

Legislative Assembly,

Friday, 11th December, 1903.

	PAGE
Bills: Audit (Council's procedure) withdrawn ;	
Bill reintroduced, first reading	2712
Agricultural Bank Act Amendment, second	
reading, in Committee, third reading	2715
Collie-Narrogin Railway, in Committee, re-	
ported (sitting prolonged)	2723

THE SPEAKER took the Chair at 2:30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the MINISTER FOR LANDS: Regulations made under Land Act, Stock Diseases Act, Cemeteries Acts, Rabbit Act, By-laws under Roads Act.

Ordered, to lie on the table.

AUDIT BILL.

TO REINTRODUCE.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Walter James) moved:

That the Audit Bill 1903 be laid aside, and leave be granted to introduce another Bill of a similar nature.

He said: When dealing with the Audit Bill a few days ago, the House took up the position that the amendments suggested by the Council were not in accordance with the privileges of that House; and I intimated then that if we took up such a position the Bill would not pass, and that the Legislative Council would insist on these amendments as a matter of privilege. That is the position now. The Bill has been returned to us with an intimation that the Council insist on these amendments. That being so, the only course is to lay the Bill aside, and that as we are agreed on the desirability of the Bill, I should introduce a Bill of a similar nature. There is precedent for the procedure, as it is the usual practice in such cases.

THE SPEAKER: As this is a somewhat unusual motion, I think I should inform members of the condition under which it is dealt. *May's Parliamentary Practice* says:—

When Bills have ultimately passed or have been rejected, the rules of both Houses are positive, that they shall not be introduced again; but the practice is not strictly in accordance with them. The principle is thus stated by the Lords, 17th May, 1606 . . .

It was also declared, in a protest, signed by seven lords, 23rd February, 1691, in reference to the Poll Bill, in which a proviso contained the substance of a Bill which had dropped in the same session, "That a Bill having been dropped, from a disagreement between the two Houses, ought not, by the known and constant methods of proceedings, to be brought in again in the same session." The Lords, nevertheless, agreed to that Bill, but with a special entry, declaring that they would not hereafter admit, upon any occasion whatsoever, of a proceeding so contrary to the rules and methods of Parliament . . . Thus when the Lords struck out a provision in the Parliamentary Elections Redistribution Bill, 1885, which enacted that the receipt of medical poor law relief should not disqualify a voter, the Commons agreed to that amendment, and passed a Bill which effected the object of that provision. A method of procedure, moreover, has been adopted, with the sanction of both Houses, by which these rules are partially disregarded. When the Lords, out of regard for the privileges of the Commons, defer the consideration of the amendments made by the Committee on a Bill received from the Commons, for a period beyond the probable duration of the session, if such amendments be otherwise acceptable, the Commons appoint a committee to inspect the Lords' Journals; and, on receiving their report, which explains the position of the Bill in the Lords to order another Bill to be brought in. This Bill often has precisely the same title, but its provisions are so far altered as to conform to the amendments made in the Lords. With these alterations, it is returned to the Lords, received by them without any objection, and passed as if it were an original Bill. Such a Bill is not identically the same as that which preceded it; but it is impossible to deny that it is "of the same argument and matter" and "of the same substance." This proceeding can be resorted to when the Lords pass a Bill and send it down to the Commons, with clauses that trench upon their privileges. The Commons can lay the Bill aside, and order another, precisely similar, to be brought in, which, in due course, is sent up to the Lords. A proceeding somewhat similar may arise, when a Bill is returned from the Lords to the Commons, with amendments which the Commons cannot, consistently with their own privileges, entertain. In that case, if the Commons be willing to adopt the amendments, they can order the Bill to be laid aside, and another to be brought in.

That is the condition under which this Bill is proposed to be dealt with. The practice is in accordance with the practice of the House of Commons.

MR. C. J. MORAN (West Perth): For my part I shall oppose the motion, because I look upon the precedent just quoted as being too fusty and too ancient on which to base an action of this kind, in dealing with a question

touching upon the privileges of this House in money matters. In the first place we are consenting to the view taken up by another place. The matter now remains *in statu quo*, and I do not think on such a small Bill which concerns such a big principle we should take a step of this kind. I would infinitely prefer the Government to go to some trouble in carrying on without this Bill until next session, rather than for the first time in our history give way in a matter of this kind in regard to a money Bill. We cannot be ignorant of the fact that another place in this State is becoming aggressive in every direction.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member must be careful in what he says about another place.

MR. MORAN: I am aware of that, and I hope I will be strictly inside Parliamentary rules. The word "aggressive" is, I say, a complimentary term when dealing with a fighting force. The Council is aggressive in taking a strong view of its rights and privileges, and I am not disagreeing with that; but it has to be decided in Western Australia by the people whether they are willing and content to let another Chamber assume an importance, aggressiveness, or assertiveness in dealing with measures of this character which it has never assumed before. There is a distinction between the action of another place in dealing with ordinary legislation and its action in dealing with a money Bill. For a moment let us lose sight of the fact that another place is asserting itself in all directions in stopping legislation of a general character. I unhesitatingly state this, and always have done so, that as long as the Upper House exists as a Chamber in Western Australia it is entitled to our respect for blocking any legislation that goes hastily through this Chamber and is ill-considered, nor is it outstepping what most people would consider its right in delaying even for a session measures of radical reform dealing with social or constitutional matters. It is expected that such will occur, but it has been held in every British House of Commons that the will of the people in reference to money Bills finds its expression alone in this lower Chamber, and I maintain that it is a sign of weakness on the part of the

Premier, and on the part of this House, to propose in this way to allow these most sacred privileges of the House to be interfered with. I do not know whether members are satisfied, but I am not satisfied that this Bill is of any special importance to this State. Perhaps some members who have listened attentively will tell me they are satisfied the urgency of the case demands this extraordinary course. I am very much indebted to you, Sir, for the clear exposition of the history in connection with this matter. I have listened with the greatest attention and pleasure, and I can only conclude from what you have said that you found it necessary to go back very far to rake up a precedent for what has been done. I should very much like to hear some Australian precedent.

THE PREMIER: The Commonwealth Parliament did it last session.

MR. JOHNSON: We lead the way in Australia.

THE PREMIER: The Commonwealth Parliament did the same last year. It is a constant practice in the House of Commons.

MR. MORAN: With all due deference to the Premier, where will there be an end to proceedings of this character? If such a course can be taken regarding a measure of this kind, why is it not possible to do the same thing with every single Bill that leaves this Chamber? Where should we be if, let us say, every Bill sent up from here in which a mistake was discovered and in regard to which a slight dispute arose between the two Houses or the Bill was blocked, had to be introduced here again? I say that if there are precedents, those precedents are exceptions and are against the rule that measures cannot be handled in the same House twice in the same session. The exception is not such a strong one as to lead me to support this measure. I appeal to members who are anxious to be respectful yet firm in dealing with the rights of this House, not to give way in a case like the present. The Premier says that this is a machinery Bill. I fail to see its importance. It may entail some work on the officers, but I think we should not be justified in adopting extraordinary procedure of this kind, and I shall oppose the motion.

MR. R. HASTIE (Kanowna): Under ordinary circumstances of our standing up for our rights against what has been done by the other place, I could have agreed entirely with the member for West Perth; but in looking up this motion to refresh my recollection I see the position is this. We in this place put through an Audit Bill, and after it was through here certain amendments seemed advisable to the Government, therefore the representative of the Government in the other House, in good faith, thinking he had sufficient power, asked the other Chamber to agree to those amendments. Those amendments were agreed to at the instance of the Government, and sent on to this Chamber. I never heard a single member of this Chamber, not even the member for West Perth—who believes in criticising the proceedings of the other House—or myself object to this.

MR. MORAN: I have never criticised the other House once this session.

MR. HASTIE: Apparently we are in this position. We declared in this Chamber the other House could not amend a money Bill, and we sent it back. Now we wish to see an Audit Bill passed. If that Audit Bill is of very great importance, I maintain we should not submit to these old precedents as to what took place in Great Britain between the Upper House and the Lower House. If this Audit measure is really required we should discard those old precedents and enact that Bill at the earliest possible moment, whether it has already passed through during this session or not. If the Premier can say that this Bill is really required for the interests of the State, that should be our first consideration and in that case we should put it through. I do not see how in any way we are compromising our position in regard to dealing solely with money Bills.

MR. W. ATKINS (Murray): Is it understood that the old law was that we had no right to do what we want to do now, and that the new precedent is in favour of doing it?

THE PREMIER: The last 300 years.

MR. ATKINS: Lately the precedents have been in favour of doing what we want now?

THE PREMIER (in reply as mover): I would point out that *May* is perfectly clear on the point that this motion is in

accordance with constitutional practice, which has been in force some two or three hundred years, and we find that it has frequently been exercised during the course of that time.

MR. MORAN: Frequently? It is the exception.

THE PREMIER: I say "frequently" applied, of course under conditions where it is applicable. In certain Bills the question would not arise. The conditions which give rise to a point like this are two. First of all a disagreement on the ground of privilege, although this House desires to support the suggested amendments, and the object of this procedure is to overcome technicalities, because where both Houses desire a Bill and also desire certain amendments we should not allow the question of privilege to interfere with the powers of the House to place what is generally desired on the statute-book.

MR. MORAN: Another place will not give way. They will sacrifice the Bill, whereas we give way by introducing the Bill again.

THE PREMIER: There is no place more anxious to maintain its privileges than the House of Commons, and I ask this House to do that which the House of Commons themselves under similar circumstances would do. I hope members will accept the precedents of the House of Commons instead of the arguments of the member for West Perth. Speaking from memory, I believe a similar difficulty arose between the Senate and the House of Representatives, and there the Bill was laid aside and leave obtained to introduce a fresh measure. That I think must always be the case where, by inadvertence, questions of privilege arise. If either House were aggressive and said it deliberately raised this point to test the privilege, the position would be different, but I ask the House to fall in with this motion. It has constitutional precedent. I think the last application of that precedent was in 1872. This is based on the old principle which has been applied in recent cases, and which I say will enable us to place on the statute-book an Audit Bill which every member recognises will be a valuable addition.

MR. H. DAGLISH (Subiaco): I would like to oppose the motion of the Premier.

THE PREMIER: I think the hon. member might have got up before I spoke.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member is out of order in rising after the mover of the motion has spoken.

MR. DAGLISH: I complain that I had no opportunity of speaking.

THE PREMIER: I always look round before I speak.

MR. DAGLISH: The Premier jumped up without allowing reasonable facilities. I waited to see if the leader of the Opposition wished to speak.

THE PREMIER: I ask for a ruling. The constant practice in the past has been that, if the mover gets up to reply, and another member wishes to speak, the mover shall sit down.

THE SPEAKER: The practice is plain. When a member who has moved a motion rises a second time, any member who wishes to speak should rise immediately, and the mover should resume his seat. I did not pay any attention to the period elapsing between the last speaker and the Premier rising to reply.

Question put, and a division called for.

MR. ATKINS: If we vote for the motion, will the Bill be altered to suit the Upper House, or is the Bill to go back as we sent it originally?

THE SPEAKER: The Bill will be returned, as it is understood it will be accepted by the other House.

MR. ATKINS: Then I do not vote for the motion.

Division resulted as follows:—

Ayes	...	...	...	16
Noes	...	...	...	12

Majority for ... 4

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Burgess	Mr. Atkins
Mr. Dinmond	Mr. Bath
Mr. Ewing	Mr. Connor
Mr. Foulkes	Mr. Daglish
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. Kolman
Mr. Gordon	Mr. Johnson
Mr. Hattie	Mr. Morn
Mr. Hayward	Mr. Pigott
Mr. Hopkins	Mr. Stone
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Taylor
Mr. James	Mr. Yelverton
Mr. Purkiss	Mr. Thomas (Teller).
Mr. Quinlan	
Mr. Rason	
Mr. Wallace	
Mr. Higham (Teller).	

Question thus passed.

Bill reintroduced in amended form, and read a first time.

AGRICULTURAL BANK ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. J. M. Hopkins), in moving the second reading, said: The object of this Bill is to increase the capital of the Agricultural Bank by £100,000. If members will refer to the original Act of 1894, they will see that by Section 5 it is laid down that the Colonial Treasurer may issue mortgage bonds to any amount not exceeding in the aggregate £100,000, for the purposes of the Act. I am speaking now of the original Bank Act of 1894. The Act operated so well and gave such entire satisfaction to the country that members began to discuss whether or not its functions could not be widened and its operations extended, and as a result of that feeling a select committee was appointed, and, I think, in confirmation of the recommendations of that committee the amending Act of 1902 was introduced. If members will refer to Section 9 of that Act they will see the capital of the Bank was then increased to £300,000. Section 9 reads:—

The amount which the Colonial Treasurer is authorised by Section 5 of the principal Act to raise for the purposes of the Act by the issue of mortgage bonds as therein provided, is increased to a sum not exceeding in the aggregate £300,000.

MR. FIGOTT: Did you not ask for an increase last year?

THE MINISTER: The capital of the Bank was increased in 1902 from £100,000 to £300,000. The Act came into operation on the 1st March of this year. Under that Act increased facilities to borrow money were given; and the extent to which a loan could be secured was increased to £1,000 sterling. Since the coming into operation of this Act in March, 1902, the average amount of money approved under the law during each month has been approximately £13,500. The position of the capital account stands to-day at £300,000 with loans approved to the extent of £259,287, leaving a balance available of £40,713. Members will understand that with the wider scope which was given by Parliamentary sanction the business of the Bank naturally increased, a matter which I took the first opportunity of bringing under the notice of members when speak-

ing on the Address-in-reply. It may be said that with the widening of the scope of the Act, for the first few months there would naturally be an abnormal number of applications coming in, and assuming that is correct, and assuming on the other hand that a large amount of this money was not paid away to the individual mortgagors, we might be able to finance until the end of the current financial year under existing conditions; but I do not think it is wise for us to assume that the application for loans will fall off, and my reason for that is not due to the fact that I believe some cessation will take place, for I think that will be counterbalanced by the increased settlement we are having on our agricultural lands. If that increased settlement brings about the necessity to continue advances to farmers, I have not the slightest doubt Parliament will in this session as heretofore be too pleased to cater for the requirements of the agricultural community. If members will turn to Clause 3 of the Bill they will see that it repeals Section 6 of the amending Act of 1902. That section provides for the repayment of advances to discharge existing liabilities, and reads in this way:—

When a portion of any advance is made to enable a borrower to pay off liabilities—

That is generally to pay off an existing mortgage—

the repayment of so much of the advance shall begin at the expiration of one year from the first day of January or the first day of July as the case may next following the date of the advances.

Under that particular clause we may have a person securing, say, £200—£100 to pay off an existing mortgage and £100 to make improvements under the Act. The £100 to pay off the existing mortgage has to be repaid at the end of the year, the balance of the loan he does not repay until the end of the first five years. The result of that is that we have two redemption periods for one and the same loan. That has complicated the books of the department, and frequently it works out that the repayments come to the fraction of a penny. The manager of the Agricultural Bank and the clerical staff and the accountant are all uniformly of opinion that it is unwise to allow that section to remain. It is unworkable, and

they suggest that it should be repealed. Next session of Parliament the passing of a consolidating Act will be absolutely necessary. It is absolutely necessary now, but we may manage without it, and at this late period of the session it is not wise to introduce anything which would cause so much discussion as a consolidating and perhaps an amending Bill would. In the meantime a person borrowing £200—£100 to pay off an existing mortgage and £100 for improvements—will pay interest during five years, and at the expiry of that period he starts to pay off a proportion of the £100, instead of starting to repay one-half at the end of the first twelve months. By the repeal of that section the books of the bank will be considerably simplified, the clerical work greatly reduced, and a section which is really almost unworkable removed from the statute book.

MR. PIGOTT: What trouble would it be to insert a new clause?

THE MINISTER: That is not necessary. We provide that at the expiration of five years the borrower shall commence to repay the whole of his loan.

MR. PIGOTT: Is not that left to the discretion of the manager?

THE MINISTER: No. Section 22 of the principal Act provides that at the expiration of five years from the first day of January or the first day of July following the date of every advance the borrower shall begin to repay the same. It must be remembered that the Act was passed to authorise advances for the purpose of improvements only. I think it desirable to have uniformity. But when the Consolidating Bill comes before us next session, proper returns should be made available to members, showing the amount advanced to pay off existing mortgages; and members can take that amount into consideration in determining whether or not this five years' grace should continue, or whether the period ought to be curtailed.

MR. PIGOTT: You advance against stock also.

THE MINISTER: A few months ago I found that, roughly, about £2,000 had been advanced for stock; and in every instance the borrowers had more stock on their land than was represented by the advance. The security is of course the land. The money is not advanced on the

security of the stock. The object of this clause is simply to secure uniformity. It may interest members to know that although we may advance up to two-thirds, the manager assures me that on the average the actual advance is much nearer one-third of the total value of the security.

MR. MORAN: Why the difference between two-thirds and one-third?

THE MINISTER: The manager referred to the average advance.

THE TREASURER: Some of the advances represent 55 per cent., and some only 20.

THE MINISTER: But the average margin is about two-thirds. All these loans pass through my hands; and it frequently happens that a person borrows £200 on property worth £1,200.

MR. MORAN: You do not mean that you interfere with the manager's decisions?

THE MINISTER: No. The management of the bank is altogether free from political control. It is vested in the manager; and I should be sorry to learn that any Minister interfered with or took any exception to the manager's valuations. The Victorian Agricultural Bank is authorised to advance to farmers a total sum of £1,341,714; and I believe the amount of each advance is practically unlimited. In New South Wales the Act was passed in 1899; the maximum advance to any one settler is £500; and from 1899 to October 1900 that State has advanced £193,037. In Queensland the maximum advance is £800, and the capital authorised is a quarter of a million. The South Australian Act also is of recent origin, and under it £620,705 has been advanced. The New Zealand Act is particularly liberal, inasmuch as the maximum advance to one person is £3,000; and up to date there has been advanced to farmers £3,073,685. I mention these figures because I am desirous that the Bill should go through; and I hope that next session one of the first measures introduced will be a consolidating Bill to deal with the Agricultural Bank Acts, and that members will then have such returns placed before them as will enable them to approach the question with a stronger assurance that they are acting rightly than they would have in the absence of that information. I have endeavoured to explain clearly the

object of the Bill. It is a short measure of few clauses; and for that reason, considering the late period of the session, I would ask members to give it their immediate attention and to pass it as quickly as possible.

MR. S. C. PIGOTT (West Kimberley): I do not think there can be any objection to the Bill. Apparently its principal provision is in Clause 3, repealing a section found unworkable in the principal Act. As to increasing the capital of the bank, I think it has been the policy of this and preceding Parliaments that once the bank got into good working order and proved successful its capital should not be stinted, so long as every precaution was taken that advances to agriculturists were made in a purely businesslike way. Though I do not know the details of the business already done by the bank, I am inclined to think from what I have heard that the management has been faithful, that great care has been taken, and that advances have been well secured. I do not intend to object to the Bill; and I hope that when Parliament meets next year members will be supplied with full details of all advances made, and of the general work of the institution. I think it advisable that members should be *au fait* with such particulars.

MR. T. F. QUINLAN (Toodyay): I am glad to support this measure, and I rise merely to express a hope that in the amending Bill of next session the manager will be given extended powers to sign advances, instead of having to await the Minister's signature. I mention this because to my knowledge borrowers have had in some cases to wait two or three weeks for the money after the advances have been approved. This is inconvenient to people obtaining advances in order to pay off their indebtedness to private institutions. I think the manager should be able to sign for advances so as to avoid delay to the applicants.

MR. PIGOTT: They would be delayed as long if they borrowed from private banks.

THE TREASURER: There is always considerable delay in private institutions from the time of approval till the money is paid.

MR. QUINLAN: That is a fact; but we have no control over private institutions, whereas this is a Government matter, and people dealing with the bank are, as a rule, not business people but country people, who are put to some inconvenience to come to Perth to obtain their loans. Any provision which will expedite the business will save them considerable expense. I know that members and the public generally are convinced that the Agricultural Bank has been a great boon to the community, and has done immense good.

MR. R. HASTIE (Kanowna): We are all at one as to the desirableness of making advances to settlers, and wish the system extended; hence I am anxious to know exactly what advances are made, how the repayments are coming in, what is the proportion of arrears, and how many borrowers have found themselves unable to pay on due date.

THE TREASURER: According to the manager there are only two defaulters. I think the arrears do not exceed £10.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The arrears are purely nominal, and do not give the manager the slightest anxiety.

MR. HASTIE: Then I am glad I asked the question; for the answer shows that this is the most prosperous banking institution in Australia.

MR. H. DAGLISH (Subiaco): I should like to ask whether the Minister can tell us what is the average amount advanced. I am anxious to see the operations of the bank extended, but I want them spread over as large a number of persons as possible; and I should therefore like to know that the amount advanced to any individual borrower is not too large. Last year we restricted the amount to £1,000, and some members tried to limit it to £800; but I should like it restricted to £500, because the advances would thus cover a much wider area than is possible if we double that maximum. Besides, our interest lies in settling on the land as large a number of families as we can, and not in increasing the large holdings. I raise this point simply because I think that the more we popularise the bank the greater satisfaction will it give to the public. I cordially support the increase of capital.

THE TREASURER: In reply to the last speaker, I may say I made

the same inquiry as he did; and I hold exactly the same view, that we should encourage the small borrower. The man who wants £1,000 can, if his security be good enough, generally get fair accommodation from his banker. The manager of the Agricultural Bank told me to-day that 90 per cent. of the advances were under £500. The report laid on the table of the House gives fairly good information as to the security held, and also shows that the manager of the bank is keenly alive to the fact that it is not wise to take too optimistic a view. He says:—

As regards valuations, I desire to sound a note of warning for the benefit of those who think that the bank should advance money on the basis of the present high values which agricultural lands throughout the State are acquiring. Personally, I think well situated country lands in Western Australia are sure to reach a higher value than they have yet seen. At the same time the business of this institution must necessarily be conducted on conservative lines, and I am strongly indisposed to accept valuations made on the basis of a heavy harvest, and soil products at a phenomenal figure. Nobody has more faith in the agricultural possibilities of Western Australia than I have, yet to assess the value of land on the assumption that wheat will continue to fetch six shillings per bushel, and chaff seven pounds per ton, would be to plunge this institution into disaster.

So evidently the manager himself has got pretty strongly impregnated into him the views of this House as to the administration of this particular Act. The profit and loss account shows that last year the bank made £616 16s. 10d. over and above working expenses and after paying off all obligations. This report also gives very full information as to the actual security held, and so far as its liabilities are concerned, to which the Minister for Lands has drawn attention, they seemed to be almost nominal. For the sum of £136,666 only £460 was provided to pay off liabilities, while of the amount approved but not yet paid only £3,586 was advanced to pay off liabilities, so that the sum provided in this direction after all is small. The manager of the bank this morning told me on this subject that he was trying to discourage those people who had previously got advances from other people from making application to the bank at all, and that he thought it would be very much wiser if we tried to stop

these people who had already had advances making applications to the bank.

MR. C. J. MORAN (West Perth): We dealt with this matter last session, and it will be remembered that the Government extended the risks of the institution. A peculiar feature of the history of this measure is how utterly it has belied the prophecies of some of the financial magnates who used to sit in Opposition when the Forrest Government were in power. It is not well for the country to forget these facts. It is usual to say that the Forrest Government were a Government of public works. No doubt they were—they were a most progressive Government in this matter, and the present magnificent position of the State is the result. They were also a Government of great progress in social and administrative legislation, and they left behind them a record in all branches of legislation scarcely equalled elsewhere. When this measure was first introduced it was introduced largely at the instigation of that Commissioner of Crown Lands whose name will be imperishable in connection with land settlement in Western Australia. I refer to Mr. Throssell, who was, I believe, at that time the principal supporter of the Government, for he assumed office later on, and was then the great champion of the Forrest party. The two leaders who formed the present Government party predicted the direst consequences, and prophesied nothing but ruin to the State from the legislation, and their dutiful children who followed them are now offering nothing but praise to it, and are ready to extend its operations.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I was one of those who helped to extend it.

THE TREASURER: If it is good legislation there is no discredit in our acknowledging it.

MR. MORAN: And there is not the slightest discredit in acknowledging you were wrong. It is only in matters of comparative judgment that we can arrive at the likelihood of the prophecies of the same people being correct. The financial magnate of the Opposition (Mr. Illingworth) offered very strenuous and most vigorous opposition to the Bill, and he covered page after page of *Hansard* in his second-reading speech with most voluminous figures—a tangle of figures

going all over the universe and dealing with the *Crédit Foncier* system of Europe. Amongst other things he said:—

The Premier in introducing the Bill for our consideration told us we have to ask ourselves in the first place is this Bill necessary? I do not hesitate to say that this particular Bill is not necessary. I do not hesitate to say that this Bill will not accomplish what the Premier proposes it should accomplish.

The Bill has proved itself necessary, and has been a magnificent factor in settling a population upon the soil of W.A. Members on the Government side of the House in those days fought for it strenuously. I as a goldfields member, in contradistinction to the member for Cue, supported all these proposals of the Forrest Government by which we gained so much democratic legislation. Mr. Illingworth continued later on in conclusion:—

It does not possess the elements of success, and must end in failure and disappointment and vexation of spirit. It is a mere Utopian scheme. It possesses no inherent vitality in itself by which it can live, and it will not give any vitality to those whom it is intended to benefit, and I hope members will do as I intend to do, and that is to vote against the second reading.

I do not intend to quote anything but the opening remarks of the late Mr. Leake, who offered one of those characteristic, slashing, and vigorous speeches in which he denounced the Bill in all its moods and tenses, and called it all the names it was usual to call these measures brought forward for the benefit of the farmer, who was such a great supporter of the Government in power at that time. He said:—

I do not know that I ever attacked any measure or system with greater pleasure than I do this Bill before the House; and I do sincerely hope that hon. members will reject the measure.

We can imagine him when he said it, and we know how restless the old Premier (Sir John Forrest) used to be when the late Mr. Leake got up to speak. My word he did attack the Bill, and I think everybody on the Opposition side of the House attacked it.

THE TREASURER: I think I took objection to the two-third provision when I came into the House, for I asked that the security should only be half.

MR. MORAN: The present brilliant light and financial genius of the Govern-

ment had not risen above the horizon in 1894. I believe he did take some objection to the extending of the provision during last Parliament.

THE TREASURER: I did not want two-thirds.

MR. MORAN: I think I opposed that also. In this, as in nearly every item of the Forrest Government policy, those who cursed have remained to bless. I was delighted to hear the note of warning of the present Director of Agriculture.

MR. BURGESS: You are croaking now.

MR. MORAN: I cannot be always croaking here when there is such a magnificent old crow over there. If you open your mouth you cannot help croaking. The youthful member for York should let me continue. I listened with great pleasure to the note of warning of the manager of the Bank in saying that the present market values in Western Australia should not be taken as a basis of valuation. He would land himself in an absolute difficulty if he took this phenomenal and extraordinary year as a sufficient basis for the lending of money in the future. One does not take an extraordinary yield of once in 20 years as being the test of the fertility of the land.

MR. BURGESS: Last year was not an extraordinary year.

MR. MORAN: Prices have always been high in Western Australia. The principal product, wheat and flour, has been protected by our State tariff. We are rapidly overcoming the local demand, and we will have to face the open market. We know that one can lose money more rapidly in clearing land than in anything else. A man can clear land, ringbark it and fence it, and if he leaves it alone for a little while all the fences will be burned down and the timber will grow up ten times thicker. Of course it depends upon the individuality of the man to whom you are lending the money. If he is a tenacious man and will not run away at the first sign of adversity, the security is a good one; but it is quite possible to make ultimate losses in connection with advances of this kind. Australian history is full of examples of financial institutions and money lenders being ruined through advances of this kind where care was not exercised. I am still a supporter of this measure of advances to

farmers as I was when it was introduced; but I am not prepared to go all the length recommended by the present Government. Care is necessary and great care, because we have not come to the crucial test in the agricultural development of Western Australia. I hope the member for York will not call me a croaker because I desire to protect the finances of Western Australia and the money provided by the ninety-nine for the one who happens to be a farmer. The farmer is not the salt of the earth, though he is a great benefactor in the development of a country. We are dealing with the money earned principally by the sweat of the brow of those on the goldfields. These men are the origin of our revenue and largely provide our market. We must be careful in making advances under this Bill. I have not a brief to advocate the cause of the agriculturist or the miner, but I desire to express my opinion on these matters from the standpoint of the State as a whole. I support the second reading. I do not know whether the Bill is necessary. I think it would be just as well to leave it until next session. These matters should not be rushed. In bringing down another Bill, such as this is, at the end of the session the Government are taking a high-handed proceeding. I think it is wise not to rush a matter of this kind, and perhaps turn a success into a probable failure by not being over-cautious.

MR. R. G. BURGESS (York): I have much pleasure in supporting this Bill, and I do so with a thorough knowledge that not half enough has been done for this bank, and that is well known throughout the country. There are men here who know more about it than I do, and they will say the same thing. The Government did nothing from 1894 till the last session or two, yet now the hon. member is croaking. Any man who knows anything about this land would not mind taking it up and turning it into pasture. The day will come when that land will be valuable, and then those people can be taxed. Do not be too frightened. I say that the hon. member is croaking and has been croaking.

MR. MORAN: What are you talking about?

MR. BURGESS: The advances of the Agricultural Bank. They were too slow

altogether at first. We should not advance too much to one man, but there might have been a great deal more advanced to help settlers. I know that has been the experience of a lot of settlers, and members in this House know that such is the case. Very little has been done except in the last year or two, and that is under new conditions and also under the new régime. Under the administration of the present Minister it is more generally known that people can get the money. Now if a man wants his money he can go to the land agent and state his requirements, and then a land inspector goes down and reports upon the land. There is not all the delay there used to be. As to the statement by the member for Subiaco regarding the small amounts, an amending Act was passed last year which contained a special clause that preference should be given to those men who wanted to borrow up to £500; quite right, too. I hope that next year when an amending Bill is brought in the measure will give the manager of the bank extensive powers to try to call in money which has been advanced. I know that men have borrowed money and in good times have almost made themselves millionaires; they have made themselves independent, at any rate. It is not right that such people should be speculating with the country's money. If the manager had some power, he would very often get this money in.

MR. MORAN: Cannot he get his money?

MR. BURGESS: He can get money in, and the bank has been carried on in a satisfactory manner.

MR. MORAN: How does the manager know who can pay the money back?

MR. BURGESS: As easily as possible. The hon. member is always speaking about farmers having to come down and all that sort of thing, but he does not remember the different class of machinery which exists now, compared with that which existed a few years back. Land has been cleared and fenced, and there are railways. Hundreds of farmers and thousands of people are settling on the land, and we ought to give them encouragement and not spread it about that things are going down. We are not likely to increase our settlement on the land when we spread that throughout the world,

particularly by our farmers and representatives who say they have great belief in the State, but who, when anything crops up, are always giving this note of warning. If we have low prices, we have railways, and we are getting harbour accommodation.

MR. MORAN: The railways do not pay. Your Greenhills line does not, anyway.

MR. BURGESS: The Greenhills railway has paid the country. It has opened up Bunbury, and there is plenty more country there. If I were Minister of Lands, I would spend money on it to-morrow. If the hon. member does not call what he said croaking, I do not know what croaking is. He was croaking about the railways the other night, and is croaking now. The whole amount advanced yet by the Agricultural Bank does not reach £300,000, and plenty of people are getting loans throughout the country without going to this bank at all. It is only the time given to them which is the great advantage.

MR. MORAN: You want to screw them up before time.

MR. BURGESS: Nothing of the sort. I have only been here a year, but the hon. member cannot silence me. He cannot show more knowledge about this country than I can. He can stand up and shout, and I can stand here and take all the hon. member likes. A man can do good to the country whether he is in Parliament or outside, and whilst I am here I will do my duty, although the hon. member may keep on interjecting. As regards the lending of money, it must be known to the intelligent member for West Perth, if he is aware of what is going on, that institutions are lending money here at from $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. to 6 per cent.

MR. MORAN: No. Four and a-half.

MR. BURGESS: Yes; I could prove it; in St. George's Terrace.

MR. MORAN: Tell me a case.

MR. BURGESS: It is not my business to tell you. I know I am right.

MR. MORAN: Five per cent.

MR. BURGESS: Four and a-half. Some of the leading institutions in this country are lending it, and they are trying to get the farmers and the leading settlers in the country to take it up. As I said just now, with regard to this

£300,000 I would not mind taking up the whole thing myself, if I were a young man. I am sure there are plenty of men who would take it up between them and would not be afraid. Fancy in this country, where we have such an enormous area, men getting up praying us to be cautious, and saying we should not lend £400,000 for new settlement in this country, where we have millions of acres, where we have railways, and where we are likely to extend our railways.

MR. MORAN: What is the difference in the price of mutton now as compared with last year?

MR. BURGESS: About 20 per cent.

MR. MORAN: That is a big fall, is it not?

MR. BURGESS: Is it not a very good thing for the townspeople that we are producing more? We shall be able to export lambs. Regarding the Agricultural Bank, I hope the Government will be in a position to increase the advances £100,000. That is my wish.

MR. MORAN: Mine, too.

MR. BURGESS: I wish to help the agricultural interest on as long as I am here by the best means this Government or any other Government can devise.

HON. F. H. PIESSE (Williams): While supporting the Bill, I would like to correct the hon. member in reference to the way in which this bank was managed in the past. He compared the administration of the past with the administration of to-day, and he said much more energy was being displayed to-day in regard to the administration than was the case in the earlier years of the bank's operations. He must not forget that this bank was started under conditions which were experimental. At the time the proposal was made in this House by the old Government, asking the House for the establishment of such a bank, there were very many doubts as to its probable success, and for two or three years great caution had to be exercised. That was one reason. Another reason was that there were not the number of people here to avail themselves of the operations of the bank, and it is only recently that they have come here in such large numbers to take up holdings on our Crown lands. We have, I think, frequently heard it remarked that the progress has been almost

phenomenal; therefore there has been much more scope for the operations of the bank. The same man administered the bank during the whole period; therefore I think that under the circumstances he paid just as much attention and carried out his work equally as energetically in the earlier days as now. In fact I think he was much more energetic, for he was single-handed at that time, and the conditions were not so favourable as they are to-day; therefore whilst every credit should be given to those who are trying to do what they can to-day, let us not rob those who are associated with the past of the credit due to them. There were not so many people. The manager of the bank had to limit his expenses, and that was the reason why they were not able to put on so many hands as are employed to-day in helping the administration. No doubt things are being much more rapidly carried out, because there is a larger staff, and a larger sum of money available, and operations have been extended by recently passed legislation, therefore it is necessary that they should under the circumstances do things much more rapidly than in the past. In regard to the bank's operations, they have been most satisfactory, and the statement placed before the House in connection with the work of the manager, showing the small losses made, redounds not only to the credit of the manager, but also those who were instrumental in bringing forward in the earlier years of this country that most creditable piece of legislation which has been so helpful to the agricultural community.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The member for Toodyay, in speaking of delays that have occurred, asked that some special power should be given to the manager. That is a matter well worthy of being looked into, and I may say that in every instance I make it a rule to treat Agricultural Bank advances as being strictly urgent papers, and as far as practicable those papers go back to the bank the same day as I receive them for signature. Of course there are times when I am absent in the country a few days together, and then papers have to wait until my return. With reference to the remarks of the member for Subiaco, and the suggestion that applications for loans under £500 should have priority, I

may say that this is the practice, and it is the opinion of the manager of the bank that 95 per cent. of the loans are for sums under £500 each.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

[Sitting suspended for 10 minutes.]

IN COMMITTEE, ETC.

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

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

COLLIE-NARROGIN RAILWAY BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

MR. FOULKES in the Chair; the MINISTER FOR LANDS in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—Short title:

MR. PIGOTT suggested that the clause be postponed until the other clauses had been passed, or if the passing of Clause 1 would not bind the Committee to the route he had no objection.

THE PREMIER: The passing of the clause would not bind the Committee to the route.

Clause passed.

Clause 2—Authority to construct:

MR. MORAN: This was the important clause of the Bill, for it stated that it was lawful to construct and maintain a railway from Collie to Narrogin. It should not be lawful to construct the railway.

THE PREMIER: Was that not second-reading discussion?

MR. MORAN: In dealing with a railway Bill it was all second-reading discussion. There were four starting points for this railway, all of which had good claims and some as good as Narrogin. There were three or four finishing places, of which Collie should be the last. It was necessary for one who had always supported public works, except in one instance, in the agricultural portions of the State to clearly state that his policy had not changed in the slightest, but that he was desirous that the railway should be constructed as an agricultural line in due and proper time, that time being not earlier than the re-entry of the Bill next session. The whole aspect of the line had been changed. On the second reading he had convinced

the Premier that the coal traffic on the new line could not pay, and the Premier then appealed to members to authorise this as a purely agricultural railway. But for such a purpose the line should not be constructed; because the country for the first 35 miles was absolutely useless for agriculture. Mr. Muir agreed with this as to the first 20 miles, and he had a lifelong experience in surveying railway routes both in Victoria and here. Sir John Forrest, who had been over every inch of this part of the route, and was a champion of railway development, thoroughly understood the difference between agricultural and jarrah country, and would agree that this land was not agricultural. The member for the Williams agreed that the first 35 miles was useless for agriculture. Hence there was no justification for an agricultural railway. As to coal, every engineer's report dealt with the probable coal traffic to the goldfields and nowhere else. He (Mr. Moran) would not shut down the coal mines. He was a protectionist; but he was not prepared to sink £500,000 in a speculative railway to carry coal to the goldfields; he would agree to its being taken there over the existing line at the same price as it could be carried for on the proposed line, or even for nothing, to ascertain whether it would be used on the goldfields. The resulting loss would be infinitely less than the cost of the new railway. We might, like Victoria and New South Wales, carry the coal for nothing until the industry felt its feet; but the new line would be run at the expense of the existing line. The South-Western railway from Perth to Bunbury was not now paying interest, sinking fund, and working expenses; and how could it pay if we carried half its traffic by another route? Neither line would then pay even working expenses. To-day's *Morning Herald* showed that ours was the only paying railway system in Australia. Let it continue to pay. For years our railway revenue had been on the whole decreasing. He had supported the present railway to Collie, and he wished to help the coal industry, which was now trembling in the balance. In discussing this Bill none had mentioned the Interstate Commission; yet anyone who omitted that factor had no grip of the problem. The Interstate

Commission, like that of the United States, would regulate trade and commerce throughout the States, and would prevent our giving a preference to Collic coal as against the Newcastle product.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Five minutes ago the hon. member advocated carrying Collic coal gratis.

MR. MORAN: Five years hence he would carry it gratis if the inter-State Commission was not formed. Recently he was told on good authority that the Commission would be constituted about the second year of the ensuing Federal Parliament. The Minister had at least two years in which to foster Collic coal before that Commission came in, and he might carry coal to the goldfields by the existing railway, and not waste time by building a new line over which the Commission, when they did begin to operate here, would say that Collic coal and all other coal must be carried under the same conditions. Until that time arrived, let the Government pay a bonus, if they would, to place Collic coal on the goldfields; and if it could not be maintained in that market against the other coal, what would be the use of building a direct railway to carry both kinds of coal on the same conditions? Newcastle coal might then be landed at Bunbury, and be carried over the specially built direct line to the goldfields, and at the same rate as Collic coal. What advantage would there be to Collic coal in that? Was it supposed that Western Australia would be allowed to give a rate preference to Collic coal against Newcastle coal over the new line or over the present line? That could not be done after the inter-state Commission began to operate here. If a big saving in distance could be made in favour of Collic coal, that would be favouring the local article in a legitimate manner; but that would not be the effect of building this proposed line. Another reason against this line was that there was no proof yet that Collic coal could compete successfully against Newcastle coal delivered on the goldfields, or that either of these kinds of coal could compete successfully against the supply of firewood now available on those fields. Every member who had spoken on that point admitted that for seven or eight years as a minimum up to about 20 years as a maximum, firewood would be so

cheap comparatively on the goldfields that Collic coal could not compete against it. The question of constructing this line to carry coal had been dropped. Therefore, looking at this as an agricultural proposition, it would be found that the big fruit-growing country of Western Australia was going to be westward of Pingelly or Wagin, along the head of that tableland where the soil was so fruitful, and running parallel with the Great Southern railway as far south as Katanning. That country had a perfect climate for fruit-growing, and it was free from the excessive moisture experienced westward of the Darling Range, as in the Collic district and along there, which encouraged all the fungoid growths. The fertile and high lands between a point westward of Pingelly and southward of Katanning would be the fruit country of the future; then if that was true, and looking at the railway map exhibited in this Chamber for hon. members, it would be seen that a railway running in a loop from Pingelly about 20 miles, right back to Katanning, would go through the pick of the fruit-growing country, and would give us a loop line easily handled and worked. This was a project which he would support, and which he hoped to be able to bring before the House in the next session of Parliament, for he was still a believer in well-considered agricultural railways.

THE CHAIRMAN: The House now being in Committee, it was hoped the hon. member would try to avoid making a second-reading speech.

MR. MORAN was endeavouring to do that. He was not here for stonewalling the Bill. This clause said it should be lawful to construct a railway, and he was putting reasons before the Committee why it should not be lawful to construct the railway proposed in the Bill. A loop line starting from Pingelly and going through the whole of that settled country southward, taking in the heads of those rivers and crossing the Williams, would give a radius of 20 miles north and south, a workable radius which would include the whole of the settled country up to Katanning. That was the pick of the country for fruit-growing, and there was the settled land, leaving out the whole of the fruitless belt. When the time came for using Collic coal on the goldfields, we

could make another loop to connect such a line with Collie. That would be following the order of nature. The good lands in this State ran north and south in belts; and with a loop line we could work the whole of that fruitful country. There was not time this session, nor was there power, to deal with the project he was placing before members; but he was explaining it so that members might understand the position he took on this Bill. It should not be lawful for the Government to construct the railway proposed in the Bill because they had no mandate from the country to do it. This House also had no mandate, for the matter had not been considered in the country. Upon all these considerations he must inform the Committee that he had never been more earnest in opposition to any clause than he was against this clause in the Bill, nor more earnest in desiring to build a railway than he was now in desiring to build a railway which would serve the people along the whole of those four routes. This line which he had suggested would meet the requirements of that country until such time as Collie coal was required on the goldfields. These were his reasons for saying it should not be lawful to construct the railway as proposed in the Bill; and he did not wish to see this project passed, because it would injure, almost destroy, the scheme he wanted to see carried out. Why not have another loop line from Beverley or Pingelly, taking in another swathe of country, and by these means taking in the whole of the high land in that good country, so that everybody in those districts would be served by railway? Why should the Williams district be left out of the country to be served by this railway, being one of the most fertile parts of Western Australia? The country inland from Wagin was thickly settled, but in the route chosen by the Government they picked a latitudinal course which would go through a country marked white, where practically no settlement had taken place. Two of the settlers from the Williams district, Mr. Couchner and Mr. McLean, spoke to him on the subject yesterday, and explained (looking at the map) that if the railway was to run across it must go far south to Wagin, or the route should be towards Narrogin and Pingelly; otherwise they

assured him the line would be following a tableland which would serve neither end and leave both sets of settlers displeased. Those two settlers, when shown the route on the map by the member for the Williams, were astounded that the Government had selected No. 2 route, and said they wanted the No. 3 route, that they had understood it was the route which the Government had selected. They were not aware until yesterday that No. 2 route was selected, and were astounded when they found it out. No. 2 route, they said, was what they called the watershed of that country. He believed in the remarks of Mr. Lecky, the historian, that there was necessity for the keenest criticism in all matters of party government, and Mr. Lecky's conclusions were that without an opposition there could be no good government. Then if the policy propounded here by the Government was a wise one, it would stand the criticism of a general election within a few months; but if there was danger in that, it would be criminal to make this Bill the law of the country. If the proposal was a good one, there need be no fear, for there was no constituency in the country which would not be willing to support a railway to open up the fairest portion of our agricultural country; but he doubted if the country was willing to expend money for a coal railway. The Government might place the line as the foremost plank in their programme at the next general election, and see whether the people agreed to it.

MR. EWING: This question should be decided immediately, one way or another. He had always thought that the member for West Perth would have been one of the most ardent supporters of the line. It might be wondered that he as the member for the South-West Mining District, which included the Collie coalfield, had sat so quiet when such allegations had been cast on the coal industry. It was his intention to take an early opportunity, when this Bill had been disposed of, of placing before the House and the country everything he knew in connection with the industry. The Government were justified in doing all they could for the benefit of the coal industry. In 1899 Mr. Monger, then the member for York, moved that the House, recognising the necessity for the early

construction of a railway line from Collie to a point on the Coolgardie railway line, empower the Government to enter into negotiations with persons with that object in view. The member for West Perth supported that motion.

MR. MORAN: It was not the same line at all.

MR. EWING: Exactly the same line, from Collie to the goldfields. The member for West Perth strongly advocated the building of the line, and stated there was good timber and fertile land along the route. It was difficult to understand how the hon. member had changed his attitude. Reference had been made to Mr. Coucher and Mr. McLean. Mr. Coucher's idea was that it would be better to traverse No. 3 route. The Government, according to the Bill, had power to deviate 10 miles on either side of the line, and the whole of the land recommended by Mr. Coucher and Mr. McLean to be traversed by the line was included in the 10 mile radius.

MR. MORAN: How could the Government deviate without another survey?

MR. EWING: There had not been a permanent survey made. Mr. Muir considered No. 2 route was the best. The Government had no interest, good, bad, or indifferent, in the line going along No. 2 route, and if the people of the district showed that by 5 or 10 miles deviation would benefit the country, the Government could take steps to alter the line.

MR. MORAN: All the more reason for the five months' delay.

MR. EWING: No Government could give more earnest attention to any public work than the Government had given to this line. The House in passing the second reading had practically decided the line should be constructed from Collie to the Great Southern railway, therefore members could not stultify themselves.

MR. DAGLISH: At the last election the country expressed a distinct desire that there should be no farther expenditure of loan money on works unless those works proved to be reproductive. The case had not been made out as regards the proposed line; he was therefore opposed to its construction. Farther, it was a line on which the electors had had no opportunity of expressing an opinion, and as the taxpayers would have

to bear the burden they should have an opportunity of expressing an opinion on this or any other railway proposition.

MR. PIGOTT: Members were impressed with the remarks of the Premier on the second reading, that the line was not to be built as a coal-carrying railway. Before the Premier spoke, there were grave doubts in that respect, and he (Mr. Pigott) was of opinion that the railway was to be built, firstly to carry Collie coal. The duty of the Committee was to consider what was the best route to serve the country as an agricultural line. The member for the Williams (Mr. Piesse), the greatest agricultural authority in the House, condemned the country along the route for 35 miles from Collie as useless for agriculture. If 35 out of 85 miles were useless, what justification had the line? The Premier said it would be a purely agricultural line. Then the construction should not start from Collie. He (Mr. Pigott) would support an agricultural line through agricultural country. If the coalfields were non-existent their member would not support the line at all. He now professed to support it as an agricultural line.

MR. EWING: The coal would be an auxiliary.

MR. PIGOTT: If built at all, start the railway from some point on the Great Southern line. He moved as an amendment,

That the words "Collie to," in line 2, be struck out.

Let us then propose a start from Narrogin, or if that were not acceptable, from some other point on the Great Southern, and we might ultimately determine a payable route. Only last week the Government asked the House to authorise an exchange of land held by the Salvation Army in this very district.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: No; of land outside that district for land within it.

MR. PIGOTT: The Government condemned Mr. Ranford's classification of the Salvation Army's original land, yet accepted his opinion of the first 35 miles of this route, though it was contrary to the opinion of Mr. Muir. If there were any good land within 40 miles of Collie it was patchy, and not even third class but outclassed. The member for the

Williams said that the first 35 miles was not capable of successful agricultural development. What then was the use of unsuccessful agriculture? That was a total condemnation of the route. The Premier undoubtedly stated that the railway was to open up agricultural country, and for no other purpose.

THE PREMIER: That was the purpose for which its authorisation was recommended.

MR. PIGOTT: Then why not take the line through agricultural land? The route proposed by the member for the Murray (Mr. Atkins), 40 or 50 miles from Narrogin along the No. 3 route, then North-west to the No. 4 route, then back to the Great Southern railway, would serve thrice as much agricultural country as would the No. 2 route. The principal agitators for the railway were evidently the colliery owners.

MR. GORDON: Then they must think they could do more business.

MR. PIGOTT: They could, if they could force the Government to continue to pay exorbitant prices for inferior coal.

THE PREMIER: How could the collieries benefit if there was no coal traffic? The Government took delivery at Collie. Why were the coal-owners anxious to have the line if not to open up new trade?

MR. PIGOTT: How could that be done if the official reports were correct?

MR. EWING: The coal could compete on the goldfields against wood.

MR. PIGOTT: Then why not send 1,000 tons over the existing railway as a trial?

MR. EWING: The new route would save 58 miles.

MR. PIGOTT: Ignore that, and ascertain whether the coal would be used on the fields. He had seen the coal tried on the steamer "Sultan" going to the North-West, and the speed was slowed from about ten knots to three, and in fact the steamer was stopped several times in 24 hours. The decision then was that the coal could not be used. It was some years ago and he was stating a fact. As to the development of the Collie coal industry, it was costing the country £100,000 a year for coal used on the Government railways. To test the feeling of members, he had moved the amendment.

THE CHAIRMAN (after referring to *May's Parliamentary Practice*) said he was not able to accept the amendment; for according to *May* no amendment could be moved which did not come strictly within the scope of the title of the Bill.

MR. PIGOTT: The Premier might agree now to report progress. He had got the title passed by stating that any amendment in it could be made on recommitment.

THE PREMIER expressed a hope that the Chairman would not insist in ruling the amendment out of order.

THE CHAIRMAN accepted the amendment.

MR. WALLACE: If this decision was against parliamentary practice as laid down by *May*, he would not support the Bill.

THE PREMIER: If the Chairman allowed the question to be put, there could be no objection to that.

THE CHAIRMAN said he would take the responsibility.

Amendment (Mr. Pigott's) put and negatived.

MR. PIGOTT said he would now make a statement. There was a certain amount of opposition to this Bill. He could see that, no matter what was said, the Bill was going to be carried without fair debate or argument. Hon. members could see there was a very small attendance of members, and he must now ask the Chairman to count the House and see whether a quorum was present.

[Number counted, and no quorum being present the Speaker was called in. THE SPEAKER ordered the bells to be rung; and after an interval, he declared a quorum present.]

Clause put, and passed as printed.

Clause 3—Deviation:

HON. F. H. PIESSE: Referring again to the question of route, No. 2 route proposed in the Bill would go too far south. He had strongly advocated that the route should be taken farther north, along No. 3 route as shown on the map. The route chosen in the Bill would traverse the valley of Collie, would go through the Darkan Area, on through a portion of country practically unsettled and never likely to be settled, and thence to Narrogin. He was confident that the line should be along No. 3 route, and was strengthened in that opinion by state-

ments made to him yesterday and to-day by two settlers from the Williams district who had confirmed the opinion he previously expressed in this House that the country through which the proposed line would pass was not in any way equal to that of No. 3 route. He would support a line from Collie to Narrogin, and hoped the Government would give assurance with regard to the limit of deviation by stating they were prepared to increase the limit of deviation and carry out the understanding which was come to in regard to farther inquiry as to the character of the country. He would prefer to carry the line from Narrogin downward, rather than lose the line. He hoped to hear some statement from the Government.

THE PREMIER: Members who had previous experience of Railway Bills would have seen in Clause 3 what was the intention of the Government. That intention was that there should be railway communication between Collie and the Great Southern Railway; also that there should be railway communication between Collie and Narrogin. The Government wanted to get between those two points the best route obtainable. They had made every effort so far, and had placed before members the reports of officers as to the routes. They wanted to make farther inquiries to see if they could get a better route, and it was for this reason the clause provided for a deviation of 10 miles on either side of the proposed route. This was considered to be an ample deviation, and within that limit the Government desired to get the best line between the two points.

MR. GORDON: The Opposition were willing to agree to the railway if it were a coal railway or an agricultural railway. The line was 80 miles long; and why could not members of the Opposition satisfy themselves that they were building 50 miles for agriculture and 30 miles for coal? The Government were wise in regard to the clause for deviation, for the surveyors had not gone minutely into the route, and the country through which the line would pass was open. Farmers coming to this State from other States were not coming here looking for good land; they were leaving extra good land, the valley country in Victoria and the northern areas of South Australia, and

were in search of a good rainfall; so this portion of our State was the very country for them. Of course they preferred good country if they could get it with rainfall. Inducements were offered to settlers by this State that no other State could offer; but the bogey of the rabbits was held up to these people. The greatest opposition to rabbits was settlement, and the sooner the Government built the line and got settlement on to the land the country would advance. The opposition to the Bill was not genuine because the member for West Perth advocated this line in 1899 as a coal line and as an agricultural railway, and said that within two years all the wood on the Eastern Goldfields would be cut out and the mines would be compelled to use the coal.

MR. TAYLOR: The argument for the past three years had been in favour of the construction of this line to convey Collie coal to the fields, but that idea had now been exploded, as the Premier had backed down on it. If the line were built and Collie coal was carried along it the farmers would soon complain that the Collie coal was devastating their farms. The Minister for Lands had stated that 30 or 35 miles along the line of route from Collie the land was no good. For 20 miles the land was no good for settlement, and that after about 35 miles the land was better; but from the Williams to the Great Southern line the land was good. We had it in evidence that the land within 16 or 20 miles of the Collie was fair land for grazing purposes. His (Mr. Taylor's) greatest reason for opposing the clause was that the end of the session was close at hand, and a Bill should not be forced through at this stage when it meant such a great expenditure for the country. The question should be submitted at the next election.

MR. CONNOR: The country at present was not justified in spending money to build the railway, for he did not know where the money was coming from. There were other works more important to the country than the building of this line. So as to get a test vote he would move to add a time limit to the clause. The Fremantle members were willing to vote for this line and allow the dry dock at Fremantle to remain unconstructed. The Government had come

into power on the cry of retrenchment, economy, and financial reform, yet they were squandering money on this line. The Government were trying to steal the support of those in Opposition by offering to build a railway wherever those members required it. He could not say it was to buy political support, but he knew what the country would think about it. Agricultural railways should be built everywhere, but the country was not in a financial position to undertake such projects, and no one had said where the money was coming from. His first and main objection to the passing of the Bill was that the country was not in a position to build it. There were more necessary works if the money could be found. It would not pay the Government to carry coal over either of the routes suggested. A company in which he was interested applied for 10,000 acres of land in that district; but he opposed this railway, even though it might traverse his land. He opposed both routes, particularly the latest suggested, a deviation of 10 miles to suit certain people. He would not oppose either route if the country could afford the expense; but we could not afford it, and if it were incurred the responsibility must rest on Government members.

MR. MORAN would move that the word "extent of ten miles on either side thereof" be struck out. If we must have this compromise of a deviation which would still leave 35 miles of worthless country on the route, make the starting point near Pingelly and the terminus near Katanning. The route justified inquiry; and if he were the member for the district he would prefer Katanning to Wagin, because the route to Katanning would benefit the whole of the Williams electorate. As it would, however, still traverse the 35 miles of waste land, start construction in one of the fertile districts on the Great Southern railway, and extend it to Collie when it was proved that the coal could be used on the fields. The route would avoid the necessity for two or three cockspurs. If the line were to be purely agricultural, why did each of the four routes start from Collie?

MR. EWING: Coal would be an auxiliary.

MR. MORAN: Then the Premier's statement that the line was purely agricultural was incorrect. About 1890 he (Mr. Moran) supported the Pinjarra-Maradong line; and the country along its route would be served by the deviation he now advocated. If a transverse line must be built, possibly it ought to start from Pinjarra. It was said a compromise had been arranged between the member for the Williams and the Premier with respect to the deviation. It was to be hoped the hon. member would not support the Bill for the sake of four or five months in time. The Minister for Lands had argued that No. 2 route was the perfect route, but the Premier now said the question of route would be farther inquired into. What fresh evidence had been produced to cause this change, and induce the Government not to stand by their selection of No. 2 route, which was so perfect in the opinion of the Minister for Lands? Where was the boasted assertion of the Minister for Lands that no railway proposition in this State had ever received the same careful consideration as was given to route No. 2? If so, what chicanery had been at work by which a compromise as to the deviation had been arranged between the Government and the member for the Williams? If the Government now promised to reconsider the route, this must throw doubt on the reports of the experts and on the alleged careful selection of the route. Could fresh surveys of the four routes be made before Parliament assembled in the next year? The Premier had stated distinctly this afternoon there would be still farther efforts made to get a good route; yet the Minister for Lands had previously told members that the potato was cooked, and that everything was done, that there could now be no drawing back, and that No. 2 route was the only route which the Government could accept. Still the Premier now promised there should be farther inquiry. Mr. Muir, who reported on the No. 2 route, might have it suggested to him under this fresh instruction that he should keep his good eye on No. 3 route and his bad eye on No. 2, by way of accommodating the member for the Williams. So, although the Government had selected the only possible route, officers were to be sent

out to survey fresh routes or to go over those routes again. In reference to the Collie-Boulder Railway Bill, which was before Parliament last year, Mr. Muir admitted to a select committee that he surveyed the line to suit the Collie-Boulder leases because he was told to do so. Would Mr. Muir have special instructions in regard to this new survey that was to be made? Mr. Dartnall recommended route No. 4; but his report had not been placed before members. This clause providing for a deviation should be amended, and he now moved as an amendment,—

That the words "to the extent of ten miles on either side thereof" be struck out.

The amendment would enable the member for the Williams to lay a case before the next Parliament, so as to get the district served in a better way than was proposed in the Bill. This amendment was in the best interests of the country.

At 6:30, the CHAIRMAN left the Chair.

At 7:30, Chair resumed.

MR. MORAN (continuing): The amendment would allow the line to be built so as to serve the largest area of agricultural land. As to the compromise secretly entered into, route 2 was to be abandoned and route 3 would take its place. Supposing another member represented route 4, then another deviation would have to be made if the support of that member was required by the Government.

THE PREMIER: Three routes would have to be built, then.

MR. MORAN: The Government would build a route for each member if they could get his vote, though the ten miles deviation would not suit in that case—it would have to be 30 or 40 miles on either side; but even that would be done. The Government would allow themselves a deviation of 60 miles to mop in supporters; in other words in a railway line of 80 miles long there would have to be power to deviate 60 miles on either side. This went to show that sufficient inquiry had not been made. The member for the Williams believed that route 3 was better than route 2; so did he (Mr. Moran), because route 3 went nearer the settled country. Instead of going along a route where nobody lived or ever would live,

the Government now condescended to come down to route 3 where somebody did live. Mr. Dartnall thought route No. 4 was the best from an agricultural standpoint. If route No. 2 was the best, why make a compact with a member to accept route No. 3?

THE PREMIER: It was not right for the member to make a statement of that character. It was not true.

MR. MORAN accepted the assurance of the Premier, and regretted the member for the Williams was living in a fool's paradise, for that member had been led to believe that his route would be adopted. In the absence of the member for the Williams, the Premier now stated that no compact had been entered into. The member for the Williams said that half the line was worthless and the other half went the wrong way. That member was in favour of a deviation of 10 miles, for such deviation would put the line where the member for the Williams required it most. In a few years to come he predicted that the member for the Williams would come to the House for another line going west from Wagin.

MR. BURGESS: It was to be hoped that it would be justified.

THE PREMIER: Hear hear.

MR. MORAN: The object of the member for the Williams in moving the line ten miles north was to enable him to justify a line farther south when the time came. The member for the Williams was working for two spur lines; but the deviation which he (Mr. Moran) wished to see was such as would serve the country which both these spur lines would serve. This would be a through line easily worked, and not two separate spur lines. The deviation would start at Pingelly, take in the best part of route 4, and across routes 2 and 3 down to route 1, and rejoin the Great Southern at Katanning or at Wagin, thus running through the best fruit-growing country in the State. The amendment would give the experts time to decide whether this or a line from Collie to Narrogin was the better; and he was much mistaken if Mr. Thompson, Mr. Muir, Mr. Paterson, and Mr. Crawford would not unanimously recommend taking in the splendidly-watered tableland between the Darling Range and the Great Southern

line in preference to running transversely through the district. But the Government, having for political reasons decided on a route, would not ask the experts for any such opinion. He asked the member for the Williams which line would serve the greater area of agricultural country.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member should keep to the question of deviation.

MR. MORAN: Having moved to strike out "ten miles" he was justified in advocating a farther deviation.

THE PREMIER: The House had agreed to construct a railway from Collie to Narrogin. Was not the hon. member out of order in discussing a line from Pingelly to Narrogin or Wagin?

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member was entirely out of order in departing from the question of a deviation from the line agreed upon.

MR. FIGOTT: Had not the Chairman ruled a previous amendment out of order because the short title had been passed?

MR. THOMAS: The short title had been passed, but not the title. Could not "Collie" or "Narrogin" be struck out when the title was put?

THE CHAIRMAN: No. Clause 2, fixing the termini, had been passed.

MR. MORAN: The object of the amendment was to allow sufficient deviation to take in the Wagin route or the No. 4 route.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member must state the extent of deviation.

MR. MORAN: No. Subsequently he would move to alter the schedule so as to define the route. There was a probability that route No. 3 was better than 2, that 4 was better than either, and that No. 1 route, to Wagin, would serve many more people than No. 2. Anybody in the Williams electorate would approve of his proposal. It would mean plenty of work for the engineers from now till the opening of the new Parliament, and full reports as to the best route. Never in our history, after suspension of the Standing Orders, had a Bill to authorise 80 miles of railway been read a second time—a railway as to which there was so much doubt and so little information. Route 2 was condemned by all the settlers in the district. The amendment was the next best thing to throwing out the Bill.

MR. DAGLISH supported the amendment because he wished to record his vote against the Bill at every opportunity. He regretted that information properly accessible to members was not available, for the papers relating to this work were on one voluminous file, and if each member were to look through the file he would require at least two days, so that a proper examination of these papers by all members became impracticable. No member could cast an intelligent vote on the question without perusing the papers. The Premier told the electors of East Perth in 1901 that during the next three years there would be no new public works, but only the completion of works already in hand; yet this Bill was a new public work, for which the mandate of the people had not been obtained, and he (Mr. Daglish) wished to give them an opportunity of saying whether the people of the country were in favour of this railway.

MR. FIGOTT: In regard to the deviation of ten miles on either side of the line as proposed, the amendment would give to the Government an opportunity of altering the route to any extent between the two extreme points. The House having decided that the railway should be built to connect Collie with Narrogin, he would not contest that point farther; but the reports of officers in regard to the routes were not in agreement, and indeed no two of the officers agreed as to the best route. One officer condemned No. 1 route, another condemned No. 2 route.

MR. MORAN: And another officer condemned both.

MR. FIGOTT: So throughout these reports the officers did not agree. Those officers who were first consulted seemed to agree that the line should not be built at all; then other officers were brought in, and they did not agree as to a route. The Government appeared to have committed themselves to route No. 2 when the Bill was introduced, yet there was now some indication that they intended, after all, to adopt route No. 3 as advocated by the member for the Williams. It did not appear which route was surveyed first, and the Minister was not in his place to tell us.

HON. F. H. PRESSE: The first trial survey was on route No. 3.

MR. PIGOTT: The Minister wrote a minute on the subject for the information of his colleagues, in which he said route No. 3 followed two sides of a triangle in the first 16 miles, and for that reason he condemned it [Minister's minute read.] The member for the South-West Mining District told the House that if the line were properly built, engines would be able to take loads of 400 tons along the railway, yet the Minister for Lands recommended a light line of railway. If the line were simply for agricultural produce, a light line of two-foot gauge would do. At Broome there was a tramway which the Government would not alter, and it had to carry thousands and thousands of tons every month; that line was built on a two-foot gauge. A light line of that description would not carry heavy loads, but it would carry agricultural produce in a new country very well, and if the railway had to be lifted in a few years time there would not be much loss, and it would test the country. If a railway were to be built to open up the agricultural land between Collie and the Great Southern line, the line should be built through the best country. One officer of the department, in reporting on the line, said that the railway would serve 12 miles of country on either side of the line, and there were other reports saying that the railway running through the agricultural land would serve country 40 miles on each side of the line. The Minister for Lands in his minute stated that from the Williams to Narrogin there was room for settlement, but not in the same ratio as in the remoter parts. A reasonable estimate was that along the route of the line within measurable distance additional settlement to the extent of 180 families could easily take place. The line which the Minister thought best was marked blue on a plan in the Executive Council chamber, but members had not seen that plan. Then there was a minute from the Premier addressed to the Minister for Lands asking for a plan showing the route proposed and the area of Crown lands fit for cultivation which the line would open up. As the railway should be treated as an agricultural line, the Premier wanted to be clear that the Government could justify the line as such. In his minute the

Premier admitted that he did not take into consideration the coal traffic. Then there was a minute from the Surveyor General to Mr. Brockman asking that officer in conjunction with Mr. Muir to examine the country along the proposed route from Collie, obtaining sufficient information to enable a full report to be made on the land suitable for agricultural purposes that would be served by the three routes as well as the extent of timber land in the neighbourhood, particular attention being paid to the good land which would justify agricultural areas being declared and surveyed prior to selection.

MR. BURGESS: Was not the hon. member obstructing the business of the House by reading the same documents over and over again?

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member was certainly out of order if he repeated documents, but he (the Chairman) had been unable to ascertain that the hon. member was doing so.

MR. PIGOTT: The documents had not been read more than once, and he was not obstructing, and had no intention of doing so. Mr. Brockman's report to the Surveyor General showed that the routes on the plan in the Chamber were selected by Mr. Muir with reference to grades and cost; yet the Government took no notice of Mr. Muir's report. Mr. Brockman stated that the proposed line from Collie to the Great Southern Railway, or any other, would serve equally well for the timber, with a possible slight advantage for the line to Pingelly. The report did not coincide with the statement in the second-reading speech of the Minister for Lands, who said No. 2 route would open up 500,000 acres; for Mr. Brockman stated that this route would make available for development only 255,000 acres. Surely Mr. Brockman could not make so serious a blunder.

MR. TAYLOR called attention to the state of the House.

Bells rung, and quorum formed.

MR. PIGOTT: Mr. Brockman was picked out by the Premier and the Minister for Lands as the most capable officer in the State. [THE PREMIER: No.] The No. 3 route from Collie to Narrogin was the line surveyed by Mr. Dartnall. Mr. Brockman reported on No. 4 route. [Extracts read.] In each

of the four reports by these officers it appeared that No. 4 route would open about 5,000 acres more than the other routes; but this was a difference not worth speaking about. Mr. Brockman said there was a slight advantage in No. 2 route as to the amount of agricultural land to be opened. All these reports showed that full inquiry should be made by the Government, so that they might choose the most suitable route. Mr. Brockman's conclusion was in favour of No. 2 route because there was a possibility of extending the line for coal traffic to the goldfields. Why did this officer jump to the conclusion that the principal object of building a line in this district was to carry coal? Mr. Ranford in his report summed up in favour of No. 2 route. [Extracts read.] The member for the Williams did not agree with Mr. Ranford's opinion as to No. 2 being the best route for serving the district. Mr. Thompson in his report summed up in favour of No. 1 route. He pointed out that it was the shortest route, that there was a larger area of good land to be selected, that there was better land and more farmers settled along the route for 30 miles west of the Great Southern line, that there was a good supply of permanent water for stock and other purposes, and that there would not be any immediate necessity for building the line between Bridgetown and Katanning as this line would serve all purposes for some time to come. However, this was not to be taken into consideration. Speaking of No. 2 route, Mr. Muir said that for 35 miles the country was no good; and the member for the Williams condemned that land as useless.

Hon. F. H. PIESSE: The remarks which he made referred to No. 2 route passing through what might be termed worthless country; but there was a proposed deviation of ten miles, and he had discussed the question with Ministers as to deviation. If the line were carried within the limits of the deviation, it would traverse country much superior to the land through which the proposed line would now pass. About 25 miles of the line would pass through land which was worthless. Considering that already the House had voted that a line from Collie to Narrogin was to be constructed, now it was a question of deviation, and if the

line was deviated for 10 miles to the north it would go into much better country and serve the district much better.

Mr. PIGOTT: That did not agree with what Mr. Thompson stated. Whenever a railway question cropped up there was bound to be a fight over the routes. No doubt all the settlers along the Great Southern line were urging the member for the Williams to get the line constructed in a different direction, therefore one must sympathise with that member. The member for the Williams had condemned 25 miles of the railway to be served by No. 2 route. Mr. Thompson farther pointed out that in his opinion No. 2 route was the next best to No. 1, and in reference to No. 3 route he said it was the worst to choose from an agricultural point of view. If the Government were confined to a deviation of 10 miles No. 2 route could be carried farther north, and would practically serve the country that No. 3 route, which was condemned by Mr. Thompson, would serve. Mr. Muir condemned three out of the four routes; Mr. Thompson condemned three of the four routes, and Mr. Brockman condemned the lot. The Minister for Lands, dealing with the proposed railway from the standpoint of land settlement said he preferred the opinion of Mr. Ranford, and pointed out that Mr. Ranford estimated that following on the construction of the railway 500,000 acres of land would be selected. In Mr. Ranford's report there was no reference to 500,000 acres of land, but 250,000 acres of land. No doubt the Minister had made a mistake and was mixing up two reports, for it was stated that there were 500,000 acres of land along No. 2 route. It did not appear that Mr. Ranford stated No. 2 route would open up the district. The member for the Williams said these experts knew nothing about it. If so, why proceed with the Bill? Some months after these reports, Mr. Muir advised the Engineer-in-Chief that it was a question whether the line should start from the Collie station or the Collie-Boulder; that if it started from Collie the ruling grade would be 1 in 80, whereas if it started from the Collie-Boulder the ruling grade to Collie would be 1 in 40, though a saving of £10,000 would be effected in construction, and that it was advisable to consider these

matters before bringing in a Bill, for that the latter route would probably result in a new township being started at Collie-Boulder. Here, apparently, was another object—to induce the building of a township on the Collie-Boulder leases, in which the member for the district (Mr. Ewing) was wrapped up.

MR. EWING denied that he had any interest in the Collie-Boulder leases.

MR. PIGOTT: But the hon. member had in the Collie-Cardiff, and they were both in the same district, and would be benefited by the railway. The Minister for Lands wrote to the Minister for Works that, if the contour of the country would permit, the line should, in his opinion, join the end of the Collie-Boulder line, and if not, then the nearest point must be adopted; and that the vested interests of Collie did not appear to be at stake if the junction were fixed at the present terminus. Mr. Muir considered that the line should not start from the Collie-Boulder junction; yet the line was to start from that junction, though that involved a grade of 1 in 40—a fact not mentioned by the member for the district, who drew a beautiful picture of an engine drawing 400 tons up that hill. Were we to have relays of engines? According to this file, the No. 1 route was the best, Mr. Dartnall, after sending in his report, was asked by Mr. Muir which route would open up the largest area of agricultural land west of the Great Southern Railway—the Collie-Narrogin or the Collie-Pingelly. The answer was that the officer was hardly in a position to reply satisfactorily; that he had only spent six days on the trip from Collie to Pingelly; that as to the quality of the land he could speak only from hearsay, which was to the effect that a larger extent of agricultural land was on the Pingelly route as compared with the Narrogin route. This officer preferred No. 4 route. In the face of these conflicting reports, the Ministers must have had trouble in deciding which route should be chosen; therefore the deviation should be extended beyond the ten miles limit, and the Government should accept the amendment because it would help them to choose the best line after farther inquiry. If the Government would be so kind as to accept the amendment for

extending the limit of deviation, they would be going some little way towards lessening the weight of responsibility that was thrown on the Opposition, when the Government attempted to crush them with their huge majority.

MR. MORAN, after referring to the the letter written by the member of the South-West Mining District to the Premier on the question, moved that progress be reported.

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

Ayes	...	...	...	10
Noes	...	...	...	19

Majority against ... 9

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Atkins	Mr. Bath
Mr. Connor	Mr. Burgess
Mr. Daglish	Mr. Diamond
Mr. Jacoby	Mr. Ewing
Mr. Moran	Mr. Ferguson
Mr. Piesse	Mr. Gardiner
Mr. Pigott	Mr. Gordon
Mr. Stone	Mr. Gregory
Mr. Taylor	Mr. Hastie
Mr. Thomas (Teller).	Mr. Hayward
	Mr. Holmes
	Mr. Hopkins
	Mr. Isdell
	Mr. Nanson
	Mr. Purkiss
	Mr. Rason
	Mr. Wallace
	Mr. Yelverton
	Mr. Higham (Teller).

Motion thus negatived.

MR. PIGOTT: Referring again to the deviation, it appeared from the reports that the grades in the first portion of the line were 1 in 40. He was told that at the bottom of the hill near Collie, where the line was to start—not at the junction of the Collie-Boulder Railway, but at the bottom of the hill—there were a number of coal mines, and at the top of the hill were more coal mines. If the line was made as proposed, what was to be the result? Was the coal to be taken up the hill by an engine drawing 400 tons on a grade of 1 in 40?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: It depended on the size of the engine.

MR. PIGOTT: An engine of this size could not run along the line which the Minister recommended to the House as an agricultural line of the lightest kind. Who was interested in the mines at the top of the hill, and who was interested in the mines at the bottom of the hill? It was the duty of the member for the South-West Mining District to remain in the Chamber, and not try to

leave it as he was doing. He ought to remain in the House six months if necessary while this Bill was under discussion. Why was No. 2 route started from the high lands at one lot of collieries instead of on the low lands where there were other collieries?

MR. EWING: It was impossible to construct the line from the Collie town-site (which in his opinion was desirable) on account of the old workings of the proprietary mine making it unsafe for the railway to pass over certain country. That was the sole reason why the line was started from Collie-Boulder. No. 3 route would pass over the old workings of the Collie Proprietary mine, over which no railway could be taken. It was impossible to carry passengers over certain portions of the line on account of the undermining of the track. That was the only reason why the line was started away from the Collie townsite.

MR. THOMAS: If No. 2 route was adopted, the clause did not give sufficient deviation to enable the agricultural districts along the Williams and the Arthur Rivers to be opened up and served. The line should go nearer to route No. 4. If the amendment were passed the Government would have the power to take into consideration whether No. 4 was not a more preferable route, and also to allow consideration as to whether No. 1 route into Wagin should be adopted. If Parliament authorised the expenditure of half a million of money for the development of agriculture then it was necessary to give the Government sufficient power to take into consideration the relative merits of No. 4 and No. 1 routes, as against No. 3 and No. 2 routes. If No. 2 route was to be adopted, then he entered his protest against the line starting at Collie Boulder in preference to the Collie townsite. Mr. Muir, Inspector of Engineering Surveys, supported the line starting from the Collie townsite. One of the reports read stated that Mr. Dartnall's examination was of route No. 3, but having checked the report with the map he found that from start to finish Mr. Dartnall's report referred to No. 4 route, and Mr. Dartnall's opinion was that No. 4 was the best route from an agricultural point of view. Some of the other reports stated that No. 3 route was the best, and others that No.

1 route would open the best agricultural land. Still these reports admitted that for 35 miles out from the Collie the line would pass along the Collie River, where there was only a small width of soil which was hardly worth cultivating and could only be called second-class land. If the line started from Collie-Boulder, the ruling grade would be 1 in 40, whereas 100 yards from the present Collie station no such difficulty need be faced. Were not the numerous Collie township residents to be considered rather than the few mine proprietors at Collie-Boulder? As to the No. 4 route, that for the first 30 or 40 miles the line would not pass through any first-class land all experts were agreed, save Mr. Dartnall, who said that only 25 miles would be traversed before first-class land was met with, and that within the 25 miles was some good country. He (Mr. Thomas) protested against the fact that all the benches of the Government side of the House were empty.

MR. JACOBY called attention to the state of the House.

[Bells rung and quorum formed.] The SPEAKER also warned members that if, for the purpose of obstruction, attention were called to the lack of a quorum, the practice would have to be stopped.

MR. THOMAS: When attention was drawn to it only three members were in the House. When speaking on the second reading, the member for the Williams said that Mr. Ranford's judgment was open to doubt in connection with the Collie land in view of his classification of the Salvation Army lands, which showed that Mr. Ranford's opinion of the value of the land for the first 35 miles on either of the routes from the Collie-Boulder was worthless. He (Mr. Thomas) preferred the opinion of the member for the Williams, who was an agricultural expert, to that of railway engineers. On the other hand Mr. Dartnall said that the No. 4 route would go through better agricultural land than Nos. 2 and 3. The Government must be armed with power to make a greater deviation; and surely, to save discussion, they should have accepted the amendment of the member for West Perth. He (Mr. Thomas) protested against the manner in which the Premier ignored the written and spoken opinions of the Minister for Lands,

who after full inquiry and upon careful examination of all the evidence he could obtain had made a definite statement to this House as to the best route for the railway and as to the limit of the deviation. Then when the member for the Williams suggested something else, the Premier rose and repudiated the action of his Minister for Lands. How could a team of Ministers, managed in that way, continue to pull together? As a strong admirer of the energy and the capacity for work of the Minister for Lands, a new Minister inexperienced in Treasury-bench tactics, one must protest against the way he was put on one side by the leader of the House. Once for all he now protested against the tactics pursued to baulk discussion on this and other clauses of the Bill; and he protested against the limit of deviation in regard to route No. 2. The fullest information should be obtained in regard to the green line, which showed the most settlement; and it appeared to him that the route for a purely agricultural railway, which this now was professed to be, should be somewhere near the green line on the map. We were not now dealing with this as a railway for carrying coal to the goldfields, because that idea had been abandoned; therefore we could depart from the original idea and could point out a route that members generally considered preferable to the one proposed in the Bill. The Minister in his minute recommended a light agricultural line; but the line proposed in the Bill appeared to have been projected as a line to carry coal to the goldfields; therefore by building a purely agricultural line, about one half the cost of the original estimate might be saved, and the sum so saved could be expended in providing spur lines to serve the agricultural districts adjacent to the Great Southern Railway. We should not commit the folly of laying down an expensive line with 72lb. rails with a view to heavy coal traffic, but should make this an agricultural line to be built along a route most suitable for the district, after full and proper inquiry. For these reasons the Premier should allow the whole matter to be adjourned to a future period, so that farther reports and fresh surveys might be made, instead of committing the country to a deliberate waste of money.

MR. MORAN: After a fairly moderate discussion of the routes, we had arrived at a stage when a vote might be taken on the question as to whether the Chairman should leave the Chair.

MR. JOHNSON: Would the hon. member be satisfied with that?

MR. MORAN moved:—

That the Chairman do now leave the Chair.

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

Ayes	...	...	...	11
Noes	...	...	...	20
Majority against				9

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Atkins	Mr. Burges
Mr. Bath	Mr. Diamond
Mr. Connor	Mr. Ewing
Mr. Daglish	Mr. Ferguson
Mr. Jacoby	Mr. Gardiner
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Gordon
Mr. Moran	Mr. Gregory
Mr. Pigott	Mr. Hayward
Mr. Stone	Mr. Holmes
Mr. Taylor	Mr. Hopkins
Mr. Thomas (Teller).	Mr. Isdell
	Mr. James
	Mr. Nanson
	Mr. Oats
	Mr. Piesse
	Mr. Purkiss
	Mr. Rason
	Mr. Wallace
	Mr. Yelverton
	Mr. Higham (Teller).

Motion thus negatived.

Amendment (to extend the deviation) put, and negatived on the voices.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4—Power of Government to compulsorily purchase land within 12 miles of railway:

MR. BURGESS: This was a new departure, and there was no reason why the provision should apply in this case when it had not been made to apply in other cases. If the principle was carried out in its entirety he would support it. The provision was not included in the Jandakot Railway Bill. If it did, all the land around Fremantle would be under compulsory arbitration. We should not make fish of one section of the community and flesh of another. He moved that the clause be struck out.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member could not move that.

THE PREMIER: This was one of the best clauses in the Bill. There had been grave complaints made from time to time that railways were constructed at the

public expense and served large areas of agricultural land which were not settled, and years after a railway had been constructed very frequently these large areas were still undeveloped, if not disposed of at a large price created entirely by the construction of the line. When we were dealing with a question like this we must some day make a start, and it was constantly found that people said they were prepared to support a principle underlying a clause or a Bill if it was made to apply universally. But we must begin the application where we could, and there was abundant justification for doing it in this case when we were building a railway through country which was not now settled. By the clause the Government claimed the right of compulsorily purchasing any area, served by the railway, within the distance mentioned, which was capable of closer settlement, to enable those who purchased from the Crown at cost price to have some of the benefit given by the construction of the railway. The Government had to pay compensation for the land. The member for the Williams would bear him out in saying that there never had been a time when persons claiming compulsory compensation from the Government had not received full value for their land. In dealing with country lands there was the right to resume a certain percentage under Crown Grants. The Bill provided not that land would be resumed without compensation, but compensation had to be paid, fixed by arbitration provided in the Public Works Act—one arbitrator on each side and a Judge as umpire. If the compensation claimed was small, then a magistrate could be the umpire. The Government were not unreasonably asking that in the case of a line where it was found there was land suitable for agricultural development there should be power to purchase it for settlement.

MR. DAGLISH: To a large extent he agreed with the clause; but it should go a little farther. The betterment principle should be recognised. The clause provided for purchase up to twelve months after the line had been declared open for traffic. That meant that the purchase could be delayed until value had been added to the land. The next clause modified the provision consider-

ably. Another objection was that the railway was built for the purpose of encouraging settlement. We allowed private settlers to take up areas of 1,000 acres, and very often two or three blocks were taken up by members of one family. The limitation was 1,000 acres, he believed.

THE MINISTER: What lands were referred to?

MR. DAGLISH: Repurchased lands.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Any lands repurchased must be dealt with under the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act. A man might get only 250 acres instead of the maximum of 1,000.

MR. DAGLISH contended he was justified in assuming that the maximum area would be granted; and if not, the principle he contended for was not greatly affected. The conditions as to compulsory cultivation of the land granted were not being made sufficiently stringent. The departmental estimate was that at the outset the average area taken up would be 400 acres, and that during the first few years an average of 40 acres would be cultivated. It was not good enough to give a settler ten times the area of land which he would bring under cultivation in the first few years. The Crown should not give away the fee simple of any repurchased land not brought under cultivation. The trouble in the past had been that the area alienated was enormously larger than the area cultivated. The selector should be compelled to cultivate the whole before getting the fee simple of the whole. The member for York (Mr. Burges) objected to this because it would not pay the big land owner; but we had to consider what would pay the State. He (Mr. Daglish) did not contend that all the land should be tilled. Under "cultivation" he would include ock-raising. The State gained nothing by giving away land which was not put to some practical use. Of land alienated a very small fraction—about one-tenth—was used.

MR. HAYWARD: The last speaker could not have studied the subject. For each 1,000 acres the selector must pay £25 per annum; whereas for pastoral purposes he could get land for £1 per 1,000 acres.

MR. PIGOTT: The principle of the clause, if good, should be carried to the

bitter end; and if it were advisable that the Government should purchase the land within 12 miles of the railway, such purchase should be compulsory. He moved as an amendment,

That the word "may," in line 4, be struck out, and "shall" inserted in lieu.

THE PREMIER: That would compel the Government to buy all land, whether improved or unimproved.

MR. NANSON: While sympathising with the intention expressed in the clause, he doubted the wisdom of the proposed method. Land could now be compulsorily purchased if required for public purposes; and of that none should complain. But he doubted whether, in any part of the Empire, a Government had been empowered to purchase land in order to transfer such land from one private owner to another.

THE PREMIER: Indirectly the same object was secured in New Zealand.

MR. NANSON: True; but in New Zealand the difficulty had been overcome by a progressive land tax, the landowner being compelled to value his land, and no matter what his valuation might be, the Government could purchase at that valuation. So if he undervalued, he was liable to have the land purchased at a price below its value, while if he overvalued he had to pay a bigger tax than the actual value justified. Thus he must either use his land or sell it to the Government for disposal to other people. Our Government might follow the example of New Zealand; but the clause would give them power to repurchase private land, no matter how good the use to which it was devoted. Compulsory repurchase was not justified save when the owner was not turning the land to good account; yet here land could be repurchased in response to a clamour for subdivision. That bordered on confiscation. Moreover, the clause dealt with land in one district only. If just, the principle should apply to all lands adjoining existing lines, including the Midland Railway, where the lands were held by a foreign corporation. It was doubtful whether such a provision would receive the royal assent. Apart from that, how would it appear to people outside of Western Australia if they learnt that the freehold of land ceased to be a freehold in this State

because, no matter how good the purpose to which the land was put by the present owner, other persons were agitating to obtain the land and the Government had power to purchase it compulsorily? This principle involved a grave departure from our existing land laws, and the Government might attain their aim better by adopting the improved land legislation of New Zealand. Therefore before voting for the clause he would like to have fuller information from the Government.

THE PREMIER: The hon. member was right in saying this clause was not copied from any existing legislation in the Eastern States. In recent Railway Bills in New South Wales there had been imposed an increasing land tax, and in that way the betterment principle was applied. If it were now sought to embody that principle in this Bill, the necessary machinery clauses would have to be framed. In the Public Works Act of this State passed last year we endeavoured to insert the betterment principle, but failed to carry it through. In this clause we wanted to overcome the difficulty, now that we were about to build an agricultural line, by taking power to purchase within a certain distance of the line for securing closer settlement. We knew there were large areas of land in this railway district which had been held for years unimproved, and these were alongside or adjacent to other lands which had been cultivated. By building this railway we should be giving an enhanced value to those large vacant blocks, and this clause was intended to enable the State to purchase such blocks, not at the enhanced value occasioned by the construction of the railway, but at a price based on the present value. This power to purchase was not intended to be permanent, but was limited to a period of 12 months after the line was opened for traffic. The clause did not provide that the power should be exercised only in relation to unimproved land, though if improved land were purchased an enhanced price would have to be paid on account of the improvements. Our policy would be to purchase unimproved land for the purpose of encouraging closer settlement. The time might arrive when, owing to clamour, there might be a

demand for the purchase of an estate even though developed to a reasonable extent; but he hardly thought that such condition would arise during the period this clause would operate. As to taking power to purchase other land under similar conditions on other railway lines, this clause gave power to purchase because this Bill was authorising the construction of a railway to open up this land; and the people owning it who had not improved the land could not complain of any interference with their right, because they had been holding land entirely unimproved in many cases.

MR. NANSON: The want of a railway might prevent the cultivation in many cases.

THE PREMIER: There were cases of large areas held by absentees and uncultivated in the neighbourhood of the proposed railway, and near them were other areas that were cultivated, showing that the absence of a railway was not the cause of the absence of cultivation. This was a good opportunity to apply the principle, and the mere fact that we were unable to apply it generally throughout the State was hardly a reason why we should not apply it now when we had the opportunity. When the question of a land tax came up for consideration next year, the matter could be gone into thoroughly. We did not want to deal with the improved land, because if an owner was cultivating his land we did not desire to interfere. There was no chance of the Government purchasing improved land for settling other persons on it. He hoped the clause would pass, and hoped it would succeed in passing through the other Chamber.

MR. ATKINS agreed with the amendment, that if the clause was to be passed the purchase of these lands should be compulsory, because otherwise one man's land might be bought at a big price and another man's land might not be bought at all. The goose and the gander should have the same sauce.

MR. GORDON: This was rather a dangerous clause. Many settlers in the Williams district had been put to great inconvenience for many years for want of railway communication, and their teams might be seen coming along the road to Perth and returning with sup-

plies. These settlers having undergone great hardships, it would not be fair now that there was a chance of having easier times for the Government to come in and take their land from them. There might be introduced into the clause a condition that the Government should be empowered to purchase land compulsorily only where the owner held more than 1,000 acres. On that condition the clause would be worthy of support, but not as it stood.

MR. BATH was surprised that no mention was made of a system recently introduced into South Australia in regard to the *bona fides* of those persons who were in favour of building a railway to a certain portion of the country. In the most recent railway project, that of a line to Pinaroo, where the settlers along the route stated that the line would prove profitable, before consenting to introduce a Bill the Government stipulated that those settlers who were in favour of the line should sign a guarantee that they would be responsible for their share of any loss incurred by the working of the railway after a certain period. When railways were projected, people along the line of proposed route were very enthusiastic about the possibilities of the railway, and stated that if the line were built it was sure to pay. In connection with the Pinaroo railway the South Australian Government insisted on a guarantee before they introduced a Bill for the construction of the line, and the South Australian Government now had a guarantee from the settlers along the route, which stipulated that if any loss were sustained in the operations of the railway after a certain time elapsed from the completion of the work, such loss was to be borne by the settlers along the line in proportion to the land held by them.

MR. HAYWARD: The provision would work a hardship amongst those who had improved their land. He suggested that the clause should be amended by inserting after "line of railway" the words, "and provided the land is unimproved at the time the Act sanctioning the railway is passed." That would exempt improved land.

MR. BURGESS: The member for Hannans should recollect that nearly all the land along the proposed railway was

Crown land taken up under conditional purchase conditions. If the Government were so weak in this proposal and had to introduce such a provision, it shattered all his faith in them. A similar proposal was not in the Jandakot Railway Bill.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

MR. BURGESS: The sooner we had different legislation from this the better for the country; the people of the country should not put up with such a proposal.

MR. BATH: What about a land tax?

MR. BURGESS: If a land tax came to-morrow, then he would accept it. A land tax would come through Federation. Why did not the Government introduce this proposal when dealing with the Midland Railway? If such a proposition were carried out in its entirety he would support it. A great injustice would be done by passing the clause.

MR. HARPER: If the proposal were carried out it might be assumed the railway would take 12 months to build, and until 12 months after that the Government had the power to purchase land, which meant that for two years no one would be inclined to make improvements on their land and the land would be practically locked up for two years. That would be detrimental to the interests of the country. A man might find it impossible, being a long distance from railway communication, to improve his land, and might have to work 20 or 30 years earning a livelihood by other means, and when an opportunity occurred for reaping the reward of his labour and his trouble over a number of years, the man would find that the Government stepped in and took away all the advantages that he had waited for. Such a person would not feel very loyally disposed towards the Government. The clause required farther consideration.

MR. STONE: Had the Government the right to take this land by force? There were lands held before responsible government which carried certain rights with them, and those rights should not be taken away. The Mining on Private Property Act could not be enforced in regard to land sold before responsible government. There were ten million acres of land held in fee simple in this country, and not one per cent. of that land was under cultivation. People who had

been living some distance from civilisation for years should have any advantages conferred by the construction of a railway. The Government could, without compensation, resume one-tenth of any land required for railway purposes. That ought to be sufficient. He was entirely opposed to the clause, which might be carried here but would probably meet with a different fate in another place.

MR. MORAN: When it was a question of authorising the expenditure of half a million in building a railway on an indefinite route, the member for York (Mr. Burgess) stoutly denounced criticism; but when the Government proposed to introduce here a principle recognised in many countries of giving the State the benefit of the improvement brought about by the expenditure of public money on lands, the hon. member was astounded at the revolutionary nature of the proposal. Let the hon. member learn the lesson that it was not fair to introduce a Railway Bill or the betterment principle towards the end of a session. The hon. member had made his own bed, and must lie on it. It was utter rot to confine this principle to unimproved land. Mr. Seddon had purchased scarcely one acre of such land. The Cheviot estate in New Zealand was unimproved. In a pastoral sense a fence, a few dams, shepherds' huts, and a water supply were highly valuable improvements, and for such improvements owners claimed thousands of pounds.

THE CHAIRMAN suggested that the discussion on improvements be deferred till the member for Bunbury (Mr. Hayward) moved his amendment at the end of the clause.

MR. MORAN wished to reply to the Premier, also to the member for the Murchison, who was wrong in saying that no Australasian Government had ever repurchased unimproved land. He (Mr. Moran) would vote for the clause by way of helping the Bill through another place.

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

Ayes	...	...	...	8
Noes	...	...	...	22

Majority against ... 14

AYES.

Mr. Atkins
Mr. Connor
Mr. Jacoby
Mr. Pigott
Mr. Stone
Mr. Taylor
Mr. Thomas
Mr. Moran (Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Bath
Mr. Burges
Mr. Daglish
Mr. Diamond
Mr. Ewing
Mr. Ferguson
Mr. Gardiner
Mr. Gordon
Mr. Gregory
Mr. Hayward
Mr. Holmes
Mr. Hopkins
Mr. Isdell
Mr. James
Mr. Johnson
Mr. Nanson
Mr. Oats
Mr. Purkiss
Mr. Reason
Mr. Wallace
Mr. Yelverton
Mr. Higham (Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

MR. MORAN said he had an amendment in the early part of the clause.

THE CHAIRMAN: No part of the clause prior to the word "may," in line 4, could be amended.

MR. CONNOR moved as an amendment that after "may" the words "and shall" be inserted.

THE CHAIRMAN: The words appeared to be contradictory, and he could not accept them as an amendment.

MR. MORAN moved as an amendment that after "may," the words "upon the request of two settlers in the district" be inserted.

THE PREMIER desired to suggest that after the word "land" in the next line there be inserted the words "upon the recommendation of the Land Purchase Board."

MR. MORAN: Then the initiative would be with the Land Purchase Board, and that would be handing over the policy to a board?

MR. THOMAS: The Premier's amendment would not meet the case. This clause was starting the principle of State ownership of land, and he was in favour of that principle being applied generally. He would vote for the clause as it stood, after what had passed this evening. If we provided that the question of purchase should be referred to some board, then the Government would not be able to act until the board requested them to do so.

THE PREMIER moved as an amendment that the following words be added to the clause:—"Provided that no land shall be compulsorily purchased until the Land Purchase Board has reported thereon." Under this amendment the

Minister for Lands would be the person to move the board to report.

MR. DAGLISH: Would it not be better to so amend the clause that the certificate should be given by the board and not by the Minister?

MR. PIGOTT did not object to the Premier's amendment. The clause would give power to the board to effect a great saving of money to the country, by buying up not only the agricultural lands alongside the proposed railway, but also buying up compulsorily the coal leases adjacent to the railway. This would relieve the State of the present heavy cost of sustaining the coal industry. He hoped that if this clause were passed the Government would take into consideration the suggestions he had thrown out, and make terms with the owners of these collieries, and close the collieries up once and for all. If this and the succeeding clauses were passed, the price could be settled by arbitration. The power to buy up land within 12 miles on either side of the railway would, he believed, cover all the collieries. He had not the slightest doubt that, if the Government would take this matter into consideration, those collieries would within two or three years belong to the State, and then, if the State thought fit to work them on its own account, let the State do it. Those collieries should always have belonged to the State.

THE PREMIER: The land to be purchased was agricultural land.

MR. PIGOTT: The Premier was, he thought, wrong. He (Mr. Pigott) was of opinion that whether the land was agricultural or anything else the Government would have power to purchase it. If the coal was found to be only half the value the Government paid for it, it might be cheaper in the interests of the State to buy up the collieries.

MR. CONNOR: This clause put too much power in the hands of the Ministers. Moreover, the country could not stand the expenditure in connection with the building of this railway. If the Ministers wanted to purchase the land, they would do it. They would purchase it secretly, if they wished to do so. He believed this railway was being forced through as a sop to a certain community. There was an insinuation in the observations of the leader of the Opposition that certain lands

were already fixed upon for purchase, if this Bill, with this clause, passed. Rumours were about that there were lands which would be purchased. Were we to give power to any Ministry to purchase any land they wished without declaring what it was for?

MR. MORAN: Evidently the Premier himself did not know the scope of the clause, and the hon. gentleman had not given it the consideration he might have done. The Government laid down a rule, and if they wished to force on the Committee an important alteration of the clause without notice, he would accept it; but nothing would be gained by rushing the matter ahead. He asked that progress be reported.

THE PREMIER: We might, he thought, get on.

MR. TAYLOR: It was the hon. gentleman's practice.

THE PREMIER: It was not his practice, for members were constantly proposing amendments without notice.

MR. WALLACE wished to have confirmation or denial of a statement which had been made. He had been informed by the member for Greenough, who quoted as his authority the member for the Williams, that certain gentlemen, Mr. Zeb. Lane, Mr. Frank Wilson, and others interested in the coal areas, were moving to have this clause passed in order that their coal areas might come within the limits of the land which might be purchased.

MR. HASTIE: That statement was made in his presence.

MR. STONE denied Mr. Wallace's statement, and asked that it be withdrawn.

THE PREMIER: There was absolutely no foundation for it. He never heard of such a thing.

MR. STONE: A statement was made by him to the members for Mount Magnet and Kanowna that there were certain heads of combines holding large positions—Mr. Zeb. Lane was one mentioned—and he thought Mr. Lane and others interested in that part of the country were anxious to see this railway go through. He did not know whether it was a breach of confidence, but it was the member for the Williams who had mentioned the matter to him.

MR. MORAN: Had the hon. member said that these gentlemen wanted the

Government to buy their coal mines back?

MR. STONE: No. The statement was in keeping with the tactics pursued by the member who uttered it. Could he demand a withdrawal of the false statement made?

THE PREMIER: The hon. member could not use the words "false statement."

THE CHAIRMAN understood that the member for Mount Magnet asked whether certain statements were correct. The member for Mount Magnet did not make any direct charge against any member, but merely asked the Government whether certain rumours were correct or not. It was not necessary for the member for Mount Magnet to withdraw.

MR. STONE persisted in his request for a withdrawal.

THE CHAIRMAN: Members accepted the hon. member's denial. He (the Chairman) had not heard the whole of the remarks of the member for Kanowna; but certainly the member for Mount Magnet made no charge.

MR. MORAN: The ruling in every British Parliament was that a member was the guardian of his own honour.

THE PREMIER: Chair! If the hon. member wished to disagree with the Chairman's ruling there was a proper method of doing it. There was no reason for all this chatter.

THE CHAIRMAN: No charge against the hon. member came under his notice, and the member for the Greenough must be satisfied. The incident was closed.

MR. MORAN differed from the ruling.

THE PREMIER: Chair!

THE CHAIRMAN: The question would be put.

MR. STONE demanded a withdrawal.

THE CHAIRMAN stated the question.

MR. MORAN: As the Government were getting deeper and deeper into the mire, progress should be reported. Accusations were flung about the Chamber in a cowardly manner, and private conversations were misinterpreted by one member, backed up by the word of another in a dastardly way, while an honourable member could not get redress.

CHAIRMAN: Order!

MR. MORAN moved that progress be reported.

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

Ayes	...	...	...	9
Noes	...	...	...	21

Majority against ... 12

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Atkins	Mr. Bath
Mr. Connor	Mr. Burges
Mr. Daglish	Mr. Diamond
Mr. Jacoby	Mr. Ewing
Mr. Moran	Mr. Ferguson
Mr. Pigott	Mr. Gardiner
Mr. Stone	Mr. Gordon
Mr. Taylor	Mr. Gregory
Mr. Thomas (Teller).	Mr. Hastie
	Mr. Hayward
	Mr. Holmes
	Mr. Hopkins
	Mr. Isdell
	Mr. James
	Mr. Johnson
	Mr. Nanson
	Mr. Oats
	Mr. Rason
	Mr. Wallace
	Mr. Yelverton
	Mr. Higham (Teller).

Motion thus negatived.

Amendment passed, and the clause as amended agreed to.

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

MR. MORAN: What section of the Public Works Act applied?

THE PREMIER: Clauses dealing with procedure.

MR. MORAN: The Bill was brought down in a very crude shape. A rule never to be departed from was to place the honest facts of the case before the people of the country. This was a radical alteration. The people along the line would have no benefit from the public work, although in connection with every other public work in Australia those within the purview of it benefited. The betterment principle was good but it was bad to single out on part of the State to apply that principle to; it should be made to apply generally and the proper way to apply it was by a graduated land tax. By that means everyone was bound to pay something. If we could not compulsorily purchase land along the Midland Railway or along the Great Southern Railway let a tax be placed on that land so as to force it to be cut up. The Government were unfairly applying to a small section of the community what in justice should be applied to the whole State.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 6, 7—agreed to.

Schedule—Description of line of railway:

MR. ATKINS moved as an amendment—

That all the words after "point," in the first line, be struck out and the following inserted in lieu thereof:—"On the Great Southern Railway, near Narrogin, on the No. 2 route, on map following that route for about 40 miles; thence going in a north-north-westerly direction to the No. 4 route at about the 40-mile (at the Williams river crossing); thence along that No. 4 route to the Great Southern Railway at or near Pingelly."

It had been stated by the Premier and others that this railway was not required for carrying coal but was an agricultural line. If it was an agricultural railway, then by judiciously spending the money we could accommodate many more settlers and open up more country by constructing the line in the way he suggested. The land near the Collie for the first 30 miles was not as good as the other land. The people at the Marradong settlement and at the Arthur River had been promised by Government after Government that they should have railway communication instead of being left as they were 40 or 50 miles from a railway. The Government ought to keep their promises and this had been repeatedly promised by every Ministry for many years past. A railway had been promised through the Marradong, and when he (Mr. Atkins) heard that the line in question was to be proposed and was going in the direction of Marradong he got the Minister for lands to have a line surveyed near to that settlement. No. 4 route would give a good service to the people of Marradong, who were prepared to take that if they could not get any better line. After the different surveys had been made, and the reports sent in, it was seen that if the line was to be a coal line as well as an agricultural line the grades on No. 2 route would be better than those on the No. 4 route, therefore he considered that the No. 4 route would be out of court. Now it was understood that the line was not to be a coal line at all, but an agricultural railway.

MR. HIGHAM: Had not the two terminal points been defined, and was not what the hon. member was moving for tantamount to a new railway?

THE CHAIRMAN: The rule regarding this point was very clear. If the amend-

ment were carried the Bill would have to be laid aside. That was the invariable rule, or it would alter the character of the Bill.

MR. ATKINS: From a conversation with the Premier he understood he would be in order in moving the amendment and that it would be effective, or his original idea was to move an amendment to Clause 1. The Premier had told him that if the amendment was carried it would be all right, and if it was not, then he (Mr. Atkins) had been trapped. These promises to the Maradong, Bannister Bridge, and Wandering people had been made repeatedly; and we should now avail ourselves of the opportunity to serve these districts and a large additional agricultural area. The horse-shoe route he proposed would not be longer than 100 miles, and would carry all the agricultural traffic for the next 10 years. Its construction would not cost more than £2,000 per mile. The experts' reports showed that the land on this route was as good as that on any other; and the people farthest away from the existing railway should be served before the Williams people, and the people farther south, who were within 18 miles of a railway and a metalled road. Much was said of Mr. Thompson's report. Mr. Thompson reported from an engineering point of view, and his statements as to agricultural possibilities were a *résumé* of what other people said; and they said that the land at the Collie end for the first 30 or 40 miles was of little or no use for agriculture. The northern or No. 4 route got into agricultural land sooner than any other route. The Government route, if taken to Arthur River, would go through good agricultural land all the way. All knew that Collie coal was not wanted on the goldfields, nor on the railways. For the latter it was too expensive; it did not keep, and the engine fire boxes were not roomy enough to utilise it. We were spending £2,000 a year in experimenting with spark arresters, and were yet no farther forward, the only hope being some alteration in the exhaust; but though these facts were well known, experiments with the coal were continued.

THE CHAIRMAN: Members should clearly understand that if the amendment were carried it did not necessarily

follow that the Bill would be lost; but the Bill would have to be withdrawn and reintroduced, so as to permit of a second-reading debate on the amended portion.

MR. MORAN: Earlier in the evening he asked the Committee to adopt a route more extensive than that proposed in the amendment, but which would have achieved the same object—a loop line from Pingelly to route No. 4, touching route No. 1 and after a semi-circular sweep joining Katanning. Did not the mover of the amendment (Mr. Atkins) think it desirable to continue the loop so as to take in the country west of Wagin and Katanning?

MR. ATKINS: That he hardly agreed with. When he thought of this amendment he located the line so that a part of the Government scheme could be carried out and the rest left; and this remainder could, when wanted, be carried out without any extra expense. If the scheme the hon. member advised were adopted, there would have to be a new line altogether, if the Collie line were wanted afterwards.

MR. MORAN: Not at all. Let No. 4 route be used.

MR. ATKINS: We could not use that for coal, for he understood from railway experts, and he was satisfied the men who went over those lines had given a fair and just opinion—

MR. MORAN: They all differed, that was the trouble.

MR. ATKINS: They did not differ about grades. He was much disappointed to find that the grades were so greatly against the No. 4 route for coal. If the line was to be an agricultural line, we should not have so much traffic on it, and a grade of one in 50 would be good enough, but if it was to be a coal line he would stick out for the flattest grade possible, because where there was heavy traffic the grade should not be more than one in 100. If the line was to be a coal line, let us stick to the Government route No. 2, or somewhere near it. The Premier had said that line would not be a coal line, and others had asserted that a coal line would not be wanted for from 10 to 20 years.

MR. MORAN: The scheme propounded by Mr. Atkins was one that he (Mr. Moran) could not recommend at the present time. That line would be neither one thing nor the other, but it would be

better than the suggestion of the Government. He still thought that the Collie coal could well be taken over No. 4 route by Pingelly, or along the No. 1 route by Wagin. He was certain that the other Chamber would find it incumbent upon them in the best interests of Western Australia to delay this for five months.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS would not enter into the merits or demerits of the scheme suggested by the member for the Murray. He believed the hon. member was actuated by the best of motives. If, however, the amendment were carried, the hon. member would not get his line, because this Bill would have to be placed on one side and a fresh measure introduced. What the hon. member proposed was another railway altogether, and totally foreign to the Bill which we spent so much time over. The terminal point was very different. The present Bill was for the construction of a railway from Collie to Narrogin, but the proposal of the hon. member was for a line from Narrogin to Pingelly. If the hon. member's proposal were carried, no one would get anything, for there would be no railway at all, and he was sure the hon. member did not desire that.

MR. TAYLOR: If the line to be constructed was to be purely for agricultural purposes, it would be wise to start it from the south-west and run it towards the Collie through the country proved by experts and the Minister for Lands to be good agricultural country, travelling through that good country for 40 miles to the 40-mile peg marked on the map, that portion of the line being constructed with, say, 60lb. rails. If that were the terminal point, and the country surrounding that part of the line were taken up and settled, then the line could turn, as indicated by this amendment, towards route No. 2, and thence along in a north-westerly direction to No. 4, and about 40 miles towards the Williams River. Then it would come towards the Great Southern Railway with light rails at a low cost. If there were a necessity for the line to go from the 40-mile peg to Collie to convey Collie coal, that portion of the line could be constructed with heavy rails to meet that traffic. The Government should adopt this scheme, for the country was thoroughly settled for 35 miles from Narrogin to

Williams. The State should not be put to the expense of building the railway proposed unless it was for the carriage of coal to the goldfields. However, he considered the line should start from the Great Southern Railway, go through agricultural land, and afterwards be continued to Collie, for it would be many years before Collie coal was used on the goldfields.

Amendment negatived, and the schedule passed.

Preamble, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments, and the report adopted.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House adjourned at 1:22 a.m. (Saturday), until the next Monday afternoon.

Legislative Council,

Monday, 14th December, 1903.

	PAGE
Papers ordered: Liquor Licenses, Correspondence	2745
Privilege: Absence without leave	2746
Bills: Collie-Narrogin Railway, first reading	2747
Evidence Amendment, third reading	2747
Agricultural Lands Purchase Act Amendment, third reading	2747
Agricultural Bank Act Amendment, second reading, in Committee, third reading	2747
Mining, in Committee resumed, Clauses 55 to 80, progress	2749

THE PRESIDENT took the Chair at 4:30 o'clock, p.m.

PRAYERS.

PAPERS—LIQUOR LICENSES, CORRESPONDENCE.

HON. A. G. JENKINS (North-East) moved:

That there be laid upon the table of the House copies of all correspondence from the Premier and Attorney General to any member of the various licensing benches throughout the State, in regard to the granting or refusal of licenses to sell liquor.