

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 6th December, 1927.

| | PAGE |
|---|------|
| Question : Education Department, purchase of books | 2358 |
| Bills : University Endowment Act Amendment, 2a., etc. | 2358 |
| Appropriation, 1a. | 2360 |
| Audit Act Amendment, Assembly's message ... | 2360 |
| Constitution Act Amendment, 2a., negative ... | 2360 |
| Meekatharra-Wiluna Railway, 2a. | 2362 |
| State Children Act Amendment, Assembly's further message | 2369 |
| Closer Settlement, Assembly's message | 2369 |
| Metropolitan Town Planning Commission, 1a. ... | 2369 |
| Hospitals, Com. | 2369 |
| Employment Brokers' Act Amendment, Com., 3a. | 2369 |
| Leighton-Robb's Jetty Railway, 2a. | 2369 |
| Motion : Claremont Training College, appointment of Vice-principal | 2358 |
| Papers : Agricultural Bank loans | 2371 |

The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 3 p.m. and read prayers.

QUESTION—EDUCATION DEPARTMENT, PURCHASE OF BOOKS.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Is it the practice of the Education Department to purchase books, published in England, direct from that country through the Agent General's Office? 2, If not, what is the practice? 3, If so, why are not these purchased through local booksellers?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, No; moreover the publishers refuse to sell books to the Education Department except through Western Australian booksellers. 2 and 3, Answered by No. 1.

BILL—UNIVERSITY ENDOWMENT ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Order of the Day read for the resumption from the 1st December of the debate on the second reading of the Bill.

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.

Read a third time and passed.

MOTION—CLAREMONT TRAINING COLLEGE.

Appointment of Vice-Principal.

Debate resumed from the 1st December on the following motion by Hon. H. J. Yelland:—"That the method of appointment of the Vice-Principal of the Claremont Training College is opposed to the best interests of the State, in that it caused dissatisfaction and discontent throughout the Department especially and the service in general, thereby diminishing efficiency."

HON. H. J. YELLAND (East—in reply) [3.10]: I approach the subject this afternoon with more diffidence than I have exhibited in any address I have been able to deliver to the House, the reason being that I feel I must reply to the remarks of the Chief Secretary. In my view the Chief Secretary has not in the least substantiated his case. It devolves upon me, therefore, to digress a little from the procedure I followed when moving this motion, on which occasion I endeavoured to keep away from all personalities except where they were necessary to enable me to establish my case. The Chief Secretary, however, has entered into the realm of personalities, and it will be necessary for me to follow him. As Mr. Milligan is the appointee, and Mr. Miles a person who was recommended by the experts of that department, the names and qualifications of these gentlemen naturally come up very frequently. I have known them only casually, but have formed a good opinion of them both. My slight acquaintance with them has been enhanced by the high opinions which other friends hold of these gentlemen, people who have known them better than I have. I feel that it is incumbent on me to ask members to believe me when I say that any attack I may make upon these gentlemen is not made in a personal way, but merely to substantiate the case I have endeavoured to place before the House. Members and the public generally will understand that in moving in this direction I am actuated only by public motives, and a desire to see clean politics. It has been necessary to mention these names and refer to the qualifications of these gentlemen merely because they happen to be the heroes in the play.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Merely because Mr. Milligan happens to be president of the Teachers' Union.

HON. H. J. YELLAND: The Chief Secretary had a good deal to say about that aspect of the question. In all that I have said I have tried to be clean and moderate, and hope to be so again this afternoon. My attack was upon the Government and not upon Mr. Milligan. If Mr. Milligan happens to be the hero in the play, he must necessarily stand in the public gaze.

HON. J. CORNELL: He has been the villain, not the hero.

HON. H. J. YELLAND: Although I kept away from personalities as far as possible, my action has been described as a distinct attack upon Mr. Milligan. I regret that that mis-statement had been made, because nothing was further from my mind than to make any attack. However, I feel that members who know me best are aware that I am not of a vindictive nature. Further, I am pleased to have received from the general public, who, being lookers-on, may be described as the best judges of the case, as persons able to regard the matter with unbiassed vision, confirmations of my attitude which are proof that the opinion expressed by the Chief Secretary is not held outside, at all events. I believe, too, that the congratulations which have reached me from outside on the bringing forward of this motion are real and genuine. In the course of my reply it will be necessary for me to correct certain statements made by the Minister and by his supporter, Mr. Kitson, as well as to refute certain claims and to protect Mr. Miles from the personal attack that has been made upon him. In doing this, it will be necessary for me to digress somewhat from the object of my motion, which motion affirms that the Government were to blame with regard to this appointment in that they had decided to make it a political issue. That has been my contention right through, and I submit that I am justified by the evidence I have brought forward. Let me state first that I asked the Minister for verification of Mr. Milligan's certificates. The Minister expressed his indignation at my request, and said that in making it I had associated Mr. Milligan with the lowest crooks appearing in our police courts. I want to point out to the Minister that the inference in question is with him, and not with me. I made no inference whatever of that nature. The allegation indicates the Minister's lack of association with those of learning, one of whose unwritten laws it is that there must

be presentation of credentials when they are asked for. I simply requested that the credentials be produced, and thereupon was told that in making my request—a request based on a law universally recognised in the learned professions—I was placing the man on the level of a lot of crooks. I strongly resent that imputation, because I feel that I have merely asked for what is due both to the public and to Mr. Milligan himself. It is rather interesting to me to learn from the lips of the Chief Secretary that a Class "A" certificate covers all the qualifications necessary for Mr. Milligan's appointment, and that no importance attaches to university degrees. I daresay the information will be interesting to others also, among them the teachers. The certificate being sufficient and a university degree of no importance, I may ask why did the Leader of the House present Mr. Milligan's certificates and all those eulogistic reports received in support of the appointment? These things were necessary because the appointee could not attach to his name those letters which would have meant that there was no need for any explanation. I asked the Minister to procure from the University a record of the case, so that we might have that record before us; and the Minister refused to do so. As I have intimated, a scholar produces his credentials without demur when they are applied for: it is only the pseudo who refuses to produce credentials and seeks to side-track the question. The Chief Secretary having refused that request, having declined to ask the University to produce evidence of Mr. Milligan's bona fides if that gentleman himself would not produce it, we can only conclude that the Minister had no case. As usual in such circumstances, the Chief Secretary went a little further and committed the unpardonable sin of attempting to discredit those who happened to stand in the way of the candidate selected for the position. Then we find the Chief Secretary still going further and even questioning the integrity of the Director's report on Mr. Miles. He considers that Mr. Rooney should have known better, the inference being that there is a band of conspirators resolved upon frustrating Mr. Milligan's appointment. That is the only conclusion I can draw from that part of the Chief Secretary's speech where he says there is no doubt that for some reason or other a combined effort was made to deprive Mr.

Milligan of his position. The Chief Secretary went on to say that if we were to read the papers on the file we would see that if Mr. Miles was the man he was supposed to be, he would be a superman. I cannot help but connect those three gentlemen with the suggestion that there was a combined effort to deprive Mr. Milligan of the position. One might pertinently ask if the fact is not exactly the reverse. Has there not been an effort on the part of the Government to deprive Mr. Miles and the other gentlemen selected in preference to Mr. Miles of their chance of obtaining a just reward? Acknowledging that the Minister for Education, our Leader, has his three executive officers—one of whom, Mr. Rooney, has since resigned—making these recommendations, we find that they are accused, by the Minister controlling them, of conspiracy. We have this very sad spectacle before us of the Minister for Education accusing his advisers of such conduct. Then may I not return upon the Chief Secretary the retort he made upon me early in his speech, of having fallen down on the job? If the hon. gentleman has under him a body of conspirators, obviously those men are not worthy of their positions. And yet that is practically the Minister's accusation. I would not like the occasion to pass without extending to the gentlemen in question an expression of my high appreciation. No one will ever doubt their integrity or their devotion to duty. My personal view of the Chief Secretary's suggestion is that it is most unbecoming. With reference to Mr. Miles, the Chief Secretary's speech contains one unpardonable error. It is a suggestion that during the last 16 years Mr. Miles has lost touch with modern methods of education.

The Chief Secretary: Will the hon. member quote me?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I am not permitted to quote "Hansard"; otherwise I would do so.

The Chief Secretary: I said nothing of the kind.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: The inference was there. That is the implication which was conveyed to me. Does the Chief Secretary wish to make an explanation?

The Chief Secretary: I did not say anything of the kind.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I take the Minister's word that such is the case, but that

was how I read his remarks, and I went through his speech closely and carefully. I was going to ask on what authority he could make such a statement, because the report runs that Mr. Miles is a man of the widest reading and the most extensive study, and the best educationist in the department. I am glad to learn, however, that I have misunderstood the Minister; and I withdraw the statement I made. The Minister's reference to Mr. Miles's 16 years of service is, however, not of an appreciative nature. On the other hand, I have to state that Mr. Miles's departmental record is unassailable. He has been marked for years as the unostentatious moving spirit of the department. My acquaintance with Mr. Miles began when he was set apart to organise the work of the rural schools. It was right out in the country I first met him, and then only for a few minutes; but the lecture he delivered on that occasion convinced me that he knew his work and that the policy he was outlining was the one to be adopted in sending education to the outback parts of Western Australia. Mr. Miles's lecture convinced me that he was a man who thoroughly understood his work, and that he was an organiser of the first rank. He organised first the curriculum to obtain in the rural teaching section of the department. He has since been in control of the whole scheme, which has been carried on most successfully. Even his opponents said to me years ago, "He is the one outstanding man in our department, and he is the coming man of the department." Yet this is the man who is now asked to stand aside for a younger man, one without equal experience or qualifications. The Chief Secretary has said that if the Government were to reconsider the appointment, the position would not be given to Mr. Miles. From what I have learnt of Mr. Miles in a casual way and as the result of casual meetings, I know that the Government would not have the opportunity of offering the position to him; or at any rate he would not accept it. Mr. Miles is too dignified a gentleman to accept the position after what has transpired. But what of the other candidates? Six gentlemen were placed between Mr. Miles and Mr. Milligan in Mr. Rooney's recommendation.

Hon. H. Stewart: Mr. Rooney's recommendation?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: Yes. To these gentlemen, I hold, some consideration is due. I have not met Mr. Miles for some considerable time, on which aspect I shall have something more to say later, when dealing with the accusation that I have been practically a tool in the hands of certain gentlemen as regards the moving of my motion. The Chief Secretary referred to the Government's policy in the matter of education. He has elaborated the Government's education policy, as he calls it. Evidently that policy has been enunciated without the help of his expert advisers, who, as we have deduced from the Minister's speech, may be regarded as conspirators. The education policy must, then, have been determined by laymen. Although there is much in the Chief Secretary's speech to show that the president of the union had a considerable say in the matter, we are not able to state that that gentleman was the prime mover. Here we have another remarkable spectacle—one Minister saying that the Government, a body of laymen, would be foolish if they rejected the advice of their engineering experts, and on practically the same day the Chief Secretary saying that in connection with educational matters the advice of experts will not be followed.

Hon. E. H. Harris: That was an unfortunate coincidence.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: The Government may pertinently be asked to let us know which departments are following the advice of their professional experts, and which are not. The Chief Secretary, however, has branded Mr. Milligan as an expert, and I infer that since Mr. Milligan has been placed upon the list of experts, he will not be consulted in any way relative to the Government's education policy. The Education Department's policy is not to be run by experts. Another interesting feature is that Professor Cameron is to be practically a half-time principal only. That is the inference I draw. If I were permitted, Mr. President, I would be delighted to quote some of the Chief Secretary's remarks. I noticed that he said in effect that the Ministry would not be worthy of the name of a Government if they were not prepared to insist upon their policy being respected. He went on to say in connection with the appointments that have been made, Mr. Milligan on the practical side of teaching and Professor Cameron on the academic side, that

if either of those gentlemen was not prepared to carry out the Government's policy, he would have to make room for someone else. So we find that the Government have set aside any possibility of one man being the main factor in connection with our education work, and have determined that he shall be in the nature of a half-time principal of the Training College, under the control of the Government who, we recognise from the Chief Secretary's statements, will not on every occasion be governed by their experts' advice. Evidently Professor Cameron is not to be allowed to direct the educational policy of the Training College, unless it is at the dictates of these laymen who will carry out their own policy. If the Government are to insist upon this ultimatum, I will express the opinion that they have been guilty of bringing Professor Cameron to this State under false pretences. The Professor is not likely to stand up to that sort of thing, or to accept such degrading conditions. I ask hon. members to visualise the position. Here we have Professor Cameron, a trained teacher and a trained trainer of teachers, who is to be told what to do and how to do it, by a number of laymen who admit they will not be dictated to by their experts. If that is so, I expect that most of us will have to say goodbye to Professor Cameron, although I sincerely hope that will not be so. The Minister gave us a statement of the Government's policy. I may well ask whether that policy was framed to meet the requirements of the particular appointment of Mr. Milligan, or was the policy the outcome of that appointment? To return to the Minister's attack upon Mr. Miles, there were some inaccuracies of minor importance, but also some glaring errors. I have wondered how it was, with the evidence and information at the command of the Minister for Education, he could so misrepresent the position as he did in one or two instances. He referred to the respective ages of Mr. Miles and Mr. Milligan. He said that Mr. Miles was in his 56th year and told us that Mr. Milligan was 50 years of age. The truth is that Mr. Milligan is 50 years of age and Mr. Miles was 55 at the time of Mr. Milligan's appointment. I know the Minister was quite right in the way he put it, but stating that Mr. Miles was in his 56th year makes a difference of six years. Had he put it the other way and said that Mr. Milligan was

in his 51st year and Mr. Miles was 55, it would have made a difference of only four years. I mention that just to show how figures can be used to really misrepresent a position.

The Chief Secretary: Mr. Miles was born in September, 1871.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: He is only a boy!

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I have been quoting the ages as disclosed in the files.

The Chief Secretary: They are not correct.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: We can go only on the ages quoted in the file.

Hon. E. H. Harris: We have not got their birth certificates.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: More conspiracy!

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: However, this is a nice little point used by the Chief Secretary for his own purposes to show Mr. Milligan up in a better light than Mr. Miles in the matter of age. Then there is the question of "too old at 40." Mr. Milligan is 50 years of age, so that if a man is too old at 40, what may be said of Mr. Milligan who is ten years older than that particular age? As Mr. Miles is 55 or 56, to use the Chief Secretary's reference to him, he is only five or six years older, but has therefore had that much more experience. He still has ten years of service ahead of him because teachers can be retained until the age of 65, if agreeable to all concerned.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: It will not be in his case.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: Yet we have been told that Mr. Miles is near the retiring age. Of course he is. He is either five or ten years off the retiring age, while Mr. Milligan is either ten or 15 years off the retiring age. Take the extremes and we have ten or 15 years' service ahead of these particular gentlemen. It is ten years in the case of Mr. Miles with his longer service and higher qualifications that should entitle him to consideration, whereas Mr. Milligan has 15 years' service ahead of him. These are little matters that do not cut much ice, but at the same time they are referred to by persons outside as disclosing one of the reasons why Mr. Miles has only four or five years extra service to be taken into consideration, whereas the other man may have 15 years.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: The man who received the second recommendation was only 35 years of age.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: He was much younger than the other applicants.

Sir William Lathlain: I suppose he was too young. He was a returned soldier, too.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: The slogan of "too old at 40" was put forward at the time appointments of inspectors were made and it was intended that those officers should travel throughout the State. That consideration does not apply to the position under discussion, because it is a residential one. To my mind, and to that of anyone who has followed the trend of these questions, especially when dealing with young men and young women, we certainly respect age. When a man is getting well on in years and has many years of experience behind him, life has a mellowing influence that makes such a man looked up to and revered by the majority of young men and young ladies. Now we come to another point of great importance. In this instance I cannot understand how it was the Minister digressed as he did. He led us to believe that Mr. Milligan was given a position as headmaster of the Practising School, which post had been refused to Mr. Miles.

The Chief Secretary: Had been previously refused to Mr. Miles!

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: The report of the Chief Secretary's speech that appeared in the newspapers, and the speech itself, created the impression abroad that the inference to be drawn was that Mr. Miles and Mr. Milligan were applicants for that position at the same time.

The Chief Secretary: That is wrong.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: Yes, quite wrong. I am glad that the Chief Secretary has admitted that, because it removes from his speech something that appeared to have a sting in it.

The Chief Secretary: I am not responsible for the report that appeared in the "West Australian."

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: That is so, but the Minister's speech gave that impression too.

The Chief Secretary: No.

Hon. H. Stewart: Yes, it did.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: That was the impression I gained after reading the Minister's speech. Although I knew the facts before the Chief Secretary mentioned them, his speech did not strike me unfavourably.

at the time, and I overlooked the point until my attention was drawn to it as the result of expressions of opinion outside this Chamber. People outside certainly gained the impression that Mr. Miles had been refused the post, and Mr. Milligan had been successful.

The Chief Secretary: That is a wrong inference to draw from my speech.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: At any rate, it is quite wrong, and I am glad that the Chief Secretary is so ready to acknowledge that fact.

The Chief Secretary: I stated the position absolutely correctly.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: The facts are that in 1905, I think it was, the position of headmaster of the Practising School at Claremont was vacant. Among the applications received was one from Mr. Gladman, M.A., who had a longer period of service than Mr. Miles, who was a B.A., and was also an applicant. The position was given to Mr. Gladman. When that gentleman was appointed to the position of inspector, the headmastership of the Practising School again became vacant and Mr. Milligan was appointed to the position. In the meantime, however, Mr. Miles had also received his appointment as an inspector, and therefore was not an applicant for the headmastership. So when we find the Chief Secretary making the statement when comparing the two officers—and this statement is correct—that Mr. Miles had been rejected for a position that Mr. Milligan had afterwards filled with marked success for 15 years, there is to be found sufficient room for the inference that has been prevalent both inside and outside this Chamber. I feel that some publicity should be given to this point because of the manner in which the inference was gained.

Hon. G. Potter: The appointment of Mr. Miles to the inspectorship was prior to the appointment of Mr. Milligan as headmaster of the Practising School.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: Yes. The Chief Secretary referred to Mr. Miles in a manner that I do not think was quite correct. He said that Mr. Miles was fortunate in that he had gained his A3 certificate while other graduates had had to sit for examination regarding their teaching qualifications. Here again is a half-truth only. The facts are that Mr. Miles held the New South Wales degree of Bachelor of Arts and had passed his first class teacher's examination

in that State. He was therefore doubly qualified when he came here, to take his A certificate. If teachers came here with academic qualifications and the requisite teaching ability disclosed by the certificates they held, it would be unnecessary for them to pass examinations in connection with their teaching qualifications. Mr. Miles held first class teaching certificates from the Education Department of New South Wales. Naturally I feel inclined to ask the Chief Secretary why he gave us half-truths only in that he said Mr. Miles was very fortunate when he received his A3 certificate, seeing that he possessed the qualifications and certificates showing he was entitled to it. We heard the Minister recounting the 16 years' career of Mr. Miles in an effort to find something derogatory to that gentleman. I must say the results were by no means commensurate with the effort. If I were to quote one of the great writers, I might turn to Mahomet, who said, "The mountain has laboured, and lo, this mouse!" If the Minister had perused Mr. Milligan's file with the same assiduity and the same spirit, trying to find out anything against him, he might have been able to give us some information very illuminating, but quite unfair to Mr. Milligan. If, on the other hand, I had the right, as the Chief Secretary has, to investigate their personal files, and had examined Mr. Milligan's file, and if I had clouded his virtues and magnified his vices, what sort of a speech would I have put up? Undoubtedly an unfair and unjust speech. In the whole of the Chief Secretary's remarks there was hardly one word of commendation for Mr. Miles, a man who has been in the department all these years and who is highly respected by his fellow teachers. I have met teachers who think well of Mr. Miles more often than I have met Mr. Miles himself. They all say he is the one outstanding personality in the service. I have nothing whatever to say derogatory of Mr. Milligan. I am not here to discuss the merits or demerits of the men, or only in so far as is necessary for me to prove that the Government have made an appointment not in the best interests of the State. Here is another misleading feature of the Chief Secretary's speech: he said there were in the State 1,900 teachers, most of whom had passed through Mr. Milligan's hands.

The Chief Secretary: No, no.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: That was the Minister's remark. He didn't say that all

of them had passed through Mr. Milligan's hands, but he said quite a number of them had done so.

The Chief Secretary interjected.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: The Minister certainly said that a large number of the teachers had passed through Mr. Milligan's hands. There are other practice schools in the metropolitan area, and many teachers had to go through those other practice schools, with which Mr. Milligan was not associated. Why, then, should the Chief Secretary give to Mr. Milligan the credit of having directed teachers who passed through the other practice schools?

Hon. E. H. Gray: Where are those other practice schools?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: There is quite a number of them.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Perhaps, but where are they?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I really do not know the names of all of them. However, I know there are others. There is an infants' school, which is a practice school, and there is another in Claremont. Mr. Milligan would have nothing to do with those. Then I understand that quite a number of the teachers go down to James-street School for practice. The Minister put up a very clever defence of Mr. Milligan, and quoted a number of his qualifications. It was necessary, because Mr. Milligan has not received his degree. Had he received his degree the very fact of having those two letters at the end of his name would have been sufficient guarantee that he had the very academic qualifications that the Chief Secretary put forward for him. Then the Chief Secretary quoted the reports that had come in from the ex-Principal of the Training College. Mr. Miles, of course, has no such reports in his favour, simply because, being an inspector, he was writing similar reports concerning other teachers, instead of having them written about himself. The Minister referred to the popularity of Mr. Milligan as one of the reasons for his appointment. I do not know that popularity should be a qualification for an academic position.

The Chief Secretary: Where did I quote his popularity?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: You referred to the handsome present of a grandfather clock made to Mr. Milligan. If I were permitted I might suggest that the same august body might well present the Minister with a walking-stick, for I feel that, having re-

gard to the way in which he sidestepped many phases of this question, he might be walking lame very shortly. However, I am delighted to know that the teachers recognised Mr. Milligan's good work.

Hon. H. Stewart: A grandfather clock was rather appropriate.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I would be delighted to congratulate Mr. Milligan upon the work he has done for the union and for the department. Even so, it does not follow that I should sit down and see what seems to me a political appointment made without having anything to say. As to that motion of congratulation to Mr. Milligan, I was sitting here the day after the Minister delivered his speech, the day on which it was reported in the Press, when I was called to answer the telephone. It was a long distance call at full rates. The caller turned out to be one representing a number of teachers. He said, "I wanted to let you know that the report in to-day's paper of the Minister's reply to your motion is in some instances wrong. That motion covering the present made to Mr. Milligan was made during the closing hours of the session, when there were fewer than 60 teachers present. It was moved by a friend of Mr. Milligan's a member of the practising school staff, was formally seconded, and was carried without comment. The Minister's statement that there were musical honours is not correct." I have been reading from the original note I made at the telephone. My informant told me he was at the meeting at which the motion was made, and that it was brought on in the closing hours.

Hon. E. H. Gray: But he didn't oppose it.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I do not suppose he would. The hon. member must agree that when one is in opposition like that and recognises that one of the principals of the Teachers' Union is being put upon them by the Government through preference to their unionists, the man who is suffering would rather suffer in silence than incur the displeasure of those in power or of his fellow-unionists. Consequently, he says nothing. I am informed that the motion was carried in silence, and so I must assume that the only contribution to the musical honours was that subsequently made by the Chief Secretary. I want to know why it was that the Chief Secretary in his speech magnified these occurrences, why he put so much emphasis on them. In my view it was to camouflage the position and sidestep the issue. That brings

me to the Muresk College appointment. I am pleased to think my motion has brought from the Government, through the Chief Secretary, a statement regarding the rumour that has been circulating for so many months to the effect that the post of Principal of the Muresk Agricultural College was definitely offered to Mr. Milligan. We have not previously had a Government announcement regarding it. While everybody was under the impression that the post had been offered to Mr. Milligan, the file laid on the Table gave no indication, although it was said that the letter offering him the position, a document that should have been on the file, had been removed from the file. However, the Minister's statement lends credence to the rumours in circulation. In moving the motion I said that Mr. Milligan had declared that he had been offered that position, but that we had not been able to get to the bottom of it. The statement that, I believe, has resulted in bringing out the reply from the Minister was made when I said that if the position was offered to Mr. Milligan we would know what to think of the Government in making that offer, since the post was under the Public Service Commissioner; and that if it had not been offered to Mr. Milligan we would know what to think of Mr. Milligan for saying that it had been. I think my conclusion was a fair and just one. Now we have reliable information on the point. It is the first official information we have had, and of course we now know what to think of the Government. Fancy a Government offering the position of principal of an agricultural college to a man who has not even the slightest qualifications in respect of agriculture!

Hon. H. Stewart: It was a violation of the Public Service Act.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: Yes, distinctly, it would have been if they had been successful in making the appointment.

Hon. H. Stewart: That is nothing to what they are going to do in the future.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: The Government should have considered the prestige of the college in the eyes of the Eastern States.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Why bow down to them?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: It is not a matter of bowing down to them; but a matter of comparison between our institutions and those of the Eastern States. I can speak of the Roseworthy College, South Australia, which I have known for many years. I can

go right back to 1890, when Professor Lowrie was in charge of it, a gentleman who afterwards came over here as Director of Agriculture, it being recognised that a man holding that position should have high academic and agricultural qualifications. He held the M.A. degree and B.Sc. degree in agriculture from the University of Edinburgh. Following him was Professor Tower from America. I have forgotten what his qualifications were. Following him was Professor Perkins, the present Director of Agriculture in South Australia, a man who went there with the highest agricultural diplomas from France. He has had many years' experience at the Roseworthy Agricultural College and also in wine making in that State. Following Professor Perkins was Mr. Colebatch, who had the R.D.A. from South Australia and went to Edinburgh where he passed his B.Sc. and M.R.C.V.S. That is the type of man placed in charge to give prestige to the agricultural college in South Australia. Now that Mr. Colebatch has left, Mr. Birks, who has the R.D.A. and B.Sc. in agriculture, has been appointed. The South Australian Government recognise the great work done by the agricultural college in that State and insist that there shall be in control of it only men of the highest calibre. When we compare their attitude with what would have happened if the Government here had had their way in connection with the Muresk appointment, I can only ask what would have been the opinion in the Eastern States of our agricultural college. It would have been said that in Western Australia the principal of the agricultural college was a man taken from the rank and file of the Education Department. I have nothing to say against Mr. Milligan, but when the Government offer such a position to a man that does not possess the qualifications, they are letting down the agricultural industry and the farmers generally.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Milligan showed his good sense by turning down the offer.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: When the position was offered to Mr. Milligan applications were called from various parts of the Commonwealth. I have been accused by the Chief Secretary of lamenting that Mr. Hughes was appointed. Let me quote from memory the opinion I expressed a session or two ago regarding the appointment of Mr. Hughes. I said if I had a son whom

I should like to place under a man of integrity, common sense and ability, I could choose no better man than Mr. Hughes. I do not think I could give him a higher testimonial than that. We had placed before us the qualifications of Mr. Hughes and the qualifications of the other gentleman from the Eastern States whose name I have forgotten. Each of them possessed the same academic qualifications, but the other had had 10 years' experience in an agricultural college and was highly regarded in the Eastern States. Had he been appointed, he would have been of immense assistance to the State, would have added prestige to the college and given the institution an impetus such as it is not likely to receive even from the appointment of such a valued and highly esteemed gentleman as Mr. Hughes.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: Are you suggesting that that was a political appointment, too?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I have not suggested that it was a political appointment.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Mr. Kitson ought to know whether it was.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: I do not know.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: But I suggest that the attempted appointment of Mr. Milligan to Muresk was political. In the Eastern States applicants for such positions must have high academic qualifications, and yet the Government of Western Australia were prepared, according to the admission of the Chief Secretary, to give Mr. Milligan the post when his only academic qualifications recognised by the University were a half of a first year's pass in the degree of B.Sc. for agriculture.

The Chief Secretary: That is in Western Australia.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: Yes, and when a candidate has passes in any other portion of Australia they are credited to him if he wishes to complete his course in our University. There is a reciprocal arrangement between the universities that permits of passes in one university counting as passes in other universities. The real fact is that Mr. Milligan, from his work in the University of Western Australia, has one pass only and that is in geology.

The Chief Secretary: That is so.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: He was given credit for his work in biology and mathematics from New Zealand. Those passes in the New Zealand University gave

him his matriculation entrance to the University of Western Australia and were counted to him as passes, for which he was granted exemption, so that he could carry on his university career here. He started off in 1913 to obtain the B.Sc. degree in agriculture and at the end of the first year he was successful in passing his examination in geology. If a candidate obtains only one pass in one year it is not credited to him, and if Mr. Milligan wished to continue the course he would have to take geology again. Consequently, the only academic claim that Mr. Milligan can make as regards the University in the State in which he resides is a matriculation pass and a pass in biology and mathematics, all of which were obtained in New Zealand.

Hon. H. Stewart: That is half of the first-year course.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: Yes.

The Chief Secretary: Now deal with South Australia.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I have not been able to trace any record in South Australia and for that reason I asked the Chief Secretary to obtain the information from the University authorities. The Chief Secretary, however, turned down my request and practically accused me of something that was not altogether complimentary. Reverting to the Muresk appointment, we now know definitely that the position was offered to Mr. Milligan. Just a little before that I happened to be in the country when a member of the Labour Party, who was neither a farmer nor a representative of a farming constituency, took the platform and delivered an address entitled, "What the Labour Government have done for the farmers." When we weigh things up and realise what they would have done, if they could, by appointing a man not possessed of the necessary qualifications to carry out agricultural experiments and be the principal of the main agricultural institution in this State, we cannot regard the efforts of the Government to help the farmer with that degree of sincerity that they would like us to believe actuates them.

Hon. G. A. Kempton: It was a lucky escape for everybody.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: And for Mr. Milligan especially.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: And for the pupils as well.

The PRESIDENT: While the hon. member may incidentally refer to the Muresk appointment, the question before the Chair is the Training College appointment.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I am simply answering statements made by the Chief Secretary. He referred to the Muresk appointment and said there was a self-appointed board of selectors who acted without Ministerial sanction.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member may refer to the Muresk appointment but only incidentally.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I am simply replying to the remarks of the Chief Secretary, who mentioned that the Muresk appointment was made without Ministerial sanction, although the appointee was selected by gentlemen who had been requested by the Public Service Commissioner to assist him in the work.

The PRESIDENT: To the extent that the Chief Secretary referred to the Muresk appointment the hon. member may also refer to it.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I am merely referring to it in order to correct a wrong impression conveyed by the Chief Secretary. He said the gentlemen who made that selection were self-appointed and had not Ministerial sanction. He mentioned that the Professor of Agriculture was not a member of the selection committee and pertinently asked why he was not? The reason was that the Professor of Agriculture was ill. I am inclined to think he was out of the State at the time; at any rate, he was too ill to undertake the work.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Was he invited?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I obtained my information from the Public Service Commissioner and I am merely repeating what that officer told me. The Public Service Commissioner felt that he could not make the appointment himself because it was of a technical nature.

Hon. H. Stewart: He needed advice.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: Yes, the advice of experts, and the experts selected were the Director of Education, the Director of Agriculture, and, as the Professor of Agriculture was ill, the University authorities were asked to appoint someone in his place, and Professor Shann was appointed.

Hon. E. H. Gray: It sounds a bit thin.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: It is not thin. The Public Service Commissioner has that

power and he did make that appointment. That could not be a self-appointed board.

The Chief Secretary: When did the Public Service Commissioner make that statement?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I got into touch with him on the telephone.

The Chief Secretary: But he was away in England.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: It was his deputy, who looked up the matter for me. I simply went to the fountain head. From the way in which the Chief Secretary is smiling, one would think I had committed a misdemeanour in going to headquarters.

The Chief Secretary: It is news to the Government.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: The Chief Secretary accused me of casting innuendoes. He asked me whether the chosen man was a friend of one of the selectors. I know that report was about at the time, and it was a most unkind and unfair suggestion.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Was it true?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: No. When the report came out I went to the Director of Agriculture and asked him if he knew this particular gentleman. He said he had never met him, and the gentleman in question also published in the "West Australian" a denial of the accusation that he and Mr. Sutton were friends.

The Chief Secretary: Who suggested that Mr. Sutton was referred to?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: The rumour was freely circulated that Mr. Sutton was the friend. Unfortunately I have been unable to get into touch with him because he has been out of town, otherwise I would have re-affirmed the position. While we are satisfied that no friendship existed between these two gentlemen, it is recognised in the service that the man to whom the position was offered was a close friend of the Minister in charge of the department at the time. They are looked upon as close friends to-day.

The Chief Secretary: Which Minister?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I refer to the Minister for Lands (Hon. M. F. Troy). I am here to deny that there was any friendship between Mr. Sutton and the selected individual, and I am also credibly informed that between the person it was intended to appoint and the Minister in charge of the department at the time a close friendship exists. I feel in honour bound

to protect Mr. Sutton by stating the facts as I know them.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: Did the Chief Secretary mention Mr. Sutton's name?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: No. Although he did not mention any names, I knew wherein lay the rumour.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: What right have you to associate the remarks of the Chief Secretary with such rumours?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: Because he asked me if I would deny that one of the selectors was a personal friend of the selected candidate?

Hon. W. H. Kitson: You deny that now?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I deny it so far as Mr. Sutton is concerned. I went direct to him. I must infer that Mr. Sutton was referred to, because the selected candidate from Victoria denied it in the "West Australian." He could not have denied it unless there had been a rumour to that effect. The Chief Secretary made only one reference to the matter, and that can only apply to this particular rumour. My deduction was, therefore, correct.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: Not at all.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I can now drop any further reference to the Muresk College. The policy of the Government on that occasion has taught them a lesson, and has resulted in the appointment to the Training College being taken out of the hands of the Public Service Commissioner. In my previous speech I pointed out that the principal of the college came under the Public Service Act. According to the Minister, the appointment of Vice-Principal is to be taken away from the control of the Public Service Commissioner and from the purview of the Appointment Board of the Education Department, and is to be made a Ministerial matter. We know there are a few of these appointments, and it is a very convenient method for the Government to employ. The failure of the Government to land their fish in connection with the appointment at Muresk has taught them a lesson, and the danger of allowing the Public Service Commissioner to have a say. Hence, they have transferred this particular position from the Public Service Commissioner and the department, and have made the appointment a Government one. It is to this procedure that I have so much objection. The Chief Secretary referred to a delegation of teachers who waited on him

early in his Ministerial career upon the subject of the position of Vice-Principal at the Training College. By a strange coincidence the leader of the deputation was the gentleman who eventually received the appointment.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Would that be a disqualification?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I do not know that it would be, and it was not suggested that it was a disqualification. It was, however, a coincidence. I wrote to the Minister some time ago on the subject of academic qualifications, and I still hold to the opinion I expressed then. The Minister in relating the incident, did not give all the facts, neither has he drawn a line between the various stages dividing the teaching staffs. I have here a copy of the "Education Circular," where it is shown that the schools are divided into secondary and primary. The primary school children are those who receive only primary tuition. This week I had a notification from the head teacher of the school that my daughter attends, informing me that she had passed the sixth standard and must now go to a higher school. She has gone as far as she can at that particular school and now has to go to the Perth Girls' School, although she is as yet under 13 years of age. It would be ridiculous for me to say that teachers in charge of children of that age should possess academic qualifications. No one would be stupid enough to put forward such a view. It was in connection with these schools that I wrote to the Minister, and I maintain that I adopted the right attitude. The next stage is the secondary school stage, and beyond that we have the teachers' Training College where the teachers themselves are trained. In the primary schools children go to the sixth standard in most cases, but may go as high as the junior standard. In those schools the teachers do not require to have academic honours. Naturally, therefore, the art of teaching becomes a necessary feature of those who are in charge of such children. I find from the "Education Circular" that the high schools are those at Albany, Bunbury, the eastern goldfields, Northam and the Perth Modern School. At the Albany High School eight teachers have degrees and there is one without; At Bunbury nine have degrees and one is without; at the eastern goldfields high school seven have degrees and four have none; at Northam nine have degrees and two have none: and at the Perth

Modern School 23 have degrees and four have none.

Hon. J. Cornell: What about the Perth Boys' School? That is the best of the lot.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: The boys there are not taken beyond the junior standard. I have not bothered about it because it comes under the heading of the primary schools.

Hon. J. Cornell: It is a secondary school.

Hon. H. Stewart: It does not reach the leaving standard.

Hon. J. Cornell: From the seventh to the ninth standards it is the best school in the State.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: In the secondary schools the children have to be taught up to the leaving standard, and the students have to be trained so as to pass into the university. At those secondary schools the vast majority of the teachers themselves hold university degrees. But we go a step further. When we have to train the teachers themselves, we are told that a university degree is not necessary. Where is the department's logic in putting forward such a proposition? However, it is not the departmental experts who have made that suggestion. If those experts could logically carry out their policy, they would do so. but they are prevented from doing it by what in another place has been termed a body of laymen who object to the experts doing their special work. Therefore I do not withdraw anything I have said as to the uselessness of academic qualifications in connection with primary education. In passing I may mention another matter, one which came under my notice during the last elections. It has a bearing on the Chief Secretary's remark that his appointee on the Classification Board is Mr. Davy. The Minister has told only half the story. He did not say who were the other two appointees. One is the president of the Teachers' Union, Mr. Milligan; and naturally it would be impracticable for the Director of Education to go to that board on this matter while Mr. Milligan was there.

The Chief Secretary: At the same time, the Director is responsible to the Minister.

Hon. H. Stewart: For this particular position?

The Chief Secretary: No; generally.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: The Director is responsible to the Minister, who can instruct the Director to refer to whom he, the Minister, chooses. If the Minister, instead of coming here to accuse the Director of not

having referred the matter while he himself had neglected his duty of insisting that the Director should refer—

The Chief Secretary: He had already referred the matter to another board, of his own creation.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I do not see the point.

The Chief Secretary: He had already referred the matter.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: To this particular board?

The Chief Secretary: No. To the Chief Inspector and the Principal of the Training College.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: He simply asked for their remarks on the matter, as is usually done. It is a common thing for the administrative head, when making an appointment, to refer to the departmental head under whom the particular officer may be working; and that is all that was done in this case.

Hon. H. Stewart: But this is a newly created position.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: Quite so. Still, the Minister has attacked the Director of Education for not having referred the matter to the Classification Board. If it ought to have been referred to that board, it was the duty of the Minister, as Minister, to instruct his Director to refer the matter accordingly, and not come here and simply strive to cover up his own tracks by throwing the responsibility on the Director, who is under the Minister's control. Why did the Minister neglect his duty by not seeing that the matter was so referred?

The Chief Secretary: It was not my duty.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: If the Minister found that the Director had neglected his duty, it behoved the Minister, in the interests of the State, to call the Director's attention to the omission. That is why I consider myself justified in drawing attention to the matter as I have done. When the Chief Secretary referred to Mr. Davy's appointment, I was reminded of an incident which occurred during the general election and which has a bearing on the present question. During the election campaign at Broome, speaking on the policy of preference to unionists, Mr. T. A. L. Davy, the Minister's nominee on the board—nominated because of his impartiality—definitely stated that when he was acting on the board he asked what was the meaning of certain red

marks against the names of certain teachers in a book kept there—either a roll or some other record—and that he was told the red marks were there for the purpose of indicating that the teachers against whose names they were placed were not due for promotion. Upon Mr. Davy putting further questions, the chairman of the Classification Board, Mr. Milligan, told him that those teachers were not members of the union and therefore were not due for promotion. Mr. Davy protested, but in vain; and then he made that statement on the public platform at Broome. Mr. Drew thereupon challenged the accuracy or truthfulness of Mr. Davy's statement, asserting that if Mr. Davy had said this—we have evidence that he did say it—then, to use the reported words of the Chief Secretary, it was an unmitigated fabrication.

The Chief Secretary: I never used that phrase at all.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: But that is the phrase which was reported.

The Chief Secretary: The report has been corrected. I said it was untrue.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: We will accept the Chief Secretary's word. I was only repeating the phrase which was reported, and I am sure the Minister appreciates the reason why I have mentioned the matter. Both expressions mean the same thing; one is merely a little milder than the other. We got into touch with Mr. Davy, and he refreshed his memory by again looking at the book in question, with the result that he was confirmed in his view as to what he had stated being correct. Whether that book is there now—

The Chief Secretary: Mr. Davy was quite correct. It was done by the department without my knowledge.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: Very well. That being so, there is really no necessity for me to go on. Without the Minister's knowledge the union, or whoever had charge of the book, marked in red ink the names of teachers who were not members of the union, and those teachers were set aside by the president of the union as officers not available for advancement.

Hon. H. Stewart: Who was president of the union?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: At that particular time, Mr. Milligan.

Hon. H. Stewart: But who made the red marks?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I could not find out. I simply know that the book was there, and that it was available to members of the board. Mr. Davy, being a member of the board, of course had access to the book. I am simply repeating information which has been given to me. I do not know who made the red marks, but I have no reason to question the accuracy of my information or to suggest that there was anything wrong.

The Chief Secretary: It was not done by Mr. Milligan.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I do not know that it was done by Mr. Milligan.

The Chief Secretary: Nor by the Teachers' Union. It was done by a departmental officer.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: The Chief Secretary has given his explanation, which I am quite prepared to accept; but I am stating the facts as they appear on the surface to us.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Who is the red marker?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: Evidently someone in the department who has access to this book and is able to mark off teachers who are not unionists.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Do other departments also keep such books and red-mark non-unionists?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I cannot conclude without referring to a matter mentioned by the Minister in closing. There was a veiled threat relative to some future appointments. We all know that the old veteran, the Chief Inspector of Schools, is about to retire on his well-earned pension, and that another appointment will have to be made. I do not know definitely, but I understand, from the Chief Secretary's remarks that the position is to be filled according to the "policy" of the Government. I can assure the Chief Secretary that future appointments will be watched with a great deal of interest. Since the present appointment has been made, as we say, irregularly, we are wanting to know whether there is a possibility of further irregularities occurring. Names are already being associated with the prospective vacancy: I heard some quite a long while ago. The Chief Secretary has said that the Government intend to carry out their education policy, and that, in effect, nothing on earth will stop them from doing it in their own way, appointing whom they like and how

they like, so long as the Government policy is carried out. If future appointments are made irregularly, I do not think that action in protest will stop with the moving of a motion such as this, but that some stronger steps will be taken.

The Chief Secretary: I suppose I shall be expelled from the House!

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I do not say anything about that. However, if the Minister feels that he has such a bad conscience as to render a step of that kind necessary, then I feel very sorry for him and recommend him to mend his ways. The Minister referred to a statement made by me that I thought the present appointment had given dissatisfaction to a number of teachers. He said he thought that if a vote could be taken, 95 per cent. of the teachers would be found in favour of the actual appointment. I am quite sure that he over-estimates the figure. I feel confident that if a vote were taken he would not get much more than 35 per cent. in favour of the present appointment. However, that is just pitting my opinion against the Minister's. I wish to point out that the friends can hail and make a big noise, and that because of the preference to unionists clause those who favour it may hail and make believe that they are satisfied with the appointment; but the Chief Secretary must bear in mind that those who suffer from the appointment will suffer in silence rather than run the risk of incurring the displeasure of a discriminating Administration. That is the reason why the Chief Secretary has not heard the objections which have been raised to the appointment. In conclusion let me say that there is a principle which should govern every Administration. Ministers are expected to hold inviolate the trusts vested in them, and one of those trusts is to make appointments in accordance with Acts and regulations. I have tried to show that that has not been done in the present case. My reason for bringing the matter before the House is that by such a disregard of Acts and regulations Parliament is, I was going to say, insulted. I hardly know of any other word that will fill the bill. The laws have been flouted and the trust reposed in the Government has been broken in this appointment. The merits and demerits of the applicants matter little to me, but the basis of the appointment and the violation of the trust imposed on the Government are

to my mind serious breaches. In looking through these papers, it seems to me a great injustice has been done to Mr. Miles, that he has been crucified to permit of the elevation of Mr. Milligan, who was the keeper of such a record in the Education Department and who, as president of the Teachers' Union, should have insisted upon the regulations of the department being carried out to the letter. The men who have raised themselves to high positions in the State by their hard work and devotion to duty should not have been superseded by anybody else. That is one of the aims of the Teachers' Union, and for the president of that union to have been the first to break away from that high ideal is to my mind not very complimentary to that gentleman. This should forever silence those who vehemently charge industrial employers with the black-listing of unionists. The action of the department in making this offer to Mr. Milligan, and of Mr. Milligan in accepting it, have not been to the credit of either. When I compare the qualifications of the two gentlemen, and realise what they have done for the State and for education generally, I feel that if we look at it with unbiassed eyes we must see that a great injustice has been done to Mr. Miles and to all those others recommended in preference to Mr. Milligan. Moreover, Mr. Milligan has accepted the position in violation of one of the principles of the union he professes to uphold. I feel I have done my duty in calling attention to this matter, and that no further good could be accomplished by letting it go to a vote. I have published the facts far and wide, and have done it solely with a view to clean politics and of doing my duty in the position to which my electors have called me to protect their interests, and so I ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

PAPERS—AGRICULTURAL BANK LOANS.

Clearing by British Labour only.

Debate resumed from the 24th November on the following motion by Hon. J. Cornell:

That all papers dealing with loans granted to settlers for clearing purposes by the Agricultural Bank trustees, the expenditure thereof being restricted to British labour, be laid upon the Table of the House.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [4.50]: In reply to Mr. Cornell, let me say that it is true the Government have assisted the mining industry to the extent of paying one year's premiums on employees under the third schedule of the Workers' Compensation Act. It is rather a myopic view for a goldfields representative to take when he assumes that the firewood industry is part of the mining industry. He might just as well argue that the explosives industry or the manufacture of mining machinery come under the same head. In any case the argument has no application in this instance.

Hon. E. H. Harris: It has an application in the Arbitration Court.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The Government payment of premiums under the third schedule of the Workers' Compensation Act applies to every mine in the State, no matter who supplies its firewood. On further reflection the hon. member will perhaps fail to see the force of his contention. Of course the Arbitration Court's award raised the cost of getting firewood, and as a natural corollary the company raised its price to the mines. Other companies or individuals did not raise their price, but other mines get the same treatment from the Government. This concession was given by the Government, not to the suppliers of firewood, but to aid the mining industry, which employs nothing like 65 per cent. of alien labour, as implied by the hon. member. In venturing to assert that the Golden Horseshoe employed 50 per cent. of alien labour the hon. member, I am informed, is quite inaccurate. The largest foreign labour employing mine the State ever had, employed only approximately that number. Recently we were asked to restrict the employment of foreign labour in mines to 25 per cent. Investigation proved that less than 20 per cent. were engaged in that form of industry. There is no analogy between Agricultural Bank advances to farmers and advances under the Mining Development Act. A goldfields member should know that a mining lease must be worked by a certain amount of labour, and it would be grossly unfair to compel an owner to employ a certain number of men and then stipulate their nationality, especially in a calling where skilled labour is scarce. Axe work is not skilled labour in the sense that mining is.

Hon. J. Cornell: It is just as skilled as shovelling.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: Clearing is skilled work.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Any man can gain a knowledge of chopping down trees in the course of a few weeks, and in an occupation like that the Government can safely stipulate that our own people must be first absorbed in employment before others are engaged.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: They don't like the work.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am sorry to hear that. The Government have been lending in the aggregate very large sums of money through the Agricultural Bank to farmers desirous of clearing their lands. There has been unemployment, and the Government were convinced last year that much of that unemployment was due to alien immigration. At the same time we are introducing migrants into this country under an agreement with the Imperial authorities and the Commonwealth Government. Under that agreement the State Government undertake to settle migrants on the land. There is in the agreement, a further clause which says—"The Government shall find assisted migrants suitable employment in the State at the same rate of wages as Australians of similar experience." Investigation by the Government through the Police Department has shown that there are many Southern Europeans in the agricultural districts, and that they are offering their services to farmers at 10s. a week and keep, and that they have been employed at that figure. The result is that Australians have a difficulty in getting work on the farms, and British migrants find it more difficult still, owing to the competition of this alien labour. Is it any wonder then that the Government in lending money to farmers should, in view of their responsibilities to their own people and the agreement they have entered into with the Imperial and Commonwealth authorities, make it a condition of the loans from the Agricultural Bank that British subjects should be employed. We are not responsible for these aliens coming to Western Australia, and we have protested against their being brought here. In a letter written to the Prime Minister on the 2nd August of this year, Mr. Collier pointed out that, from figures supplied by the Customs Department he had found that for the three months, April, May and June, 265 Italians, 99 Greeks, 146 Jugo Slavs, 30 Albanians, and 69 other aliens, or a total of 609, had

landed in this State. He said the result of this influx was that many of our own people were thrown out of employment by the foreigners, who were prepared to work for little wages, and that it was increasing the difficulty experienced in placing the men who came out to Western Australia under the Migration Agreement. The Prime Minister replied quoting figures supplied by the Commonwealth Statistician indicating that whereas the percentage of unemployment in Western Australia was 11.4 in 1922 it was only 4.4 in 1927. Another instance of figures being made to prove almost anything. The communication was most courteous in tone, but no assurance of relief from the trouble was definitely promised. It therefore behoves the Government to protect its own people as far as possible to the extent of doing nothing to encourage such a class of immigration. The old-time objections to Asiatic immigration were raised not only on the ground that these coloured races were not likely to conform to our ideas of civilisation, but that by working for small wages they would lower the standard of comfort which enables a man to live decently and bring up his family respectably. Judging from the wages for which Southern Europeans work, as proved by the investigations of the police, they can scarcely be expected to help to build up the Commonwealth on lines which make for its social improvement, or which would conduce to its strength should it be called upon to fight for its existence. Men who come here and work for 10s. a week and keep are not of the breed that will enable Australia to maintain an honoured place among the dominions which help to form the British Empire. With regard to the employment of Southern Europeans by the Main Roads Board, the Deputy Chairman states that when the Horseshoe mine closed down representations were made as to distress amongst those thrown out of work. Arrangements were made for about sixty men to be absorbed in road work. Deserving cases were selected. The circumstances of each were taken into consideration. With the exception of eleven, they were all British subjects. The board's policy is not to employ foreigners, and Mr. Cornell has selected the only instance on record where foreigners have been put on and retained until the completion of the job. The circumstances were, however, peculiar. The board took men who had been employed on the Horseshoe mine

and who were known to be absolutely in need of help.

Hon. E. H. Harris: And they took only those who could produce a union ticket.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am informed that they took deserving cases. It is very easy for the hon. member to make an interjection of that kind. He suggests that desirable cases were deliberately overlooked.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Nothing of the kind; do not put that construction on my words.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It was the only construction that could be put upon them. The Orion Rock camp work to which Mr. Cornell refers employed 27 men, not 40. The whole of the foreigners, 11 not 21, happened to go to the one job.

Hon. A. Burvill: What do you propose to do with them?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is not our responsibility. It is not our responsibility to provide work for all these people.

Hon. A. Burvill: They are here; you must do something for them.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Mr. Bruce ought to be consulted on that point.

Hon. V. Hamersley: They find work for themselves.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Now we come to the Swede. He was employed at Macpherson Rock and when Ministerial instructions were subsequently issued, that no foreigners were to be employed except those naturalised and married to Australian women with families resident in the State, until Australians and other Britishers were absorbed, he was then put off and Mr. Cornell was advised of the reason on the 26th September. He was informed that Mr. Olsen could not be re-engaged at present, and should look for work elsewhere, as there were Australians and other Britishers available for employment on the Macpherson Rock Reservoir. All this is in conformity with the policy of the Government which is to discourage the immigration of aliens and encourage the immigration of British subjects. There seems nothing wrong with that policy. If we were responsible for these foreigners coming here it would be a different matter. But they are being brought out here not only against our will, but despite our protests. Hence we feel under no obligation whatever to find them work, when they arrive in this country. Proof is available that there is an organised system in Italy for

placing Italian immigrants in Western Australia. In September, 1926 the Commissary General of Emigration in Italy presented a report to the Italian Prime Minister. To that report there was a preface which the Commissary General urged that "every Italian should read." In the preface the prospects of settling Italians in Australia are reviewed, and there is a very illuminating reference to this State. The Commissary General says:—

Western Australia is the State which has suffered least through the arrival of emigrants not nominated, and where conditions are at present relatively the best, given the ease with which our emigrants adapt themselves to clearing and woodcutting generally. A representative of the Commission has been sent there to provide for the placing of emigrants.

Here is evidence of organisation. Not only are the Italians being sent here, but a representative of the Emigration Commission, appointed by the Italian Government, is here to provide for the placing of these emigrants. That is what the official report tells us, and it goes to show that an attempt is being made on well-defined lines and with the help of the Italian Government, to send to Western Australia a class of immigrant for which we are in no way prepared. In view of that fact, and of our obligations to the Mother Country, as well as to Australians, and the necessity of maintaining the standard of comfort to which our people have become accustomed, the Government would be wanting in their duty if they offered inducement to aliens to come to this State—which they would be doing if they acted in the manner in which the tenor of Mr. Cornell's speech would seem to imply. I have much pleasure in laying on the table of the House the papers asked for by Mr. Cornell.

HON. V. HAMERSLEY (East) [5.9]: I regret that the Government in their considered wisdom have thought fit to deny many of our settlers the right to use moneys that they themselves are responsible for. After all, those people cannot borrow money from the private institutions because in a great measure the Government have mopped up most of the money the private institutions have; also, the Government themselves hold the security of the land. It is Government land, and until the titles are passed along to the settlers by

the Government it is a very risky security for the private institutions to lend money on, so that the farmers might proceed with the work of development. In days gone by the Government instituted the system by which money would be lent to settlers on land that was still Government land and until the title had been handed over. When a person borrows money from the Government, he undertakes to work that land. Then it is to be presumed that the money should be placed at the disposal of the individual. He is responsible for the expenditure of it, and if he can get a more satisfactory class of labour than that which he has been in the habit of employing, it is unfair that the Government should dictate to him and declare that he must not employ certain labour, a class of labour, ready and willing to do the work. We know also that Australians do not care to take on clearing jobs.

Hon. E. H. Gray: You do not give them a good enough price.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I know a man at York, well able to pay for work done on his property without the aid of the Government, who declared that he would hold up for our particularly favoured workers, an area of 2,000 acres. He said that these people could come along and clear it at their own price. Do you know that he held up that land for two years and nobody would take on the work of clearing? And he stipulated, too, that the clearers could do it at their own figure. I know of many who repeatedly endeavour to employ Australians to do the work of clearing, and in many instances I regret to say, these men take on the contract but do not attempt to carry it through. Their one idea is to beat the employer. It is not a question of price. Employers can give 30s. £2 or £2 10s. an acre and no matter what the price may be the job is almost invariably scamped. On the other hand, Italians do the work satisfactorily. Their one idea is to complete their job so that they may get other employment in the surrounding districts. Of course, we have heard complaints occasionally, but on the whole the tendency on their part is to do their work well, and so establish a good name for themselves in the hope of getting other contracts. These foreigners are doing the work that many settlers cannot get people of our own nationality to carry out, and in the absence of

those men we would find it very difficult to clear many of the lands in readiness for the plough.

Hon. E. H. Gray: There would be no difficulty if you paid more.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: The foreigners are doing work that is creating traffic for our railways. They are clearing in the back-blocks where many of our own people do not care to go—on the outskirts of civilisation.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: There are no picture shows there.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: We should welcome these Italians for the work they are doing. I have been told that the same thing has occurred in America, that these men are in a great measure responsible for the great prosperity of that country. They are the real hewers of wood and drawers of water. Our own people are more prone to take on the working of machinery to carry the traffic that is created by the initial work of the foreigners. There would not be the handling of large quantities of produce at our ports were it not for the work being created by the foreigners. The agriculturist should have the right to say what class of man he should employ if he finds them willing and ready to work. It is generally admitted by those who desire clearing to be done, that these men have been eminently satisfactory. I regret that the Government have indicated that they are not inclined to lend money to settlers who are in that position. It has put some of them in a very awkward position because they have employed foreigners and the contracts are only half completed. I know of some Italians who are going about the country districts looking for clearing work. They cannot go to some farmers who have employed them before because of the scare that has been created that the Government will not lend money if those people are given the job. I hope the Government will not adhere too rigidly to their decision that such work must be given to Australians or Britishers, but that they will render the same assistance as has been available in the past.

HON. H. STEWART (South-East) [5.18]: The fact that foreigners have been able to secure clearing contracts, is owing to the large amount of developmental work that is going on, and to the old experienced clearers of 15 years ago not being available to-day.

Hon. E. H. Gray: They were driven out.

Hon. H. STEWART: No, but some clearers drove settlers off the land because clearing costs were too high. All those who take up land and secure advances from the Agricultural Bank do not make good.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Perhaps all those that Mr. Gray spoke of have not made good.

Hon. E. H. Gray: I have made good, so that is the difference.

Hon. H. STEWART: Naturally those who are on the land would always prefer their clearing work to be done by Australians or Britishers.

Hon. E. H. Gray: They have a peculiar way of showing their preference.

Hon. H. STEWART: I do not think Mr. Gray is conversant with the position, particularly with the preferences of those associated with the development of the land. I know of no instance in my district of Italians being employed in connection with agricultural development.

Hon. E. H. Gray: I can take you to plenty of places in your district. I could take you to Gnowangerup, for instance.

Hon. H. STEWART: I spoke of my own knowledge; I do not know whether Mr. Gray regards my district as covering the whole of the South-East Province which is about the size of England. I do not profess to know the conditions regarding the employment of clearers throughout the whole province. I am convinced that any Australian or Britisher would prefer to have his clearing work done by his fellow countrymen rather than by foreigners, if the work could be done at anything like a reasonable price. Most of the clearing is done by contract and to-day we have not the experienced clearers that were available years ago. The Agricultural Bank advances only what is considered the value of the clearing and the bank pays for the work only when it is done. The money the bank is prepared to advance at so much per acre cleared is what, in the opinion of the bank's inspectors, is a fair and reasonable amount for the work. I know of no instance of a settler endeavouring to get that work done at less than the price at which the loan is available. Mr. Hamersley has pointed out that the money borrowed from the Government through the Agricultural Bank has to be repaid by the settlers. It is desirable, therefore, that settlers shall have the work done at a price that will not unduly burden them regarding the interest

they will have to pay. The Minister said that practically anyone could use an axe. I am rather surprised that he should endeavour to convey the impression that anyone could use an axe and do clearing work on conditions that would be economically sound. Some men can do so, for there are men who will take the advice of experienced settlers and do as they are told.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Are you using that argument in favour of increased prices?

Hon. H. STEWART: I will deal with specific instances to show the hon. member that his interjection is beside the point. The Leader of the House conveyed the impression that clearing amounted to unskilled work. Any man who is willing to work and will follow the advice of men experienced in agricultural matters can make good wages on the basis of Agricultural Bank rates available now.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Have you known of any instances of clearers getting 10s. a week only.

Hon. H. STEWART: I had intended asking the Leader of the House if the instance he referred to dealt with a man who was paid wages, or had taken on a contract and through lack of experience was not able to make more than 10s. a week.

The Chief Secretary: He was paid wages at the rate of 10s. a week.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: I know of men receiving £2 a week and tucker.

The Chief Secretary: Contract prices were given in connection with some instances but I did not mention them.

Hon. H. STEWART: What the Minister has said is news to me and I certainly have not known of such instances in my district. At Bridgetown I was told of one man who had had a lot of clearing done by Britishers years ago but that man now finds that Britishers are not available, or will not take the contracts at the prices offering. He has been compelled to let contracts to foreigners. He says that not all the foreigners are satisfactory, but that some take contracts and do the work quite well at recognised fair contract prices. He had had some work done 12 months before the trouble arose. I would like to remind hon. members that a new chum can take his axe and undertake clearing work. From the experience he gains during the first six weeks or so he is able, if he displays suffi-

cient initiative and understanding, to compete with more experienced clearers.

Hon. A. Burvill: On the other hand, some may not.

Hon. H. STEWART: It all depends upon individuality. I do not believe that all people are endowed with the same amount of vitality, physical energy, constitution, or mental equipment. We cannot put all men on the same level. Regarding Mr. Gray's references to prices, it was brought home strongly to me recently when I learnt of one man who had had hundreds of acres of clearing work available for years past. He had advertised the contracts and men had taken small areas from time to time and completed their contracts at good prices. Then an old experienced clearer came along and asked that individual whether he had any clearing work to be done. When he was informed that there was work available, the clearer found out where it was, went along and had a look at it, came back and put in his own price, which was somewhat lower than the price that had been available for years past. That clearer, without any particularly favourable weather conditions to assist his work, undertook the clearing and finished his contract. He made more than other clearers equally experienced, but who had had the advantage of higher prices and not more favourable land. He was thoroughly satisfied and did not work more than 48 hours a week. He had the knowledge and experience and was industrious. Some men who are observant will acquire very quickly the knowledge of how to clear in the Great Southern district. Others do not. They will not benefit from experience, nor will they accept advice. They scamp their work. Clearing work of that description means that it is often much more expensive to have the clearing work done properly by contract at a later stage. Some men do not clear flush with the ground or in accordance with the requirements of the owner. That makes it more expensive when the clearing has to be thoroughly done in the long run. If farmers were able to foresee the condition of their land when clearing contracts were let to some clearers, they would be very careful to see that the work was done well. I would point out to Mr. Gray that we have had experience of that sort of thing at Newdegate where the unemployed were sent out to do the clearing of holdings. The work was done and the

ultimate contract price represented an incubus upon the settlers, when the task of properly clearing the holdings was undertaken. Mr. Hamersley has referred to the way clearing work was carried out at times. I believe we are all in favour of Australians or Britishers having the first chance of the work, and in 99 cases out of 100 that preference will be extended to them. It is not that the work is unprofitable for there are instances that can be quoted of men having made sufficient out of their clearing contracts to be able to save up and purchase properties. Some men will stick to clearing work for years; others, like the prospector, will make a cheque and then knock it down. A man of the latter type is often the best for the work. Throughout the country there is a tremendous amount of work in progress in the shape of group settlement, road construction, railway construction, and water supply works, and there is a real shortage of labour for the development of the agricultural areas. We hear a lot about the unemployed around the metropolitan area, but unemployed are not to be found in the country districts. In the country work may be obtained at a contract price fixed by the Agricultural Bank trustees and considered by them to be a fair and reasonable price for the work. If Australians are not willing to undertake clearing contracts at the price, it is justifiable in the interests of development that other labour should be employed. I feel strongly that general sentiment would give preference to Britishers if they were prepared to do the work at a reasonable price, such as that laid down by the Agricultural Bank.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [5.33]: I congratulate the Government on the stand they have taken and I hope they will tighten up the instructions.

Hon. J. Cornell: Then to be consistent they should not buy fish from southern Europeans.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: It is a fact that many farmers are trying to evade the instructions by letting contracts to Britishers and Australians who are engaging alien labour for the work. I know positively that the conditions and wages of clearers have retrogressed since the advent of alien immigration. I have no objection to an alien provided he is a decent citizen and adheres to the stand-

ard of living that Australians observe. The trouble is that the aliens will not do that. I am certain that the reason why they are employed in Western Australia is that their labour is so much cheaper than that of other migrants.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: They do not take the work more cheaply.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: It is extraordinary that a member of the Labour Party should have to stand up in this House and plead with members to support the Government in their efforts to give British migrants a chance. If the desires of members are carried out, it will be necessary to stop the migration of Britishers and flood the State with aliens.

Hon. V. Hamersley: You do not know what you are talking about.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: No matter where one may go in the wheat areas, large numbers of aliens are employed. If the statements made by some members are correct that the aliens are better workers and do the work more satisfactorily, then we must stop the immigration of Britishers, because the only outlet for labour in this State is on the land.

Hon. G. W. Miles: There is room for some on the wharf, too.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: It is useless to encourage a policy of immigration when the farmers say the migrants are no good. Mr. Holmes interjected that Britishers would not do the work. What an insult to our own people! Has not the State been built up to its present stage of development through the labour of Britishers? Members talk about the British Empire and wave the Union Jack, but when the acid test is applied they favour the employment of cheap labour from southern Europe. I hope the Government will tighten up their instructions and ensure that the money provided through the Agricultural Bank is not advanced to permit of the exploitation of southern Europeans. They are being exploited, and because they know a little more about food values than do our own people, they are able to keep in fairly good condition. They will be exploited until a stand is taken in their defence.

Hon. J. Cornell: You are referring to olive oil and garlic.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Those are good staple foods. In the interests of the aliens as well as the migrants coming from the Old Land,

Government action is necessary. How can we develop the country if we shut our own people off the land? The present shortage of labour in the country is due to the bad conditions and the low prices ruling for work. This State is prosperous enough and the farmer is prosperous enough to permit of the Agricultural Bank increasing the price for clearing. Western Australia will never be more prosperous than it is at present and, if the rate for clearing is insufficient, there is no reason why the Agricultural Bank should not increase it.

Hon. G. Potter: But the farmer has to repay the money to the Agricultural Bank.

Hon. G. W. Miles: You want to introduce a go-slow policy such as you have in all your unions.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: All the talk about a go-slow policy is merely designed to throw dust in the eyes of the people.

Hon. G. W. Miles: You are the one that is trying to throw dust in their eyes.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I am pointing out the facts. I have travelled through the State sufficiently to acquire a knowledge of the position and I say the farmers are exploiting the aliens.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Can you give us an instance?

Hon. E. H. Gray: Yes.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Then let us have it.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Only on Saturday last a farmer said to me, "It is a godsend that these people are coming here for it enables us to get our land cleared cheaply. It is an opportunity that has not occurred for 30 years." In Western Australia there is a land hunger; prices are high and there is sufficient margin between the economic price of land and its virgin price to give every one participating in the work of clearing decent living conditions and wages.

Hon. J. Nicholson: That does not give us any information.

Hon. G. W. Miles: No, but the hon. member has made a lot of noise.

HON. J. CORNELL (South—in reply) [5.40]: My intentions when speaking to the motion have been either misjudged or misunderstood by the Chief Secretary. I take little notice of Mr. Gray because he has to blow off occasionally.

Hon. E. H. Harris: It provided a good safety-valve for him.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I shall return to him later in my remarks. I launched the

motion for two reasons only. The first reason was because of representations made to you, Mr. President, Mr. Dodd and myself regarding the peculiar position at Newdegate where British labour was not forthcoming and the work was given to Southern Europeans, but when the work was done, or partly done, the Agricultural Bank refused to make the advances. I asked for some information as to how those settlers would be treated, and whether the Government would stand fast to their decision and not pay for the work that was done under a misapprehension or in exceptional circumstances. I regret that the Chief Secretary did not say whether the Government would make inquiry and advance the money if payment was considered to be warranted. That was the main object in my moving the motion.

The Chief Secretary: No injustice has been done.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I understood that the Newdegate settlers would have to carry on as best they could. I did not quote from the files because the Minister courteously placed them on the Table before the motion went to the vote. Another point I desired to clear up was whether the Agricultural Bank trustees, of their own volition, imposed this embargo.

The Chief Secretary: No.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Then the Government directed them to do it.

The Chief Secretary: Yes.

Hon. J. CORNELL: That is another point cleared up. I think the bringing in of the mining industry and the advance recently made by the Government was germane to the subject. It was brought in only for the purpose of illustration. Money advanced by the Agricultural Bank—public funds—could not be used by settlers for clearing work if they employed alien labour, but Government grants—again public funds—are being made to carry on the mining industry, grants that are much more precarious than Agricultural Bank advances, and no reference has been made to any embargo on the employment of Southern European labour.

Hon. E. H. Gray: They have an established standard of living.

Hon. J. CORNELL: According to the hon. member the only standard a southern European wants is olive oil and garlic. If there was any justice behind the decision of the Agricultural Bank trustees not to make advances for clearing done by

southern Europeans, surely the same policy should apply to the grant of £5,000 recently made to the Golden Horseshoe mine. The Southern European is not fitted to go clearing, but he can work in a mine. I want to see this country peopled, but to be consistent we must apply the embargo all round.

Hon. H. Stewart: There is the construction of the Meekatharra-Horseshoe railway. Government funds were advanced for that.

Hon. J. CORNELL: It is doubtful whether the Wiluna mine can be worked without Southern European labour. If it is fair to place an embargo upon the expenditure of Government money in one direction, it is fair to extend it in another. I may have been misunderstood when I referred to the Government advance of £30,000 odd to the mining industry in connection with the Kurrawang Firewood industrial award. I said that 65 per cent. of those employed by the Firewood Company were Southern Europeans, but did not apply this remark to the mining industry generally. There has never been less than 65 per cent. of Southern European labour employed in the goldfields firewood industry, and it is a notorious fact that the mining industry would not have kept going but for this class of labour. The Chief Secretary says that the advance of £33,000 goes all over the State. I say that 80 per cent. goes to the Kalgoorlie and Boulder mines, which draw their supplies of firewood from the Kurrawang Firewood Company, which company in turn employs 65 per cent. of Southern Europeans. The Olsen case stands apart from the other question. Olsen is an educated man, and an acquisition and an asset to Western Australia. His views would carry great weight when he wrote to Sweden and pointed out what had happened to him here. Whilst I agree that we must endeavour to people this country with Britishers, I do not think any member of this Chamber would have the slightest objection to Swedes coming here in great numbers. They are good settlers, and we could not get better. That is why I cited the Olsen case. Whilst the Minister and the Under Secretary for Works had the courtesy to reply to me, the secretary of the union ignored my letter when I brought the matter under his notice. Aliens are accepted as members of the union, but nothing

is done for them, and the Government do not care to interfere. There is no doubt Olsen was victimised because he was not an Australian born. The Chief Secretary said that inquiries made by the Police Department showed that Southern Europeans have been employed in the farming industry for 10s. a week and their food, and that this was one of the reasons for the embargo. Logically, that declaration means that although the farmers may be sweating these people, the Government are prepared to go further and prevent them from getting any work at all.

Hon. A. Burvill: That is bound to happen.

Hon. J. CORNELL: We must face that issue. The Government are not responsible for bringing these people here. The responsibility for that lies with the Commonwealth Government. They are here, however, and are being denied work, and no proper inquiry is being made into their conditions. Unless some understanding is arrived at with the Federal Government, the interests of Australia will not be advanced, and great hardship will be inflicted upon these newcomers. It is no more the fault of these Southern Europeans that they are here than it is our fault. Some years ago two farmers holding large areas along the Midland Railway line told me that if they had their way they would not employ a southern European on their properties. They said, however, there was no one else to do the work. The old contract clearer had departed, and the remaining people had to be employed on day labour in order that the work might be done. It was impossible for anyone to take contracts for clearing and employ men on that system. Much against their grain, these farmers had been forced to let extensive clearing contracts to Southern Europeans, for there was no British labour offering for the work. I am not prepared to say that the southern European is a better man than the Britisher. In the matter of clearing I doubt whether there is much difference between the average British immigrant and the Southern European; one knows as little about the work as the other.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: One may have more inclination for the work than the other.

Hon. J. CORNELL: There is no doubt about that. The Southern European has not been brought up under the Government dole system. It happens that I picked out the only main road camp in Western Australia

which employed Southern Europeans. I know some of these people and look upon them as good citizens. Some of them are married and have families. As the Chief Secretary says, they are entitled to the work and they can do it. I happened to be there with a settler who was an Australian. He said, "Here am I with an Agricultural Bank embargo placed upon me. I cannot get anyone but Southern Europeans to do my work, but I am not allowed to employ them, although they are employed by the Main Roads Board." Settlers are bound to make comparisons of this sort. The main objection to Southern Europeans seems to be that they are unsophisticated. Some farmers are doubtless prepared to exploit them. They do not know our standard of living, and therefore, cannot conform to it. Their tongue is also foreign. On reflection Mr. Gray would doubtless admit that, given a decent chance, Southern Europeans have made good in this State, and have become excellent citizens and farmers. Many of them are in his own constituency.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: Quite right.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The Chief Secretary has overlooked one important point. Although this embargo has been placed upon Southern European labour for clearing work, these people can select their own land and receive advances from the Agricultural Bank. I have recently made inquiries of the bank concerning this and found that the position is as I have stated. These people, however, cannot employ their fellow countrymen to assist them in clearing the land.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: That is idiotic.

Hon. J. CORNELL: No one can dispute that reasoning. I regret that a way out has not been found for the Newdegate settlers. I understand this is the first specific case brought under the notice of the Government. I lay this flattering unction to my soul that 70 or 80 per cent. of the settlers in that district are "diggers." They found a way out once before, and will do so again.

Question put and passed.

BILL—APPROPRIATION.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

BILL—AUDIT ACT AMENDMENT.

Message received from the Assembly notifying that it disagreed to the Council's amendment, and giving reasons.

BILL—CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading—negatived.

Debate resumed from the 1st December.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [6.3]: Knowing that there is a great deal of work to be done, I shall not speak at length on this Bill, which however calls for comment from every member.

Hon. A. Lovekin: You are flogging a dead horse.

Hon. E. H. Gray: I do not think so. The measure, if enacted, would fulfil the desire of many people who have for years been entitled to vote for the Legislative Council, or should have been so entitled, but have been denied that right. The Bill does not in any way propose the abolition of this Chamber.

Hon. H. Seddon: It is not frank enough to disclose that wish.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Apart from the question whether the Legislative Council is necessary or not, every decent man and woman should be entitled to the franchise for it while it exists.

Hon. E. H. Harris: The Bill does not provide for that.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Thousands of men and women who are entitled to the franchise are now denied it.

Hon. G. W. Miles: And thousands have it who should not have it.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: The Chief Electoral Officer, we learn, intends to issue 52,000 claim cards to persons who are entitled to enrolment for the Legislative Council. He would be well advised to refrain from wasting his time and the State's money while the franchise position remains so obscure and tangled. Indeed, the position is so confused that large numbers of people who are entitled to be enrolled do not know it. Even men of culture and education whom I have canvassed in the metropolitan district have produced to me the two acknowledgment cards, Commonwealth and State, as proof that they were enrolled for this Chamber. The present basis of the franchise is unjust, cutting out altogether too many people. Who represents the better asset to the State—a man with six children in a four-roomed house, or a citizen who does nothing but own a block of land? Under the present system the man owning a block of land worth £17 annually is entitled to the vote, while the man with

six, eight, or ten children, who is worth £4,000 or £5,000 to Western Australia, is not so entitled.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Where do the children sleep—out in the bush?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: In the house. A shop-keeper who defies decent standards of health can claim the vote and obtain it.

Hon. G. W. Miles: He should be prosecuted and fined.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: But he can claim the vote and must be given it. The decent shop-keeper who takes a flat to live in is denied the vote.

Hon. J. Nicholson: But the other shop-keeper does not get the vote for sleeping in the shop.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: He is entitled to the vote if he claims it.

Hon. J. Nicholson: I never saw that in the Act.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: It shows the unjust and ridiculous nature of the present basis of enrolment.

Hon. A. Burvill: Your statement is ridiculous.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The hon. member must be allowed to proceed with his speech.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: The statement may be ridiculous, but it is true. Suppose two men rent a house between them, and one pays the rent to the landlord, while the other tenant pays half the rent to the man who pays the landlord: only one of the two tenants can enrol in such circumstances. If, however, the tenants alternately pay the landlord, they can each secure a vote. A basis which admits of that is manifestly wrong. It means that the fly people who take the trouble to master the basis of enrolment get the franchise, while other people, valuable citizens, are deprived of the vote. There are all sorts of ways of legally securing the vote while decent men and women are deprived of it. The Bill goes a long way to rectify that undesirable position. No one will say that decent citizens should not be enrolled. Surely members of the Legislative Council are not afraid of the people. When the community at large considers that this Chamber should be abolished, it will be abolished, but that has nothing to do with the present measure. Members who oppose the Bill should get up and defend the existing franchise.

Hon. E. H. Harris: It has already been defended.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: The statement has been made that this Chamber is needed to check hasty legislation. Such a check may be necessary, and a Labour Administration in power constitutes such a check. Even if the franchise is broadened, a prospect which many members view with apprehension, there is still this consideration, that in the event of any brand of Government being returned to power, there will still be elections for the Legislative Council and the people will be able to register their approval or disapproval of the Government at those elections. The Bill does not cut away any privilege of this Chamber.

Hon. A. Lovekin: If we had equal franchise, would you give us equal rights with regard to money Bills?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: That question can be discussed when it comes up. One clause of the Bill provides for the abolition of plural voting. It has been asserted that the number of people in possession of the plural vote is very small indeed; but the system is unjust and antiquated, and no elector should have more than one vote. The clause broadening the franchise may require amendment to make it more definite. Mr. Harris made mild attempts to ridicule the clause, and sought to make the House believe that the provision would give the vote to anyone dwelling in a tent or an old shack.

Hon. E. H. Harris: That is quite true.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Not so. Under the clause in question anyone living in a house fit for human habitation will be entitled to the Council franchise.

Hon. E. H. Harris: That is not so according to the Bill.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: To say that anyone putting up a tent on four sticks would be entitled to the vote under the clause is absurd.

Hon. E. H. Harris: That is what the Premier said several years ago, and it is recorded in "Hansard."

Hon. A. Lovekin: The speech is merely propaganda.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: No. The members of this party are giving expression to their opinions and the opinions of their supporters. This is a burning question with Labour people. Men and women who are at present refused the franchise claim greater representation in this Chamber. When the opportunity offers, it is our duty to give expression here to views that we promulgated on the public platform. It is ridicu-

lous that a man or a women 21 years of age who is entitled to a vote for the Legislative Assembly, where Governments are made and where the finances are administered—

Hon. H. Seddon: How about cases like that of the Minister for Works, who could get a vote and did not obtain it?

The PRESIDENT: Order! There are too many interjections.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I am in a position to state that the Minister for Works now has the vote. The fact that he did not possess it previously, shows the unjust basis of the existing qualification. I hope hon. members will give the measure their serious consideration. I earnestly assure them that large numbers of people want this amending Bill carried. Justice should be done to thousands of hard-working people by passing the measure, thus incidentally causing this Chamber to be held in higher esteem by the community generally.

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

| | | | | |
|------|----|----|----|----|
| Ayes | .. | .. | .. | 7 |
| Noes | .. | .. | .. | 16 |

Majority against .. 9

AYES.

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Hon. J. Cornell | Hon. J. W. Hickey |
| Hon. J. M. Drew | Hon. H. Seddon |
| Hon. E. H. Gray | Hon. W. H. Kitson |
| Hon. E. H. Harris | (Teller.) |

NOES.

| | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Hon. A. Burvill | Hon. J. M. Macfarlane |
| Hon. J. Ewing | Hon. W. J. Mann |
| Hon. W. T. Glasheen | Hon. J. Nicholson |
| Hon. V. Hamersley | Hon. G. Potter |
| Hon. J. J. Holmes | Hon. H. A. Stephenson |
| Hon. G. A. Kempton | Hon. H. Stewart |
| Hon. Sir W. Lathlain | Hon. H. J. Yelland |
| Hon. A. Lovekin | Hon. C. F. Baxter |
| | (Teller.) |

PAIRS.

| AYES. | NOES. |
|------------------|------------------|
| Hon. J. R. Brown | Hon. G. W. Miles |
| Hon. J. E. Dodd | Hon. E. Rose |

Question thus negatived.

Sitting suspended from 6.18 to 7.30 p.m.

BILL—MEEKATHARRA-WILUNA RAILWAY.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central [7.30]) in moving the second reading said: This Bill denotes something

which must be cheering to the people of Western Australia. It denotes that the mining industry, which first brought this State into prominence and gave the first impetus to its prosperity, is not dead nor dying, but is about to experience a revival, the assured extent of which will be great, but the full extent of which it is impossible to forecast. It is many years since Parliament was asked to approve of a mining railway of the dimensions of the one under review. There has not been the necessity, unfortunately, and our attention in this respect has been confined to railways necessary in the interests of the agricultural industry. That, after a lapse of 36 years since gold was first found in quantity in this State, the need should again arise to provide over 100 miles of railway communication to assist the development of another goldfield within our territory, must prove a further splendid advertisement for Western Australia, and renew the faith of investors in our gold-mining possibilities. The proposal contained in this Bill is the construction of a railway from Meekatharra to Wiluna. Wiluna cannot be said to be a new goldfield. Up to 15 years ago it had produced a million pounds worth of gold. Then the process of development slowed down, for some reason or other, until four or five years ago, when a company was convinced by geological and other data that there was considerable auriferous wealth in the district awaiting exploitation. At the same time the company recognised that it would be foolish to proceed with the thorough testing of the mines unless there was an assurance from the Government of the day that a railway would be built if there was sufficient justification. Accordingly, Mr. John McDermott, on behalf of the company, wrote to the then Premier of the State (Sir James Mitchell) a letter in which he expressed the viewpoint of the shareholders. A few extracts from this letter, and the reply of Sir James Mitchell, will make the position clear as to the present obligations of the State. Mr. McDermott opened his communication by stating that the object was to secure a promise to submit to Parliament a measure for an extension of the existing railway line to Wiluna, after the company's share of the contract had been carried out. In the course of his letter, Mr. McDermott said:—

The gold and base metal industry of Western Australia has been sinking with alarming regularity for some years. A feeling of Government indifference to the State mining interests has been steadily growing amongst

mining investors, particularly in London, so much so that large sums of cash capital earned by mining companies operating in Western Australia have been invested in other countries, and particularly within the last two years in Canada. Many of the leading directors of Westralian mining companies are joining Canadian mining boards and, should this drift be allowed to continue, interest in Western Australian mining will soon cease altogether. In such an event a tremendous concerted effort by the Government and people of Western Australia would be required to regalanise a favourable opinion in outside investors. Such an opinion is essential to, and can alone secure, the supply of the large sums of capital necessary to re-establish the prosperity of the State mining industry. It might never be able to be revived, no matter what effort is put forward, once the interest of the leaders and investors in the industry, who were attracted by the great Coolgardie gold rush, have finally severed their connection and interest with Westralian mining.

Mr. McDermott then referred to the interest the Government had been taking in the mining industry, and, after that, got down to bedrock by stating what his principals were prepared to do if the Government were to pledge themselves under the conditions he stipulated to build a railway. Let me quote from him further. He says:—

Subject to your Government promising to introduce when called upon by me as a Government measure, which will be accorded your fullest support, a Bill authorising the extension of the existing railway line to the Gwalia consolidated group of leases, Lake Way, and passing through the townsite of Wiluna, the route to be at the selection of your Government, and the building of the railway to begin immediately the Bill has received the approval of Parliament, I am authorised to state that my principals in London are prepared to form a company to purchase, work and equip with necessary treatment plant, the said leases now under option to me at Lake Way, and provide a cash capital of not less than £300,000, which money will be spent entirely in the interests of the company within the State of Western Australia.

That letter was sent to Sir James Mitchell, the Premier of the day, who replied in the following terms:—

I am in receipt of your letter of the 12th instant, asking that a Bill be introduced to Parliament authorising the extension of the existing railway line to the Gwalia consolidated group of mining leases at Lake Way, passing through the townsite of Wiluna, and in reply have to advise you that when the Minister for Mines certifies that the development at this mine justifies the construction of a light line, Parliament will be asked to authorise the expenditure, but this information must not be used for flotation purposes. All

details in connection with development work that may be necessary to enable the Minister to issue his certificate must be subject to arrangement with him. The Government will welcome the discovery of mining fields of sufficient value to justify the provisions of transport facilities. Further, it will be a fortunate day for the State when the Minister can certify as above.

It will be seen that Sir James Mitchell did not give an unqualified promise. The building of the railway was to be subject to a certificate that the development of the mines justified its construction. Nothing further was heard from the company, but it proceeded vigorously to test the mine. Meanwhile a change of Government took place, and the company were anxious to know whether that change affected the arrangement which had been made with Sir James Mitchell. So they wrote to the present Premier asking for an expression of opinion from the new Government with regard to the matter. The Premier replied as follows—

With reference to Sir James Mitchell's letter of the 22nd September, 1923, regarding the provision of an extension of an existing railway line to the Gwalia consolidated group of gold mining leases at Lake Way, I have to advise you that the matter has received the consideration of the Government, who are prepared to endorse the undertakings therein expressed.

Since then the mine has been thoroughly tested. Hon. members have no doubt read the report of Mr. Montgomery, the State Mining Engineer, which was laid on the Table of the House. That report deals exhaustively with the subject, but it is just as well to quote a few extracts from it. Mr. Montgomery writes—

On the whole the bores may be said to confirm the evidence of the levels, and show that like values exist to the lowest depths attained by them, so that the conclusions as to size and value of the ore-bodies in the proved levels may be expected to hold good to seven or eight hundred feet at any rate, giving a reasonable probability of life for the mine at an output of 300,000 tons annually above the 800 feet level for something like ten years. There is no reason apparent why the lodes should not persist to like depths as at Kalgoorlie without much diminution of average value. The Wiluna Mines Limited's proposition has now been well proved. The lodes are long and wide. They have provided 340,711 tons of ore from above the 100 feet level, returning £565,604 worth of gold, and 't now proved that good ore extends beyond the limits of the older workings, so that there is a strong probability that the output from the first 100 feet will not be less than 400,000 tons. The

diamond drill boring which has been done gives good grounds for believing that the size and value will continue much the same for another 500 feet in depth. There is no visible geological reason why they should not continue to like depths as the Kalgoorlie lodes, and have a similar life of not less than, say, 25 years.

Mr. Montgomery says there is no visible geological reason why the results should not continue to like depths as the Kalgoorlie lodes, and have a similar life of not less than, say, 25 years. If that proves to be so, the mine should produce over 12¼ million pounds worth of gold in that period of time. Mr. Montgomery goes on to show that the company's mine is not the only gold yielding property showing good results at Wiluna. He tells us—

Other mines at Wiluna, not at present working, have produced to end of 1926, a further amount of 197,974 tons of ore, returning 122,065 fine ounces of gold of value £518,133, bringing the total production of the field to 538,685 tons of ore returning 225,220 ounces of fine gold, of value £1,033,737, showing that the company's mines are not by any means the only ones in the district, and that if the field be revived there is great promise that a further large production of gold will come from leases other than those of the Wiluna Mines, Limited.

The question of the successful metallurgical treatment of the ore in this particular district did at one time give reason for doubt to men versed in mining. That aspect, however, does not occasion Mr. Montgomery any anxiety. He says—

There is no reason to fear any unusual metallurgical difficulty in getting a quite satisfactory extraction of gold from the Wiluna ore. It is expected that concentration by flotation followed by roasting and cyaniding of the concentrates can be made to give an even better and cheaper economical result than the standard sulphide treatment by roasting the whole of the ore before cyaniding, but the latter can be relied on for very satisfactory results if flotation should not come up to expectations.

Mr. Montgomery then refers to the financial position of the company. He remarks—

The company is understood to have very strong financial support able to provide development and equipment of the mines in the most efficient manner, provided that the Government will give connection with the State railway system.

The Government have also satisfied themselves as far as possible on this point.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Have the company experimented successfully with the flotation process?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I cannot say. The mining superintendent stated to the Railway Advisory Board, during their recent inquiries, that the company had expended approximately £200,000 on developmental work, and expected to have to expend another £300,000 before the mine would be properly equipped. The company's general superintendent, Mr. Vail, has stated that there will be no difficulty about raising the necessary money. The Mines Department files show that the Agent General reported from London that the directors of the company there had stated that the amount of money put up as at the 16th June last was £350,000, and that they intended to raise a further £200,000, making a total of £550,000. From different sources it has been ascertained that a very considerable sum of money has been made available, and there is every encouragement for investors to find all the capital required. At the mine they have over a million tons of ore blocked out. The shafts have been sunk and everything is ready for the ore to be taken out. Although in the absence of a decision as to the particular type of plant which will be used at Wiluna, it is not possible to form an accurate idea of tonnage of machinery which will be required for the mine, but it will probably be between 5,000 and 6,000 tons. Under existing conditions that would have to be carted from Meekatharra to Wiluna at the rate of £5 a ton. With the provision of railway facilities the cost over that distance would be reduced to 14s. a ton. Hence on machinery for the equipment of the mine, there would be a saving to the company of £26,000 by the construction of this line, and they will have that much extra money to put into the work of development. The Government having concluded on the facts and prospects that the construction of a railway to Wiluna was warranted, it was necessary to come to a decision as to the point at which it should junction with the present system. The Railway Advisory Board was instructed to make investigations and report. In the first instance the company did not make any stipulation or suggestion in regard to the route. In the course of the inquiries made by the Advisory Board much evidence was taken, and the mine management and the attorney strongly urged that the line should junction at some point along

the Murchison railway system. After an investigation in connection with which all parties concerned were afforded an opportunity of giving testimony, the board submitted a report recommending that the line to Wiluna should branch off from Meekatharra. In keeping with that recommendation, this Bill is presented. Let me read a couple of extracts from the report of the Advisory Board dealing with the question of routes. They say:—

From the evidence given by the mines superintendent at Wiluna, it appears essential that the shortest and most direct route to a seaport should be adopted if costs of mining and treatment are to be kept down and imported stores, machinery and supplies obtained at the cheapest rate. Large quantities of round mining timber will be required, while there is also the probability that oil fuel will be used to a considerable extent, probably about 15,000 tons per annum being required. In this respect the Geraldton connection would be much more suitable for Wiluna than the Leonora one, as mining timber could be easily obtained and the crude oil required could be shipped direct to Geraldton, where bulk handling could be established.

Further on the Advisory Board say—

The Meekatharra connection would be the shortest of the routes mentioned, and therefore the least expensive to construct. The staff to work the line would be stationed at Meekatharra, and would also be available for other main line work. The Geraldton-Meekatharra line is up to standard, and would not require any additional expenditure to carry the extra traffic, and trucks returning empty could be utilised for traffic from the manganese company's line after they arrived at Meekatharra. The Deputy Commissioner of Railways states that the Meekatharra connection would be far and away the most economical one from a railway working point of view.

It will be seen that from the standpoint of cost of construction in the first instance, and perpetually in the reduced cost of the transit of goods, the Meekatharra route is recognised by the Advisory Board as having supreme advantages over any other. It will be seen also that the Railway Department state that the Meekatharra connection would be far and away the most economical one from a railway point of view. There are some advocates of a Leonora connection.

Hon. G. W. Miles: They are not serious.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The Advisory Board have prepared figures making a comparison between the rates of freight which would have to be paid if the Leonora route were chosen as against those which will be paid if this line is built. Let me quote a few as a sample of the whole.

Hon. J. Nicholson: How much do you think it will cost?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I have not the figures; in any case it would be an estimate only. The intention is to begin with a survey, and until that is completed it will not be possible to form an estimate.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Is it not estimated that it will cost £3,000 a mile?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am not sure. The Advisory Board have prepared figures which are enlightening. It will be quite sufficient for me to quote a few as a sample of the whole. If the mine had to convey crude oil over the Leonora route, it would have to pay £6 ls. 7d. a ton as against £4 4s. 3d. from Geraldton. On Class I rates the difference in the two routes would be about £2 12s. 9d. a ton. On some items the cost would vary from £2 to £4 10s. per ton. On Class B goods—machinery and other such heavy freight, the rate would be £4 2s. 3d. via Leonora and £2 17s. 8d. via Meekatharra. Not only that, the cost of construction would involve the expenditure of about £221,000 more from Leonora. That is also a rough estimate because I do not think there has been any survey of the country between Leonora and Meekatharra.

Hon. G. W. Miles: You will call for tenders, I presume.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I dare say. The prospects of these mines provide a bright outlook for the State. The company, which are operating them and which have so far always been most careful about their representations, claim that they are capable of working on a scale of output of some 300,000 to 350,000 tons per annum. That is to say about 1,000 tons per day. An output of 300,000 tons per annum would probably require the employment on the mines of not less than 800 men. This, in turn, would mean a settled population in the district of from 3,000 to 5,000 persons, which would be increased if other mines at the centre were also opened up, and Mr. Montgomery's report gives great promise of such an eventuality. The early stages of the development and equipment with treatment machinery of a large mine in an outback locality are characterised by heavy working costs. The transport of machinery in particular is expensive. If this railway be constructed at an early date, it will not only very materially lower the permanent working expenses of the mine and enable the owners to go forward confidently with the

work of development, but the railway will at the outset make large earnings in the freights on the material required for the mining and treatment plants, and the buildings and domestic materials for the sudden influx of population. And then, when the mine employs the number of hands necessary to man it effectively, there should be no doubt about the line as a revenue-producing proposition being a profitable one. The Government, in introducing this Bill, are carrying out the promise of a previous Administration. But even if no such promise had been given, the manner in which the company has carried out its undertaking to test the property thoroughly, and the results of that test—the years of wealth-production that are ahead—the unmistakable statements and opinions under this head of such a man as the State Mining Engineer—all these would be regarded by the Government as sufficient warrant for embarking on the expenditure involved in this undertaking. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. SIR WILLIAM LATHLAIN (Metropolitan-Suburban) [7.58]: My remarks on this Bill will be exceedingly brief because I do not profess to know a great deal about it. We realise that a tentative promise was made by a previous Government to construct the railway.

Hon. H. Stewart: To introduce a Bill.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: We are asked to authorise the building of a line for the development of one particular mine. I understand that had the railway gone via Leonora it would have opened up a great deal more country and would have taken in pastoral areas, whereas the proposed route will not traverse any such country. That is a reason why we should be sure of our ground before we sanction the building of the line. We were all delighted to hear the glowing reports read by the Chief Secretary, but ever since I have been in Western Australia I have come across many glowing reports regarding the probable production on a very large scale from the mines at Wiluna. Strange to say those prognostications have never been fully realised. We have heard it said that the largest body of ore that exists in any part of Western Australia is to be found at Wiluna but the fly in the ointment is the refractory nature of the ore. I am not speaking as one having

expert knowledge of the mining industry, or of refractory ores. I am as anxious as anyone else to assist the mining industry provided there is a fair chance of a reasonable return. When we are asked to sanction the construction of a railway to the far outback country, we want to be assured that the predictions of the mining experts regarding the future of the mine are of a satisfactory character. I ask the Chief Secretary for a very definite statement as to whether the Government are satisfied that the Wiluna ores, which have been regarded as refractory, can be treated satisfactorily. I also hope that the Minister will tell us that the line is to be built by contract. It will be interesting to know when it is proposed to build the line. We ought to be careful in authorising the construction of a railway, the purpose of which is the development of one mine only. In this instance we are asked to put all our eggs in one basket. Had the line gone from another centre, it might have passed through pastoral areas. I am not opposing the Bill but am merely seeking information, which I hope will be forthcoming. In the meantime I will listen with interest to what may be said by other members who are more conversant with the country and the possibilities of the mines.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [8.3]: I do not wish to oppose the Bill. Were I not to offer some remarks I would feel that I was remiss in my duty as a Western Australian. When moving the second reading of the Bill, the Leader of the House said many years had elapsed since a Bill to authorise the construction of a goldfields line had been before Parliament. The Bill that was last before us related to, I think, the Bullfinch line. The lesson taught by that railway—and the same thing applied to other goldfields railways—is one that will bear re-telling. For many years the Bullfinch mine progressed satisfactorily. Then there came what awaits all gold mines—the end. Five years ago an effort was made to pull up the line because the mine had petered out. Fortunately a Bill to that end was not introduced. The line remains and to-day its existence is justified as an agricultural railway. Recently we had before us a Bill to authorise the pulling up of the Kanowna line and the White Hope railway. I hope it will be many years before the fate that overtook Bullfinch, Kanowna and White Hope will be repeated in respect of

Wiluna. I trust the expansion of the pastoral industry will justify the retention of the Wiluna line after it has been constructed, and the Wiluna gold mine is no more. I have carefully read the report furnished by the State Mining Engineer (Mr. Montgomery) on the Wiluna goldfield. There is no man in this State for whom I have a greater respect or deeper regard, both as a public man and personally, than I have for Mr. Montgomery. I have several times contended that of all the excellent men we have in the Public Service, no man is more cultured or more fitted for his position than is Mr. Montgomery. We know how conservative he is.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: He was very conservative regarding Ravensthorpe.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Ravensthorpe is a reasonable proposition to-day, if only we could get the capital invested there that is available for Wiluna. Perhaps Ravensthorpe may be described as even a better proposition.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Is there not something wrong with the process there?

Hon. J. CORNELL: In the course of his report, Mr. Montgomery pointed out the development that has taken place at Wiluna, and the large amount of money that has been expended by the company before deciding to erect any plant. I think the figure mentioned by Mr. Montgomery was £200,000, as being the money already expended or to the expenditure of which the company was committed. Recently I received a pamphlet from Johannesburg, and the Chief Secretary has had the pleasure of reading it. It refers to the development of a mine on the Witwatersrand and in one portion indicates that a company had recently commenced production after £1,000,000 had been expended on shaft sinking and equipment before the management were able to determine whether the erection of a treatment plant would be justified. What I am afraid of regarding Wiluna did not confront this South African mining company, who nevertheless spent £1,000,000 before deciding to erect a treatment plant. Mr. Stewart knows that there are no metallurgical difficulties in connection with gold mining at Witwatersrand. On the other hand, there are metallurgical difficulties in connection with Wiluna mining and Mr. Montgomery, in his report, is not definite when he touched on that phase of the Western Australian proposition. It is

said that the old Wiluna Gold Mining Company won £1,000,000 worth of gold before deciding to close down owing to metallurgical difficulties. I am not speaking at random, but on the authority of several prominent metallurgists of this State. I do not desire to name them, for those gentlemen, who would not care to do anything to hinder the introduction of capital into the State, would not be prepared to express their opinions publicly. The problem that awaits Wiluna is as to whether the ore can be treated profitably.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Have they not solved that problem?

Hon. J. CORNELL: The hon. member has not read Mr. Montgomery's report!

Hon. G. W. Miles: No, I have not.

Hon. H. Stewart: Had they solved the problem, that fact would have been clearly stated.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The report states that experiments have been carried out with the flotation process by means of a pilot plant with a capacity of 30 tons or less. Mr. Montgomery suggests that if the flotation process cannot be utilised, it may be possible for the system in vogue at the Golden Mile to be applied to Wiluna.

Hon. H. Seddon: They are now trying a third process.

Hon. J. CORNELL: A mining man like Mr. Stewart will bear with me when I say that if it comes to a question of erecting a dry crushing plant at Wiluna, such as is used on the Golden Mile, the Wiluna company will be hard put to it to make ends meet and show a profit on 10 dwt. dirt. I am not deerying the proposal nor am I opposing the Bill. I am hoping for the best, but the opinions I am expressing ought to be voiced. I will play second fiddle to no one in my desire that those handling the Wiluna proposition will solve the metallurgical difficulties and that the mine will become the great undertaking we all hope it will be. There is another phase to be mentioned and that relates to the question of the route for the railway. Undoubtedly, as has been pointed out, Geraldton is the nearest port. The fact remains, however, that the machinery that will be required to enable the company to operate at Wiluna, on a basis of 300,000 tons per year, must come from the Old Country, from the Continent, or from the Eastern States. Coming from the Old Country or the Continent, the machinery will have to

go via Singapore and be transhipped to Geraldton, or else it must come direct to Fremantle.

The Chief Secretary: Not at all.

Hon. A. Burvill: Why should it not go direct to Geraldton?

Hon. J. CORNELL: I hope what I suggest is not so, but I think the Minister will find that in practice what I indicate is correct. I have seen almost every plant erected on the Golden Mile and I have worked on some of them. By no stretch of imagination could it be suggested that one company could order sufficient machinery to warrant a shipment direct. If it be found possible for the ships to go direct to Geraldton with the necessary machinery, I shall be pleased. Then there is the question of food supplies. Because of the industrial trouble we have had during the last few days, people are rushing to buy food supplies that come from the East. Most of the food supplies for Wiluna will come from the Eastern States, and will have to be transhipped from Fremantle to Geraldton. Then there is another factor: A few days ago I asked a question in the House. I wanted to know whether, in view of the figures revealed by laboratory examination relating to the prevalence of miners' phthisis in the older mines, the Mines Department was insisting upon such a layout of the underground workings of the Wiluna gold mines as would conform with methods in vogue elsewhere for minimising the causes of miners' phthisis. We do not want a recurrence of what has happened on the Golden Mile. If the necessary steps have not been taken in accordance with modern mining hygiene at Wiluna, we shall inevitably have such a recurrence. Knowing as I do the toll of victims taken by miners' phthisis, I say it would be better if the Wiluna mines were not developed at all than that through the absence of modern mining hygiene we should have there a recurrence of the dreadful experiences on the Golden Mile. It will be criminal if we do not attend to the layout of the Wiluna mines. I have been told by a reliable authority that it is proposed to work the Wiluna mines on the shrinkage stopping system. I say it would be better not to work the mine at all. Scientific research has discovered no reliable method of coping with the dust inseparable from the shrinkage stopping system. The State should see to it that the Wiluna mines are brought right up to date in point of ventilation and modern

hygiene for the prevention of miners' phthisis. Then there is another point: The passage of this Bill is certain to give an added value to the Wiluna shares. Assuming that those shares are worth £1 to-day, they will be worth at least £2 when the Bill goes through.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: Can we accept that as a good tip?

Hon. J. Nicholson: What are they worth now?

Hon. J. CORNELL: I am not sure, but their value will be doubled when the Bill passes, for without the railway the mines cannot be worked.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: That is true also of agricultural land.

Hon. J. CORNELL: With this difference, that the farmer generally speaking cannot get out at a profit, whereas the shareholder sometimes can.

Hon. J. Nicholson: You are giving a good hint to the investing public.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Yes, and I trust that the shareholders, or most of them, will reserve the placing of their shares until they have carried out their undertakings to the letter. The whole history of gold mining in Western Australia in recent years proves conclusively that those who desire to manipulate the industry first boost it and then get out and leave the baby for the flats who come in. I am not suggesting that the Wiluna company would do that.

Hon. H. Stewart: It is a common experience in mining.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I trust it will not happen at Wiluna, for when we pass this Bill the State will be committed to the expenditure of half a million of money on this railway. I am not disparaging Wiluna; I am merely pointing out what might happen and suggesting that we should insist upon certain things being done, more particularly as to the layout of the mines, so that the men who work in them will not run the risks that the men in days gone by had to run in the mines of the Golden Mile. Just one additional point: It is said that the building of this railway and the erection of the mining plant will find employment for a thousand men. Throughout Australia to-day the miner, like the prospector, is no longer young. There are very few young fellows taking on mining in Australia, and I have yet to find a miner who would be a party to his son going to work underground. He knows the risks that have to be run under-

ground. One proposition the Wiluna Company will be up against is that of suitable labour. I venture to prophesy that if the Wiluna mine is to be successful, it will have to get the necessary labour, and for this will have to rely on Southern Europeans.

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

BILL—STATE CHILDREN ACT AMENDMENT.

Message from the Assembly received and read requesting a conference on the amendment insisted upon by the Assembly.

On motion by the Honorary Minister, consideration of the message made an Order of the Day for the next sitting.

BILL—CLOSER SETTLEMENT.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to the amendments made by the Council.

BILL—METROPOLITAN TOWN PLANNING COMMISSION.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

BILL—HOSPITALS.

Recommittal.

Resumed from 1st December. Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Honorary Minister in charge of the Bill.

Clause 27—Power of local authorities to expend revenues on public hospitals:

The CHAIRMAN: When last the Bill was before us, it was recommitted on motion by the Honorary Minister for the purpose of further considering this clause. On the motion of the Honorary Minister the clause was struck out. The Honorary Minister then moved the insertion of a new clause to stand as Clause 27, following upon which the Committee agreed to several amendments in that proposed new clause. That, I think, is the stage we have reached.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I protest against the loss of time entailed by the reading of long questions over and over again. The clause proposed to be substituted appears in the minutes.

The CHAIRMAN: I would not have read it had it appeared on the notice paper as agreed to by the Committee. I am informed that certain alterations were made.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: That does not meet the point. You put the question to the Committee as it appears in the minutes.

The CHAIRMAN: When did I put it?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: On Thursday last when it was previously before us.

The CHAIRMAN: On that occasion the President was temporarily occupying the Chair.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Anyhow the Chairman put the question. My only object is to save time. When long amendments are included in the minutes I think they should be taken as read. A point was raised on Thursday by Mr. Burvill and Mr. Hamersley whether two municipalities could combine to carry out an undertaking. To make it quite clear that they may do so, I move an amendment—

That the following subclause be added:—“(5) Any two or more local authorities, whose boundaries are adjacent, may enter into an agreement between themselves and the Minister for the purposes of this section.”

As the Bill has been recommitted so many times I suggest that, if further fault is found in it, the measure be allowed to go to another place and if necessary the fault be remedied there.

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

Bill again reported with further amendments, and the report adopted.

BILL—EMPLOYMENT BROKERS ACT ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Honorary Minister in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 3:

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: By the common consent of members it has been agreed that we should cut out of the Bill everything except the machinery clauses, namely, the substitution of the court of petty sessions for the licensing court. The licensing court is a different body from what it used to be. Accordingly I move an amendment—

That paragraph (c) be struck out.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Paragraph (c) refers to the inspector as the

officer who will control the whole of the ramifications of the Act. Therefore the paragraph is necessary and should be retained, at any rate, at this stage.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The only place where there is any possibility of the inspector being required would be under Clause 3. Still there would be no need for an inspector to examine the premises of an employment broker, because the clerk may refer any application to the court if the premises are considered to be unsuitable.

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

Clauses 3 to 6—agreed to.

Clause 7—Amendment of Section 9:

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: This clause goes too far. It should be sufficient to provide that the applicant has suffered forfeiture or cancellation of a license. There should be no need to take into consideration the reasonable requirements of the district, the suitability of the premises or any other reason that the court deems sufficient for refusing to grant a license. I move an amendment—

That all the words after "Act," in line 4 of Subclause 1, be struck out.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: This is a protection for those who are carrying their business on in a legitimate manner, as well as a penalty upon those who have been instanced by Mr. Kitson, and who are not carrying their business on as it should be conducted.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Section 9 of the principal Act provides that objection may be taken to the granting of a license on the ground that the applicant is not a fit and proper person to hold one. Other important safeguards are also inserted. I think the clause should be allowed to remain as it is.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The clause says that the court may refuse to grant a license. This will lead to the establishment of a monopoly. Why should any restriction be placed on the number of persons who may desire to conduct this class of business? The determining factor will be that if people cannot make a success of it they will give it up. I support the amendment.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: If too many employment brokers are allowed to exist, competition will become so keen that they will do anything they can to secure the business.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: That is not a fair statement to make.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: Some brokers adopt most objectionable practices. The files in the department are replete with instances of misrepresentation that brokers have indulged in with the object of getting business.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I am opposed to the amendment. This class of business should be kept clean, and the number of those engaged in it should be restricted.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: It is necessary to provide against any district being overburdened with employment brokers. Some of the premises in Perth are not fit for the purpose for which they are used. It would be unwise to carry the amendment.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Unless the subclause is amended, a monopoly will be created in this class of business, and people engaged in other callings, such as that of a land agent, will want similar protection for themselves. The more brokers we have the better is the class of business likely to be.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 8 to 10—agreed to.

Clause 11—Amendment of Section 14:

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: We should vote against this clause, which prevents employment brokers charging a fee to employees.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It is as well to come to grips on this question. The Bill was introduced practically at the instigation of members of this House, and as a result of what they said in the last Parliament. On a previous occasion many members agreed that no fee should be charged to employees.

Hon. A. Lovekin: That is provided in the principal Act and you want the fees cut out.

Hon. V. Hamersley: I did not agree.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member will never agree to anything that stands for progress. Both Mr. Lovekin and Mr. Holmes agreed. Mr. Holmes said that it would be equitable to amend the Employment Brokers Act so as to put the responsibility of payment on the employer, and make it a punishable offence for a broker to accept anything from an employee.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Where did that come from?

The HONORARY MINISTER: From "Hansard" of last year. Mr. Lovekin said he thought the employers were the persons who should pay these fees, and that he was prepared to let the employee go free because the employer was better able to look after himself than was the employee.

Hon. A. Lovekin: I think you will find something else there as well.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Quite so. However, I do not believe in quoting "Hansard"; it really gets us no further. Hon. members did say they were prepared to support a Bill to tighten up labour exchanges. One thing they were emphatic about was that payment of fees should be upon the employer and not upon the employee. Mr. Burvill expressed himself to the same effect, and has not twisted. Remarks of that kind influence one to bring down a Bill such as this, whereupon the hon. members whose words I have quoted give the measure the knife, merely because at the moment they do not find it convenient to stand up to their declarations.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The clause means that employees shall not be charged any fees, which are to be borne entirely by employers. Never yet have I heard any objection from the good, honest employee to the payment of a fee in return for being provided with employment. The whole Bill is against the employer. It is known to the Honorary Minister that on the books of the State Labour Bureau many pounds are standing to the debit of employees who have failed to repay the cost of railway tickets. Employers have frequently been subjected to the same treatment by employees. There are bogus employees, who fail to show up after the employer has advanced the railway fare and a few shillings to go on with. At present employer and employee each pay half the fee, as is equitable. If the employee pays half, it is some guarantee of good faith that he will proceed to take up the situation.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I wish to quote Mr. Holmes as reported on page 1436 of last session's "Hansard"—

In my opinion it would be equitable to amend the Employment Brokers' Act so as to put the responsibility for payment on the employer and make it a punishable offence to accept anything from the employee. A broker should be fined if he accepts payment from both parties.

Mr. Lovekin on page 1445 is reported as follows:—

I think the employers are the persons who ought to pay the fees. I am prepared to let the employee go free, because the employer is better able to look after himself than the employee.

Hon. A. Lovekin: I am prepared to adhere to that now.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: My experience of the past two years has been such as to keep me away from employment brokers' offices altogether and deal with the men direct. Out of 50 men who applied to me for jobs recently, I accepted three. Not one of them had any money, and I provided each with a railway ticket costing £1 7s. 11d. One turned up on the job; two went away and sold their tickets, and I have not been able to get on their track since. Last week I advertised for men, and there was a levee from 9 o'clock till 11. I selected a half-grown man who said he could ride, and I agreed to pay him £2 10s. per week, with care at the station just as good as I have ever received myself, in return for his making himself generally useful. He was to leave by Wednesday's train, and I wired the station to meet him. On Thursday morning I received a telegram from the station saying that he had not turned up. On the Thursday afternoon a telegram came to say he would arrive next day. On the Friday I received an urgent message from him saying he had been refused employment on the station. Then I received a message from the station to say he had been dismissed because he arrived drunk, and refused to take orders, and refused to have his meals anywhere except in the dining room with the manager. All the sin is not on the employer.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: Mr. Holmes would be well advised to accept the principle of preference to unionists and to apply to the unions for any men he needs; then his troubles would cease. In the event of the individual getting way with the ticket or with money advanced, Mr. Holmes would have the right to prosecute him. The only argument for the deletion of the words in question is that Clause 12 is to be rejected. We have not yet arrived at that clause. Have the Committee already decided which clauses to delete and which to retain? We are getting a little ahead of ourselves. If Clause 12 is to be rejected, the words in question should be retained. I hope that Clause 11 and Clause 12 will both be carried.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I am still of the same opinion as some time ago, that the employer should pay the fees because he is better able to look after himself. But that is not the point at present. The Committee have practically agreed to leave the Bill with its machinery clauses only.

Clause put and negatived.

Clause 12—Amendment of Section 15:

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: The same argument applies to this clause.

Hon. J. Nicholson: It is consequential.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I agree that the clause is consequential in some directions, but I hope hon. members will reflect before deciding to reject it. It deals specifically with the payment of fees and, bearing in mind what hon. members have said on previous occasions, I think they should agree to it.

Hon. A. Lovekin: We would have to put something else in it if we did so.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The remarks of other hon. members could be quoted and if they were in earnest I think they must support the clause. The illustration given by Mr. Holmes would indicate that he did not perhaps exercise the best of judgment. His experience may not have been a happy one, and I know there have been such experiences, but I cannot regard them as having a general application. Mr. Kitson quoted an instance regarding an employment broker, and I could quote others still more striking. I would not say that they would apply generally. In view of the utterances of members regarding the responsibility of the employer for the payment of fees, they should give effect to their expressions of opinion and allow the clause to pass. I would not mind if some obligation were placed upon the employee, but I do not think it is right that the employee should have to pay for a job.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I have not changed my opinion regarding the payment of fees by employers, but if we agree to the clause we must insert other provisions that will safeguard the interests of employers. It must not be a one-sided Bill. If the employer is to be made to pay all the fees, we must embody some safeguards to counteract incidents such as Mr. Holmes described.

Hon. E. H. Gray: The man concerned could be prosecuted at common law.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: We are trying to give the Minister a change of court and we should

provide him with the necessary machinery to enable him to avail himself accordingly.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: His feelings must have carried the Honorary Minister away when he said that many members had supported the principle of the employer paying the fees. I do not think that can be contended for one moment. The object of the clause is to do away with private employment brokers altogether. My experience of employment brokers has been different from that of Mr. Holmes. After trying the experiment indulged in by Mr. Holmes with similar results, I relied entirely upon the private employment brokers to make a proper selection, and I have had satisfactory results. I know of one instance in which seven men applied for a position as tractor driver. The private employment broker went to no end of trouble, and sent each of the seven applicants to the Westralian Farmers for a test. Only one man succeeded; the others knew nothing about the job.

Hon. H. Stewart: If the employer had sent to the union secretary he would, of course, have got a good man straight away!

Hon. W. H. Kitson: All the good men are in the union.

Hon. E. H. Gray: And all the duds outside.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: If we are to be thrown on to the State Labour Bureau, pity help the agriculturists! We could not expect public servants to go to the trouble that private employment brokers do to meet the requirements of their clients.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Some time ago a Labour Exchanges Bill was before the House, and it was during the debate on that measure that members gave expression to the opinions quoted by the Honorary Minister and others regarding the payment of fees. The point at issue then was regarding the advance of money for travelling expenses and the means by which the payments could be recovered. The Honorary Minister has so far got away with his contention that members had endorsed the principle they now object to; they did nothing of the sort.

Hon. E. H. Gray: The same principle is involved.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Certainly not. The whole question is as to whether the employer or the employee is to pay fees. If the employers are to be made to pay all the fees, they will establish their own bureau.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Like the pastoralists did.

Hon. E. H. Gray: And do like Mr. Holmes did—make a terrible mistake.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: If the employers established their own employment bureau, they would see to it they got the men they desired. It will not be in the interests of the Labour movement or the workers generally if we provide for the discrimination indicated in the Bill. If we are to allow men to take positions that do not cost them anything, there will be no guarantee that they will arrive at the destination to enable them to embark upon the work they have verbally agreed to undertake.

Hon. H. STEWART: Section 15 of the principal Act is fair and reasonable as it stands. I do not think it is in the interests of the employees that they should not be charged any fees.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Those who do not want to pay can go to the State bureau now.

Hon. H. STEWART: That is so. A good man is always prepared to pay for services rendered. The existing law provide equitable treatment for both the employer and the employee.

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

| | | | | | |
|------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Ayes | .. | .. | .. | .. | 4 |
| Noes | .. | .. | .. | .. | 17 |

Majority against .. 13

AYES.

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Hon. J. M. Drew | Hon. W. H. Kitson |
| Hon. J. W. Hickey | Hon. E. H. Gray |
| | (Teller.) |

NOES.

| | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Hon. C. F. Baxter | Hon. A. Lovekin |
| Hon. A. Burvill | Hon. W. J. Mann |
| Hon. J. Ewing | Hon. J. Nicholson |
| Hon. W. T. Glasheen | Hon. G. Potter |
| Hon. V. Hamersley | Hon. H. Seddon |
| Hon. E. H. Harris | Hon. H. A. Stephenson |
| Hon. J. J. Holmes | Hon. H. Stewart |
| Hon. G. A. Kempton | Hon. J. M. Macfarlane |
| Hon. Sir W. F. Lathlain | (Teller.) |

Clause thus negatived.

Clause 13—(Amendment of Sections 16 and 17)—put and negatived.

Clause 14—agreed to.

Clause 15—Repeal of Section 25 and substitution of new section:

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: This clause does not go to the machinery. It provides a penalty

for the employment broker who knowingly induces any servant to enter into an engagement, etc. I have no objection to that, but there must be a corresponding clause on the other side. What about the employee who makes a false statement and gets money under false pretences? I suggest that members vote against this clause.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The Committee having negatived Clause 12, the entire responsibility is now on the employee, who has to pay the lot. All responsibility is taken off the employer.

Hon. A. Lovekin: You are looking at the wrong clause.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Do you want to finish this week, or not?

The HONORARY MINISTER: The employee has to carry the lot, and now it is proposed to make him responsible for something in addition.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: On a point of order. This has nothing to do with obligations for payment. The Minister is dealing with the last preceding clause.

The CHAIRMAN: The Minister is a little away from the clause under discussion.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Mr. Lovekin wants a corresponding clause dealing with the employee, as if he were not sufficiently penalised already. There are many reasons for the retention of this clause, and no valid reason why it should be struck out.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The Minister said that since we have struck out Clause 12 the whole of the fees will have to be paid by the employee. The parent Act provides that no payment shall be charged by the broker to a servant which is not equally charged to the employer.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: The employer is seldom charged.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The employee is careful to see that he does not pay more than half the fee.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: The broker is satisfied with that.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The employee will not pay more than he is entitled to pay. The Honorary Minister led the Committee to believe that if the employee did not have his fee for the broker he would not get the position.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: That happens many times.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Nothing of the sort. The employee is sent out to the job, and his fee is collected from the employer.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: The sentiment expressed by Mr. Lovekin is a good one, and in view of it I hope he will support the clause. If he wants to further protect the employer from the employee, it will be easy to insert a clause to that end.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: I will support this clause if that is done.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: I agree that the worker is not prepared to pay more than he is compelled to pay. But in many instances the employer is not charged any fee.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: How do you know that?

Hon. W. H. KITSON: I know it from actual experience. Moreover, the department will bear out that statement. Quite a number of employment brokers in the past have existed simply because they did not charge the employers any fees. That has been the inducement held out to secure the business of certain employers. Scores of instances could be quoted in support of that statement. Any reputable broker would have no objection to the clause because he would have nothing to fear from it.

Clause put and negatived.

Clause 16—Insertion of new section after Section 25:

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I suggest that the clause be negatived. It provides that employment brokers shall keep their letters, telegrams, etc., for the inspection of the Government who run a competing bureau.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The clause should be retained. The chief inspector informs me that many reputable firms are keen on having the provision made law. Some firms indulge in practices that lead to unfair competition and the clause would safeguard reputable brokers.

Clause put and negatived.

Clause 17—agreed to.

Clause 18—Amendment of Section 28:

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: This is another clause that should be negatived.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The clause merely provides for the making of regulations to prescribe the maximum fees to be charged by employment brokers.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Yes, and thus starve the employment brokers out.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Section 28 provides all that is necessary.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The regulations would have to be laid on the Table and either House could disallow them.

Hon. A. Lovekin: We know all about regulations. We did not come down in the last shower.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It is necessary to ensure that the workers are not fleeced.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: The clause would give the Minister power to fix the fee at 6d. or £5 per engagement, and the whole of the employment brokers could be closed up between the closing of one session and the opening of the next session. That would achieve the object of the State Labour Congress, who unanimously resolved in favour of the abolition of all private registry offices and expressed the opinion that all labour should be engaged through the unions working in conjunction with the State Labour Bureau. Such a clause would provide just the opportunity desired.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: Have you read the resolution of the Geneva Convention?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I am not interested in that. I am concerned about what could happen under this clause.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: If the Government, intent on getting rid of employment brokers, fixed the fee at 6d., that sum would come into operation as soon as the regulation was gazetted and would operate until the regulation was disallowed, which might be six or eight months afterwards. The Honorary Minister should not put up such stuff to us. It is nonsense. The clause is evidently designed as part and parcel of the principle underlying the Bill to get rid of employment brokers.

Clause put and negatived.

Clauses 19, 20—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and returned to the Assembly with amendments.

BILL—LEIGHTON-ROBB'S JETTY RAILWAY.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 1st December.

HON. G. W. MILES (North) [9.57]:

While it is admitted, I think, by members generally that an extension of the Fremantle harbour is necessary, the bringing forward of this Bill and its passing will commit Parliament to the Stileman scheme.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Not necessarily.

Hon. G. W. MILES: In my opinion that is the position. We have suspended the Standing Orders to permit of measures being passed through all stages at one sitting, and it is hoped that the business of the session will be concluded this week. This measure is far too important to be rushed through in one sitting and without receiving thorough consideration. On Thursday last the Minister laid some papers on the table and obtained permission to get them printed. We were to have the reports of the Fremantle Harbour Trust Commissioners and Mr. Stileman's comments on them. The papers were furnished to members this afternoon and there has been no opportunity to study them carefully. After I have passed a few remarks on the Bill, I hope the Minister will agree to an adjournment of the debate in order that other members may have a better opportunity to study the question. The Minister, when moving the second reading of the Bill, said great responsibility rested on the Government, and he inferred that if the Bill were not passed this session, the onus would be thrown upon Parliament. The Bill should have been brought down long ago. It is not fair to expect Parliament to deal with such an important measure in a hurried manner, as we shall have to do if it is not held over. With much of the report of the Engineer-in-Chief, all can agree. We admit that the trade of Fremantle will increase, but the trade of the out-ports will also increase if they receive fair treatment from the Government. They have not received the fair treatment to which they are entitled.

Hon. A. Burvill: Not for the last 30 years.

Hon. E. H. Gray: They have during the last three years.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I am not satisfied that they have. Albany wants its fair share

of the trade and is entitled to have it. Railways should be built from Albany to open up the back country. It is not right that all the traffic should be dragged to Perth and Fremantle. Centralisation has been the curse of this country.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: You cannot accuse the present Government of centralisation.

Hon. G. W. MILES: They are just as bad as any other Government.

Hon. A. Burvill: They are worse.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I want to see the other ports receive the trade that is geographically theirs, and I am quite in favour also of extensions being made to the Fremantle harbour. It is a difficult matter for laymen to criticise a scheme put up by engineers. Other engineers have, however, recommended the up-river scheme of development. Mr. Stileman's report shows that Sir George Buchanan recommended a scheme extending past Rocky Bay.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: He was here only five minutes.

Hon. E. H. Harris: And how long has Mr. Stileman been here?

Hon. G. W. MILES: The late Mr. C. Y. O'Connor lived here for a number of years, and he also recommended the up-river scheme. It is all very well for Mr. Gray to say that if we pass this Bill we are not committing ourselves to the new scheme. We must admit that it gives the Government the right to resume land at the value at which it stood in June last, and that is the only reason they can have for getting the Bill through. The Bill also commits us to a particular site for the bridge across the river. The bridge should, in my opinion, be near Blackwall Reach. Some people advocate a bridge crossing from Point Walter to Point Resolution.

Hon. A. Burvill: How far away is that from the site that is now recommended?

Hon. G. W. MILES: It is about a couple of miles away from the old site that was recommended, the spot where tests have been made to show what the bottom of the river is like. No information has been afforded us as to whether the foundations are right for putting the bridge in at the place now recommended.

Hon. E. H. Gray: The Engineer-in-Chief has advanced his reasons for it.

Hon. G. W. MILES: He has given us some assumptions on the point, but we should not swallow them holus-bolus as the Government wish us to do. The bridge

across the Sydney Harbour is an enormous one. We would not require to have such a large structure here, neither would we need to have one as long as that is. A bridge could be put across the river at Blackwall Reach without the need for any piers to rest it on. Mr. Stileman has not stated the height of his proposed bridge above the water level. That is an important factor, because it affects all river traffic.

Hon. E. H. Gray: It cannot be lower than the present railway bridge.

Hon. G. W. MILES: It should be higher, because it should be rendered unnecessary for boats navigating the river to lower their masts or funnels when passing under it. I cannot see that a drawbridge is a feasible proposition and neither can the Engineer-in-Chief. That is one of the strong points why we should not decide here without further consideration the site for the bridge. Mr. Stileman talks about tidal influence, and what will follow if the harbour is opened up further east, and if some of the spits are taken away. That is mere assumption on his part.

Hon. E. H. Gray: He has taken records of the rise and fall of tide.

Hon. G. W. MILES: There are many people in this State who remember what the river was like before the harbour was made. The present harbour contained more shallow water than is found to-day at Rocky Bay, that is to say when there was a bar across it. When the harbour was opened up, practically no difference was noticed in Perth in the rise and fall of tides. I have asked some of the old settlers about the matter, and they say that the opening up of the harbour has had the effect of taking the flood waters out of the river quicker than was the case before. Let us assume that the extension of the harbour up-river would affect the tide in Perth waters. Is it not possible to construct a weir across the river at the spot where the bridge is to be, and a lock by which the flood waters can be regulated? That would overcome the difficulty of flooding. The Engineer-in-Chief states that if the harbour is extended past Rocky Bay, or further up than he proposes, the rise and fall of tides around Perth will be affected. I doubt that very much. Even if he were right, means could be found for checking that influence.

Hon. E. H. Gray: It would be a costly job.

Hon. G. W. MILES: It would be sounder, more logical and less expensive than the

proposition of establishing an outer harbour. The plan does not show where it is proposed to have the entrance to the outer harbour.

Hon. H. Stewart: I am not the only one who has hunted for an entrance.

Hon. G. W. MILES: No provision is made for a dock. Members will recollect that years ago boring took place at Fremantle in connection with the formation of a dock there. One Government was accused of spending £200,000 without getting a bottom for the dock. A construction of that sort is one of the main things that is required at Fremantle. It is proposed, I understand, to build an outer harbour outside the North Mole along the beach. In addition, breakwaters will have to be constructed, and practically the whole basin will have to be dredged. It is said that the dredging can be done by suction. It will also be necessary to construct wind-breaks along the breakwater in order to keep the wind off the ships. A wind break has already been constructed on the present North side of the harbour, but if the harbour were extended up-river a natural wind-break would be provided by the high land in Rocky Bay. I do not altogether agree with all the pilots have said about the depth of the water. I think provision should be made for a depth of at least 36 feet up to the proposed new bridge. The Harbour Trust Commissioners say that the piles should be driven to a depth of at least 40 feet to enable the harbour to be dredged to 36 feet. Both the Minister and the Engineer-in-Chief have stated that only five per cent. of the shipping draws more than 36 feet. Ships are getting larger every day, and English companies are building them over 1,000 feet long.

Hon. E. H. Gray: They cannot come through the Suez Canal.

Hon. G. W. MILES: The canal will probably be deepened so as to take larger ships. It has been the proud boast of Fremantle that it is the only port this side of the line that is able to accommodate the largest ships in the British Navy. I refer to the "Hood" and the "Repulse," which visited Fremantle some time ago.

Hon. H. Stewart: That was only a small section of the Navy.

Hon. G. W. MILES: They are two of the largest craft in the Navy. Fremantle was the first harbour at which they had been able to berth since they left Home waters.

Hon. H. Stewart: The British Fleet could have been accommodated in Albany.

Hon. G. W. MILES: God made Albany, but man is trying to make or mar Fremantle. If we pass this Bill we shall be pledging ourselves to the Stileman scheme of extending the harbour 1,000 feet above the present railway bridge and no further.

Hon. E. H. Gray: The Minister said Parliament would be consulted before anything was done.

Hon. G. W. MILES: This Bill will probably commit the country to an expenditure of £100,000 for land resumption, and, in addition, to the cost of constructing the bridge. The Minister's main argument was that the passing of the measure would enable the Government to resume land at the values obtaining on the 30th June last. I glanced at the report and saw that the reason for straightening the harbour was that this would be an advantage. Where the railway crosses the bridge, it is certainly necessary to resume some land on the south side; but 400 feet of water, from 12 to 15 feet deep, is being resumed, and on the North Fremantle side the solid land is being removed. No doubt that is an engineering question. The plan on the wall shows that some of the land at North Fremantle is to become part of the harbour by being dredged to a depth of 32 feet. The House should consider the matter very carefully, and I hope the Leader will take a note of the point regarding tides in the river, whether it would not be possible to have a weir and floodgates across the river, assuming Mr. Stileman's report to be correct. Personally I consider that now is the proper time to provide for the bridge across the river, so that the people following us will not have to rebuild it for another century, instead of that becoming necessary in ten or 20 years' time. By agreeing to the scheme we shall be practically committing the country to an outer harbour, of which I for my part do not approve: neither do the Harbour Trust or the pilots approve of it. With reference to the figures quoted in the report, everyone realises that the trade of Fremantle is increasing, and possibly will increase more rapidly than the Minister estimates. Everyone is agreed that the harbour ought to be extended. The report, under the heading "Wharfage accommodation required," states—

In order to deal ten years hence with a total cargo traffic amounting to 3,000,000 tons,

it is obvious that harbour extensions on a bold scale will be necessary.

In my opinion the proposed scale is not bold enough. If the scheme is adopted, the harbour will be confined to 1,000 feet, above the present road bridge. The report further states—

Vessels of a larger carrying capacity were being built before a halt was called by the war, and that the tendency is still in the same direction is an established fact. To what limits such increases may reach is less definite.

We know that large vessels can be handled more economically than small vessels. Therefore I hope that even if the extension is not dredged to a greater depth than 32 feet, provision will be made for eventually dredging it to the same depth as the present harbour. As to width, I understand that Mr. Stileman in his reply to the pilots said the width was only being lessened gradually from 1,400 to 800 feet, and that he cited the circumstances that the entrance channel was only 450 feet wide. But that is not the point at all. The Minister will recollect that quite recently a Bay liner went through the Fremantle wharf.

Hon. E. H. Gray: That is liable to happen at any time.

Hon. G. W. MILES: Quite so. But it is more likely to happen where there is 800 feet than where there is 1,400. Mr. Stileman refers to Sir George Buchanan's proposals, stating—

Section No. 1 would involve the removal of the existing railway bridge and the extension of the wharves up to the existing road bridge. Section No. 2 contemplates removal of the road bridge, and wharf extension as far as Point Brown. Section No. 3 provides for further extension of the wharves up to Rocky Bay.

If we are to confine operations to that spot, where are we to have our docks?

Hon. E. H. Gray: Dry docks?

Hon. G. W. MILES: Dry docks or floating docks; but we must have room. Why should we go outside to make a harbour when there is a natural harbour inside, with an entrance already provided? I hope the measure will not be hurried through unless the House receives a special assurance from the Minister that the passing of the Bill will not commit us to that particular bridge. I fear, however, that it will. I agree, nevertheless, with the following passage from Mr. Stileman's report:—

Briefly stated, the objections to a bridge having an opening span for the passage of

ships are:—As affects navigation interests—(a) Restriction of navigation to periods where traffic across the bridge can be suspended, and also probably to daylight hours. (b) Necessity for attendance of tugs on all vessels making the passage. (c) Charges and risks are increased, while delays are incurred. As affecting other interests—(d) Considerable increase in capital cost, working expenses and maintenance. (e) Necessity for dolphin and fender protection to bridge. (f) Interruption to road traffic while vessels are passing. (g) Maintenance of staff and watchmen for operation of the opening space.

It seems to be out of the question that Mr. Stileman opposes an opening bridge. If we agree to the Bill, we shall agree to a bridge passing across in that locality, and the Engineer-in-Chief will never recommend a bridge with an opening span. Further, by passing the Bill, we shall commit ourselves to that particular area for the Fremantle bridge for all time. Another argument, one which is used by the local people, is the need for connection between North Fremantle and Fremantle. Why cannot the local traffic pass across from North Fremantle to Fremantle in a ferry? The main bridge must be where the main traffic will go, namely, higher up the river. Why Fremantle people should want it in that particular locality passes my comprehension.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Most of the Fremantle people are in favour of that.

Hon. G. W. MILES: By reason of vested interests. The people do not look far enough ahead.

Hon. E. H. Gray: It is not at all a question of vested interests.

Hon. G. W. MILES: Yes, it is. I hear that a member of Parliament has a good deal of land on either side of the site. Another man said to him, "What about selling me some of that land?" The member of Parliament in question is not going to use his influence one way or the other. Under the heading "Future railway approach to Port," the report has the following:—

The necessity for obtaining railway access to the Port, alternative and additional to that through Perth, has been realised and stressed in all proposals for harbour extension yet made.

Everyone is agreed that the line must eventually go to Robb's Jetty and to Fremantle and up to Brookton to bring in heavy traffic from that side of the river. Eventually the heavy traffic on the Eastern Goldfields line will go off at Midland Junction and come down the south side of the river. The report suggests that the line down the

south side will come along the foreshore on the south side, which will be reclaimed, under the proposed new bridge, and down to Fremantle to connect up with the Fremantle railway system. That is all dealt with. Mr. Stileman has dealt with the whole scheme fully and the only point on which I really disagree with him is in confining ourselves to that particular part and not making provision for extending the harbour further up the river. In his report Mr. Stileman mentions that at one stage years ago there was a proposal to bring the shipping to Perth. I do not believe in that and I suggest that if a bridge were constructed across Blackwall Reach, that would be far enough. Failing that, we should consider whether we should not erect a bridge from Point Walter to Point Resolution, thus making available the whole of the water of Freshwater Bay. If we did that it would be looking ahead. Mr. Stileman also says—

In every case, however, the alternative in mind has been what is known as the South-Swan railway which, leaving the existing main line at Guildford, would run to Fremantle via the south side of the river. This railway would do nothing to relieve the existing line from Spencer's Brook, nor would it avoid the existing heavy 1 in 40 gradient through the hills.

Then he goes on to discuss the line from Brookton to Armadale, and we are all agreed upon that point. Then he proceeds to deal with the effect of harbour extensions above Blackwall Reach, and says—

Over its full length, between the existing railway bridge and Blackwall Reach, the Swan River is at present much restricted either in width or depth, often in both, and this restriction at present exercises a marked control on the level of the water surface above the existing bridges. There is no indication in any previous report that consideration has been given as to what the probable effect of widening and deepening the river would be on the surface water levels higher up. The importance of the point is, however, obvious.

Next he refers to the river level records at Guildford and Claisebrook. In my opinion a lot of that is merely a matter of assumption, because when the mouth of the river was opened up there was practically no difference in the levels of the surface up the river. I have put forward the alternative, however, assuming Mr. Stileman's view is right and that this will affect the river levels. Should it increase the levels we would have to raise the Esplanade if necessary, but a preferable scheme is to erect a weir and regulate the

water coming in or going out. That would obviate that difficulty. Then he goes on to say—

It is clear that the main factor in controlling these differences in water level is the restriction to flow in the river over the length between the railway bridge and Blackwall Reach. It follows, therefore, that the removal of this restriction will have the effect of making the full Fremantle tidal effect felt as far up the river as Perth Water. Low water level in the latter would then be lowered from 6 inches to 12 inches, and high water level raised about 12 inches on moderate high waters, and more on the higher tides.

I have said enough to deal with that point. Regarding the design of the bridge, the Minister might find out the height it is proposed to construct it across the river. He might find out those particulars in order to ascertain whether all river traffic will be able to pass underneath it without having to lower masts or funnels or so on. Mr. Stileman goes on to deal with the design of the bridge and says—

Borings, which have from time to time been put down in the vicinity of proposed river crossings and elsewhere, disclose the great variability of the strata and make it clear that any proposal to construct a bridge, having spans of considerable width, must be approached with misgiving, and would almost certainly involve very heavy cost in foundations. For this reason it is desirable that spans should be limited to moderate width in order to reduce the load on the foundations.

He goes on to point out that provision would have to be made on the bridge for the 4ft. 8½in. gauge railway line to cross the bridge. Nothing has been settled, however, as to whether that line will run across the bridge or will go down the south side of the river. Mr. Stileman says—

For road traffic a width of 40 feet, with provision of a footway for pedestrians, should meet requirements for some years. To provide this a total width of about 120 feet will be required, but it is probable that the full eventual width for railway purposes need not be provided at once.

That is all he says on that point and it will be seen that no mention is made as to the probable height of the bridge above river level.

Hon. H. A. Stephenson: It would not have to be very high as a railway bridge.

Hon. G. W. MILES: If the bridge were taken across Blackwall Reach, it would be fairly high, and river traffic could pass under it. I do not know whether it could be

so high because the land is low-lying on the North Fremantle side. Mr. Stileman says—

The future South-Swan railway will pass under the above lines, and go direct to the Fremantle station.

After dealing with initial harbour extensions, he refers to later extensions and says—

As expansion of the inner harbour to the extent necessary to meet full future requirements cannot be obtained, new construction outside the present harbour will be necessary.

That is the main point on which I think the House is asked to commit itself. According to Mr. Stileman that is the limit the harbour can come up-river and it is on that point that I think the House should question him. We should look ahead for the next 50 or 100 years. Mr. Stileman proceeds—

Various proposals for extension either to the north or to the south of the existing entrance have been made in the past. All proposals on the south must contemplate the construction of a new harbour entirely separated from that already existing of no portion of which could any advantage be taken.

If that is right, why did we not decide upon that in an earlier stage, and why did we not adopt an outer harbour scheme. On the other hand we adopted the inner harbour scheme and that has proved entirely successful. Some engineers have supported the outer harbour scheme. It is said that laymen should not criticise engineers and that the Government should take the advice of their departmental officers. I believe that point was stressed when we discussed another matter quite recently.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: You cannot have it both ways.

Hon. G. W. MILES: We have had good Engineers-in-Chief in the past, some of the best in the world. The late Mr. C. Y. O'Connor stood out. Whatever Mr. Stileman's qualifications may be, Mr. C. Y. O'Connor will stand out as one of the best Engineers-in-Chief this State ever had. I am not saying anything against Mr. Stileman, but we cannot lose sight of the fact that Mr. O'Connor's work proved him to be a most capable engineer. Monuments are to be seen all over the country as indications of his engineering ability. He suggested the inner harbour scheme and, had he lived, I believe the harbour would have been extended.

Hon. G. Potter: Other engineers suggested the outer harbour scheme to the south of the present harbour.

Hon. G. W. MILES: Yes, and their proposals were not adopted. Sir John Coode was one, but Mr. C. Y. O'Connor advocated the inner harbour and that has proved eminently satisfactory. Mr. Stileman, in his report, goes on to say—

In these circumstances the harbour becomes unnecessarily costly, both in construction and operation and difficult to administer. Extensions to the north, on the other hand, permit of full advantage being taken of the existing entrance channel, and ensure that measure of centralisation necessary to co-ordination of control and economy of working.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Does that not indicate that the entrance to the outer harbour will be through the present channel?

Hon. G. W. MILES: He does not say where the entrance will be, but I take it it will be somewhere about Rous Head. If hon. members will take an opportunity to study Mr. Stileman's reply to the Harbour Trust Commissioners, they will have an understanding of the position and I will deal with that point later. Mr. Stileman proceeds—

On drawing No. 2 accompanying this report, the site recommended for the new combined road and railway bridge is shown, also the extension of the harbour up to the bridge. That constitutes the first stage of the work. The second stage, calling for the construction of new works to the north, is also indicated. This follows generally on lines proposed by Mr. J. G. Ramsbotham, M.Inst.C.E., in his report made in 1913.

That also applies to the inner harbour. The actual construction of the bridge is put far enough up-river and the harbour construction is to go on, I take it, stage by stage. The whole question, however, is bound up in the site of the bridge. He goes on to give the approximate cost of the bridge, the railway from North Fremantle to Robb's Jetty and the connection into the present Fremantle yard, together with the road approaches to the bridge and other contingent works as £1,200,000. Then the extension of the harbour up to the bridge, with a depth of 32 ft., he estimates at £2,000,000. I do not want to put the country to the expense immediately of a depth at the top end of more than 32 ft., but provision should be made to deepen it to 36 ft. if required. Then I think it ought to be wider than 800 ft. at the top as suggested by the Engineer-in-

Chief. If the debate is adjourned, members will have an opportunity to read Mr. Stileman's comments on criticisms by the Harbour Trust Commissioners and the harbour master and the pilots.

Hon. E. H. Gray: They are not engineers.

Hon. G. W. MILES: No, that is the disadvantage we are at. Because we are laymen, we are not supposed to have any views on this matter. The harbour master states that a reduction in width means grave risks and considerable delays to shipping. Mr. Stileman comments that, not unnaturally, neither the harbour master nor the pilots are concerned with the economics of the question. I ask, why would not the pilots have the capacity to study the economic side of the question? There is the safety of ships to be considered. That is all part of the economic side; for if the harbour proves to be dangerous we will not get anything like the same tonnage of ships coming in. Mr. Stileman, in his comments, says—

They do not appear, however, to realise that the reduction in width proposed is to 800 feet minimum at the new bridge. Generally, over the extension a considerably greater width will be available.

If the harbour were to be taken further up the river it would not be so bad to have this 800 ft. width, provided it was arranged ultimately to go to a depth of 36 ft. Because, as we got into Rocky Bay, we could have a spacious swinging basin. We do not want to have to take ships from the upper end down to the main harbour to swing them. What the pilots have in mind is the swinging of the vessels. Mr. Stileman continues—

Navigation of any vessel in a width considerably less than even 800 feet in itself presents no difficulty. It is regularly done by the Fremantle pilots when navigating the entrance channel, which is 450 feet in width and is, moreover, on a curve.

Unless we have a swinging basin at the upper end, vessels will have to be taken down to the main harbour stern first in order to be swung. Mr. Stileman continues—

The 1,400 feet width is, in my opinion, a fetish. The originally approved design for Fremantle harbour intended two quays, 800 feet apart only. Later, when jetties to the north quay were decided upon, the width provided became 1,046 feet. One jetty only was, however, built, as these were found to be unnecessary, and the original one was eventually removed. The 1,400 feet width thus became established. Examples without number can be quoted of modern ports where vessels must be,

and are, navigated through chains of docks to the swinging basin, in which alone this operation can be undertaken The view of the pilots, therefore, appears to be that what is safely and regularly done elsewhere cannot be undertaken with safety at Fremantle. I feel sure this view would not have been put forward had they been possessed of fuller knowledge as to how large vessels are handled in dock in other of the world's ports. The pilots do not advance one single reason as to why, from a navigation point of view, 36 feet depth is required.

I advance it, if the pilots have not. It is because in the future shipping is going to be of increased size, and I think provision requires to be made for carrying the depth to 36 feet if necessary. Mr. Stileman continues—

It would seem that, in their view, the same margin of depth over draught is needed in harbour as in a sea way. No authority of any kind can be found to support such a view. Two out of every three berths in the harbour, after completion of the first extension, will have 36 feet of water. The 32 feet intended over the extension will float, with a very adequate margin, certainly 95 per cent., probably an even larger percentage, of the vessels trading to the port.

I hope other members will take more time to read carefully the reports of the Harbour Trust Commissioners and of the pilots and the Engineer-in-Chief's comments on those reports. The estimated cost of resumptions is not mentioned. I do not know whether any estimate has been got out. The Minister might be able to give some information on that point and to tell us whether any provision has been made for a dock. A dock is one of our most important requirements. Our own *State steamers* have to be sent to Sourabaya to be docked.

Hon. E. H. Gray: The *State steamers* could not keep a dock in full commission.

Hon. G. W. MILES: No, but if we had a dock, many other ships would come here for repairs. The tramp ships alone would keep a dock busy.

Hon. E. H. Gray: The black labour ships would not come here to be docked.

Hon. G. W. MILES: No, but you are sending our own steamers to Sourabaya to be docked, and then you go out flag waving and talking British versus foreign, while your own Government run all sorts of foreign cars instead of having only British cars. If we do not agree to the measure at this late hour of the session, it is not fair for the Minister to attempt to saddle this House with the blame. The Bill should have been introduced a week or two ago

and more time should be given to members to consider it fully. If we agree to the Bill as it stands, we shall be committing ourselves to the Stileman scheme involving an extension of the existing harbour for 1,000 feet above the present road bridge, and an outer harbour, and possibly it may mean at a later date that we shall have to scrap an expenditure of a million pounds worth of bridge work and land resumption in order to extend the harbour up-stream. I hope the Minister will be able to give some satisfactory reply to the points I have raised. At this stage I cannot say whether I shall support the second reading of the Bill.

HON. J. M. MACFARLANE (Metropolitan) [10.41]: With Mr. Miles I recognise that something in the way of harbour improvement at Fremantle is necessary, but at this late hour of the session it is too much to ask my support of the Bill before the House, knowing it will involve the larger question of harbour improvement. A very heavy expenditure will be entailed and many serious questions will be involved—questions so serious that we cannot adequately compass their consideration within the space of a few days. Mr. Stileman's suggestion for an outer harbour does not appeal to me. I remember when the work of constructing a dry dock was undertaken and the bottom fell out of it and £100,000 was lost.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: Nearly a quarter of a million was lost.

Hon. E. H. Gray: There was no bottom to fall out of it.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: Remembering the severity of our winter storms, and the shiftiness of the sand, I tremble to think of the fate of an outer harbour and how long it would last. I am surprised at the remark of Mr. Stileman in his reply to the Harbour Trust Commissioners in which he says—

The tendency to sheer to windward, to which reference is made, may then be overcome, if its cause lies in the channel, while if the fault lies with the vessel, additional scarmoom will be available in which to correct it. It is curious how the view that this coast is subject to exceptionally violent weather persists.

For a good many years I lived in Fremantle and I do not think that the storms that have occurred intermittently during the last 20 or 30 years have gone for good. They are sure to recur. I remember a storm at Wembly Beach that shifted almost a moun-

tain of sand in a night. I have known the effect of storms on the Bunbury breakwater and I recollect the damage done at South Beach. South Beach is a comparatively sheltered spot, and yet last year a considerable section of the retaining wall was washed away. Therefore, when I am asked to consider a question involving the construction of an outer harbour, I cannot see how, on the evidence before me, it can be regarded as a safe harbour. I am more partial to the extension of the inner harbour. That brings me to the question of the site for the new bridge. In my opinion the point suggested is too near to the mouth of the river. I am in a quandary whether to support the Bill, because I consider that before we definitely settle the route of the railway, we should determine whether we are going to adopt an inner or an outer harbour scheme of improvement. The main point on which I wish to comment is that the time has arrived when the Government should remove the stigma arising from its harbour charges. Shipping using the port is mulcted in heavy costs by reason of the war-time sur-tax, pilotage and tonnage dues imposed. If the Government afforded some relief, the port would appeal much more strongly to the shipping companies of the world. To-day they feel they are being mulcted in costs that are not reasonable. During the early part of the session I mentioned the dues charged, and I pointed out that the Harbour Trust, after providing for interest, sinking fund, etc., in one year paid 30 per cent. of its earnings into Consolidated Revenue. So it continues from year to year, proving that the harbour charges are a form of taxation. That is not right. The Government should remove that stigma from the port. The Minister said the Government would probably consider the matter when the shipping companies considered the question of reducing their rates. That remark attracted attention in shipping circles and I have been supplied with the following information—

The PRESIDENT: I remind the hon. member that the question before the House is the construction of a railway, and not of a harbour.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: But you have allowed a good deal of latitude, and it is of no use undertaking harbour improvement unless we can popularise the harbour by giving shipping good treatment that will encourage it to call at the port.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member must connect his remarks with the Bill before the House.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: The Minister said it was impossible to dissociate the harbour improvement scheme from the question of the railway. I merely wish to show that unless we popularise the harbour, we shall not require any extension.

Hon. E. H. Gray: The extension is required now.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: The patronage of the companies will not be retained. However, in view of your ruling, Mr. President, I shall not pursue that phase of the question. It is obvious that the existing bridges must be removed in order to provide for inner harbour extension, but provision for an extension of 1,000 feet does not seem sufficient. If it is not sufficient, a new scheme must be submitted to carry the extension above Rocky Bay. I think it would be better, rather than proceed with the outer harbour scheme, to adopt the suggestions of the Harbour Trust Commissioners and spend the money on an inner harbour having a proper width and an adequate depth of water. The harbour would then accommodate all the shipping that is likely to enter it say for the next 50 years. I am in full accord with Mr. Miles in his desire to help the Minister by making suggestions of a constructive nature, but I am unable at the moment to say whether I can give this scheme my support or not. I am in the same position as other members in that I do not know definitely what the harbour scheme is, or where the bridge should be placed with due relation to the future needs of the harbour.

On motion by Hon. A. Burvill, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.52 p.m.