr.

Piesse asked me my opinion of the land to be served as a grazing proposition. I was born almost in the Riverina district, and I maintain that the country we are about to serve with a railway is equal to the land in any other part of the State for sheep raising. One factor in favour of it is that in four years out of five we can rest assured that there will be a summer rainfall, and that good feed will be available for stock at what otherwise might be a most critical period of the year. Again, one cannot over-stress the importance of the goldfields market for stock. With regard to water supplies, six years ago the settlement between Southern Cross and Noongaar was promised a source of supply from the goldfields main. Levels were taken and surveys made. The scheme was to be gravitation because it was to take off from the highest point on the eastern goldfields line, a height of about 1,700 feet. The district expanded, the miners' settlement came along, and most of the new areas about to be served were selected, and an enlarged scheme was agreed to. The plans and all the details are to-day to be found in the Goldfields Water Supply office. Then further south to Mt. Hampton it was proposed to carry out one of the most comprehensive rock catchment schemes in the State. This was to be eight miles from the head of the scheme I have referred to. We know what happened. There was no money available to carry out the works. That is one of the tragedies of those districts. The promise to carry out the first scheme was made by a National-Country Party Government, and the Labour Government enlarged on the proposals, but then money could not be found to permit of the work being carried out. The Agricultural Bank which had £100 to advance for water supplies said to the settlers, "What is the use of your sinking dams when you are going to be provided with a water supply?" As a consequence, settlers did not put down dams, and that is one of the tragedies of the district, because since the depression only those settlers who could put down dams at their own expense have obtained water supplies. I do not know of one of those settlers who has not found good holding ground and a good catchment area. If catchments can be obtained in morrel country elsewhere, holding grounds are to be found in that district. Where farmers have supplied their own dams it has

been greatly to their advantage. They have been able to run cows, pigs, and other side lines, and also a few sheep. A farmer of that district told me the other day that he had obtained 200 head of sheep, and that they represented the best investment he had ever made.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Would you run merino sheep on the dams of those settlers?

Hon. J. CORNELL: Personally, I told those settlers long ago, "What you ought to do, or the Government ought to do, is to sink a dam. Until you have a permanent water supply, you have no chance of becoming successful farmers, and the whole history of farming in the Eastern States and elsewhere in Western Australia shows the truth of that." Further, it is no use putting down a dam of less than 2,000 cubic yards, the evaporation in that locality being at least 7 or 8 feet. Every farmer in that district with stock must budget for at least a two-years supply of water, or else when there is a shortage of water he will have to get rid of his stock.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: But he will be over capitalised.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I do not think so. With modern machinery a dam of 2,000 cubic yards can be put down for £150. Without such a dam, a farmer in that district would be gambling with stock. In a dry country sheep can be trained fairly well as regards water. The more one gives a sheep to drink, the more it will drink. I speak with the knowledge of a shearer. It will take little feed to keep a sheep going if there is decent shade, and the sheep can be rationed as regards water.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: A sheep must have nothing less than three-quarters of a gallon of water a day right through the summer.

Hon. J. CORNELL: But a farmer will not keep a thousand sheep on a thousand acres. Moreover, let me point out that it would not pay to run the goldfields water supply if only the agricultural districts were to be served by it.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: But there must be a permanent source of supply, and dams are not a permanent supply of water.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The greatest pastoralist in Western Australia and the man who has done most for merino sheep here,

has provided his own water supply. The Minister has quoted the Ghooli experimental farm. That farm is in the furthest east, but not in the furthest north, of our settlements. During the four years it has been established, it has averaged 12¼ bushels of wheat and over 17 bushels of oats; and 90 per cent. of the land to be served by this proposed railway is infinitely superior to the land at Ghooli. The land to be served is 30 or 35 miles further south than the Ghooli farm; and Westonia has a better rainfall than Southern Cross, which is 35 miles further east. There has been a suggestion to refer the Bill to a select committee. What could a select committee do? How many years is it since a select committee ever inquired into the route of a railway? I have been here 22 years last May, and so far as my recollection goes I am unable to mention one select committee ever appointed by this Chamber to inquire into the route of a proposed railway.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: What about the Dwarda-Narrogin line?

Hon. J. CORNELL: That is the one solitary exception. One of the reasons for a select committee in that instance was to get rid of an interminable question.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The railway was built, was it not?

Hon. J. CORNELL: In 22 years I cannot recollect a railway Bill being referred to a select committee. I understand that select committees to decide the route of a railway were frequently appointed in days when routes were shifted about to suit constituents. But for a quarter of a century the recognised principle of this country has been to refer the question of the need and the route for a railway to the Railway Advisory Board, consisting of the Surveyor-General, the Director of Agriculture, and a railway officer. If they reported in favour of a line, the invariable practice of this Parliament was to accept the recommendation.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Has not the practice been to pass the Bill and not build the railway?

Hon. J. CORNELL: During my 22 years in Parliament I have not known a railway construction Bill to be rejected.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: You have not answered my question.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The utmost that could be done by Parliament in regard to a Bill authorising a railway was to deviate the line five miles on either side. The Railway Advisory Board was instituted to overcome the difficulties to which I have referred. I ask again, what could a select committee do in this instance? Is it suggested that the Minister has come here to tell us what is wrong? Are the settlers he stated to be there not there? I venture to say that all the Minister has told us can be found in the report of the Railway Advisory Board. The Government merely ask, by this Bill, that Parliament should implement the board's report, by authorising the construction of the railway. Mr. Holmes dwelt on Mr. Drew's statement that within six months of the start of construction of the line, hauling would begin. It is generally accepted that the proposed line would be used for the carriage of superphosphate, wheat and stock; but that as regards passenger service it will have comparatively slight utility, for the simple reason that these are days of motor transport. The map shows that 90 per cent. of the people whom the line will serve are now using the Eastern Goldfields railway, and they are likely to use that railway in future. Revenue will not be lost to the State from that aspect, because if the people in question went around the loop it would only be a matter of a few shillings. I think the Minister desired to convey to the House that if authorisation for this line is given during the present session—and I hope it will be given quickly, if it is to be given at all; otherwise let us vote the Bill out—a definite promise will be given to the wheat merchants of this State that within a certain period wheat dumped along the proposed route will be lifted. Then the wheat merchants will put acquiring agents at the various proposed sites and buy wheat there. That wheat will be dumped, and the growers of the district will during the coming season have all the facilities they need for the transport of their wheat, and all the facilities they would have if the railway were actually a working concern. This is neither ancient history nor piffle. It is what happened in the case of the Newdegate line, and the Lake Brown-Bullfinch, the Karlgarin line, and the Kulja eastward line. All lines built since the Newdegate line, in 1926, have been built with the promise I have mentioned

given to the wheat acquiring merchants. The Government gave the acquiring agents a definite promise that it would be six months or nine months after the farmer dumped his wheat when it would be lifted by the railway. That is all that is going to happen here.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: If this railway be authorised, do you think it will be built within the next five years?

Hon. J. CORNELL: If the line be authorised this session I feel sure an undertaking will be given to the wheat merchants that wheat can be dumped and will be lifted within nine months.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Railways have been authorised for ten years and not yet built.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I am not going to enter into a discussion on that point. It stands to the credit of the previous Labour Government that they built lines in those parts of the State where there were no lines and where the service was urgent. They adopted that policy as against the policy of constructing railway lines within easy distances of existing lines. There is a peculiarity in regard to the rainfall of the district to be served by this proposed railway. It is generally accepted that for the purpose of wheat growing the rainfall is to be measured not in inches, but by the period in which the rain does fall. In this area the rain falls from May to October. Anyone knows that for wheat, the further east or north we go, the shorter the growing period. A remarkable feature about the Yilgarn district, generally, is that in a fair average season a better result is obtained from the sowing of 22 lbs. of wheat than is obtained in other districts by sowing 60 lbs. That is because of the climatic conditions, the shorter growing period, and the tendency to a greater stooling out. Whereas wheat-growers closer to Northam and the Great Southern sow a lot of seed and have a lot of stalks coming up straight, the grower in the Yilgarn district relies on a light seeding and gets, not so many heads, but bigger heads, with the result that if the rain is a little short there is not so much incentive for the wheat to peter out. I do not wish to refer to another part of the South Province, but for one reason: In justification of the building of this line I am going to make reference to the proposed new jetty at Esperance. The Minister for Works recently told a deputation that the time had arrived

when new and proper jetty facilities must be given to Esperance.

The PRESIDENT: I hope the hon. member will connect this up with the second reading of the Bill.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Yes, I will. Why did the Minister for Works say the Government would provide a jetty at Esperance? He said successive Governments had put settlers on the land in the Esperance district, and unless they were given the same facilities as were afforded to settlers elsewhere, the only thing was to get them out of the Esperance district. That proposed new jetty, I understand, will cost as much as this proposed railway; the difference is that members will have to pass the amount for that jetty whether they like it or not, whereas here they propose to send the Bill to a select committee.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Why shall we have to pass the amount for the jetty?

Hon. J. CORNELL: Because you will have no say in it. Exactly the same reasoning presents itself here for the construction of the Esperance jetty. Some 180 settlers have gone out on a promise that they will be given the same facilities as other settlers have in other districts.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Who made the promise?

Hon. J. CORNELL: That does not matter. I take it there is a certain amount of morality in all Governments, including those Governments who find themselves impelled to fulfil the promises of their predecessors. What one Government promises, another has to carry out. The Government who sent out the Moorine Rock settlers was a Nationalist Government, and the Government who sent out the ex-miner settlers was a Labour Government. If the succeeding Government were not prepared to give effect to the promise of their predecessors, they had a bounden duty to tell the settlers so.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: What about the 3,500 farms scheme?

Hon. J. CORNELL: That does not enter into the question. The point I wish to make is that those people, the miners, have gone out. Did they go there because they wanted that land? No, they went there because there was no other land available closer in. They are entitled to the same consideration as has been given to those who had opportunity before these men went out. If members are not prepared to do the reasonable

thing and pass the Bill, the Chief Secretary has given a definite assurance that, even so, this year's harvest will be lifted, or at all events the farmer will not be put to the necessity of carting over a distance of up to 40 miles. The same assurance has been given by the Government as was given to the Newdegate and other settlers, namely that the harvest will be lifted within a prescribed period. The other alternative would be to say, "Well, we have made a mistake. You settlers will stop there at your own risk, and the £115,000 advanced by the Agricultural Bank on a fixed security can go to pot." But that sort of business cannot go on. There is only one thing to do, namely, to give these people what they have not got and what they so urgently require. If the land does not justify railway and water supply facilities, as are everywhere provided on the wheat belt, then the outlook of Western Australia as an agricultural proposition ends at Noongaar to the east, and extends from Noongaar down through Newdegate to the southern ocean, and north to Northam. Inside that territory is the future of Western Australia. If that be so, the best thing we can do with the territory outside of it, is to give back Western Australia to the blacks. But I do not believe that the agricultural possibilities of Western Australia cease at Noongaar.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Did we not have a record wheat yield east of Noongaar.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Yes, the record yield of the State. That was in 1927.

Hon. C. B. Williams: But I meant the record individual crop.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Yes, that is so. I make this appeal to members. If I do not succeed, then even the pessimist will no longer be able to visualise the possibility of getting out of the depression by taking the long view. I will support the second reading.

On motion by Hon. C. B. Williams, debate adjourned.

BILL—POLICE ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [8.12] in moving the second reading said: The purpose of the Bill is to amend the Police Act in such a way as to enable the Government to deter people from claiming or receiving sustenance from the

funds made available for the relief of unemployment when those people, by reason of their financial circumstances, are not entitled to such assistance. At present there is a provision in the Act under which the department may proceed against a person who claims sustenance without being entitled to it, but where false statements are made to obtain sustenance relief work, there is no provision in the Act by which the persons making these false statements can be punished. And if the person works for the money after having secured employment by false statements as to his family responsibilities, action cannot be taken against him under the existing law. The Crown Law Department hold that, as the false declaration made in such instances is not a declaration permitted by statute to be made, the making of it is not actionable at law. Action has been taken in many cases which are covered by the provisions of the Act, with the result that payments from sustenance have been reduced by over £30 per week. This saving has been due to the striking off of names from the sustenance list after conviction of the offender. The moral effect of these convictions has been to cause a large number of other unqualified persons to go off sustenance relief. In addition to that, there is no provision under present legislation to deal with cases where a man's circumstances may have improved whilst working under the relief scheme. In this connection cases have come under the notice of the authorities where men already in receipt of income in excess of the basic wage were also enjoying the proceeds of relief work. To deal effectively with the situations, paragraphs have been added to the Police Act which read as follow:—

2A. Any person who, by wilfully making any false statement or representation—

- (a) as to any sum or sums of money being his own personal property then in his possession or power; or
- (b) as to any property real or personal then owned by him; or
- (c) as to any sum of money then receivable by him by way of income, gift, or allowance; or
- (d) as to any sum of money received by him as salary or wages over any period; or
- (e) as to any employment in which he was engaged over any period; or
- (f) as to any sustenance relief received by him over any period; or
- (g) as to the number of persons then dependent on his earnings; or
- (h) as to the financial position of persons then dependent on his earnings,

obtains or attempts to obtain under any scheme for the relief of unemployed destitute or indigent persons any work or employment or any benefit in money or money's worth either for himself or for any other person.

2B. Any person continuing to receive or attempting to receive any such work, employment, or benefit after he shall to his knowledge have become disentitled to receive the same.

2C. Provided, that any person convicted of an offence under paragraph 2A or 2B of this section shall not be deemed to be a rogue and vagabond, but otherwise shall be liable to the penalty prescribed by this section.

The Government are earnestly endeavouring to place men in work and to give relief where relief is necessary. Unscrupulous people, by means of false statements, have obtained such work or assistance, which means that genuinely necessitous cases may have been prevented from getting much needed employment for financial help. Many cases have been discovered in which men have obtained assistance for themselves, their wives and families, and where it has been proved, later, that the wives and families have not been maintained by them during the periods they were receiving such aid. In other cases they have reported their earnings or family incomes at considerably less than the actual figure, and have thus been granted sustenance. In one case a man received sustenance for himself, wife and one child, and, at the same time was earning £4 19s. weekly. In another case, the man received sustenance for himself and family, and, during the period he was drawing such sustenance, was doing casual work, for which he received £159 in wages. He reported the receipt of £43 only for this period. Other cases have come under the notice of the department in which people have been drawing sustenance, when members of the family, living at home, were earning a total of from £7 to £8 per week. I could quote many other instances of such practices, but I think what I have already said is sufficient to indicate that it is necessary for provision to be made in the Act to enable the department to take legal action on the discovery of such impositions. It is essential that action should be taken in such cases. People who stoop to this sort of thing must be forced to realise they cannot impose on the State with impunity. The Government are desirous of dealing fairly and sympathetically with all cases of necessity, but must have the necessary power to punish unscrupulous persons who gain such benefits at the expense of their less fortunate

fellows. The amendments provided in this Bill are designed to give power to the department to take action on the discovery of such fraudulent practices and they will undoubtedly tend to minimise such practices in the future. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. W. J. Mann, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.22 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 3rd October, 1933.

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

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read, notifying assent to the undermentioned Bills:—

- 1, Health Act Amendment.
- 2, Mining Act Amendment.
- 3, Road Districts Act Amendment (No. 1).

ORDERS OF THE DAY POSTPONED.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle) [4.34]: I move—

That consideration of Orders of the Day Nos. 1 and 2 be postponed.

These two Orders of the Day refer to the financial emergency legislation. I regret the necessity for moving their postponement, but the Premier has suffered rather a bad turn in health. When I spoke to him over the telephone this morning, he was hopeful

of being able to attend Parliament on Thursday next, I think it would be to the advantage of everyone concerned if the Premier were here to take charge of the financial measures, as he has had control of them from the commencement. Should the Premier be unable to attend here on Thursday, he is anxious that both measures should nevertheless be finalised this week. In view of the possibility of the Premier's being here on Thursday, I ask for postponement of the two Orders of the Day.

Question put and passed; the Orders postponed.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1933-34.

In Committee of Supply.

Debate resumed from the 28th September on the Treasurer's Financial Statement, and on the Annual Estimates: Mr. Sleeman in the Chair.

Note—Legislative Council, £1,442:

MR. TONKIN (North-East Fremantle) [4.36]: There is no provision on the Estimates for anticipated expenditure to deal with a problem that is facing us, and that is the problem with which the subject of technocracy deals. Very little attention is being given to that problem in Australia, but I understand that it is attracting considerable notice in the United States of America. Just recently Mr. Hemingway, an accountant and solicitor who spent, I believe, the last 10 years in America, delivered a series of lectures on business subjects to Perth audiences, and one lecture dealt with the subject of technocracy. I take the following extract from the report of his remarks which appeared in the "West Australian":—

The technocratic movement had its origin in Columbia University, U.S.A. Its votaries had investigated at great pains and on a scientific basis (deriving their statistics from the U.S.A. Department of Labour and the Department of Commerce), the extent to which machines were ousting men from gainful employment, the consequences of the changes that were being wrought, and the possibilities of the future.

That shows that considerable attention is being paid to this problem, which is decidedly pressing. The lecturer went on to quote certain figures showing the astonishing