

Mr. McCALLUM: I move an amendment—
That in lines 5 and 6 of Subclause 7 the words "twelve months ended the thirty-first day of December then last preceding" be struck out and "period mentioned in such order" inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. McCALLUM: I move a further amendment—

That in line 9 the word "fourteen" be struck out and "thirty" inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 36 to 37—agreed to.

Progress reported

House adjourned at 10.56 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 27th September, 1922.

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

QUESTION—MINISTERIAL ORDER OF PRECEDENCE.

Hon. P. COLLIER (without notice) asked the Minister for Works (in the absence of the Premier): Having regard to the statement made by the Premier, and published in the Press to-day, and to the fact that nothing has appeared in the "Government Gazette" altering the order of precedence of Ministers, will he inform the House who is now the second senior Minister of the Cabinet?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: It is a funny question to ask; I do not know whether I am in a position to say. I believe I am, but I do not know. I probably shall know shortly.

Hon. M. F. Troy: And great will be the fall thereof.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not know about that.

BILL—WYALCATCHEM-MOUNT MARSHALL RAILWAY (EXTENSION No. 2).

Second reading.

Debate resumed from the 29th August.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin) [4.35]: I know something about the district through which this proposed seven-mile extension will pass. Under ordinary circumstances, if the Government were doing their duty with regard to the construction of railways authorised since 1914—

The Minister for Works: The Government always do their duty.

Mr. JOHNSTON: If the Government were doing their duty, I might have assisted to pass this Bill, believing that the district is a good one. I have always supported the construction of agricultural railways, but the attitude of the Government recently towards railway authorisations and construction is such that I do not propose to give them any more power to build railways without very careful consideration and scrutiny. The other evening I referred at some length to the breach of faith committed by the Government in connection with the Narrogin-Dwarda railway. We all know how, after having spent £3,000 on the survey and clearing, they suddenly decided to stop the work.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! That matter is still before the House.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Yes, but if we give the Government power to build this line, I wish to know whether they intend to deal with it in a similar manner. If we pass this measure, do they intend to waste another £3,000 of the people's money by starting its construction and then holding up the work with a view to making further inquiry as to whether the advice of so many professional officers is correct?

The Minister for Works: On a point of order, is the hon. member in order in referring to a motion which is still on the Notice Paper, and on which he spoke recently?

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not discussing that railway; he is just making some remarks leading up to this debate. I have already directed his attention to the fact that the railway referred to is still under consideration.

The Minister for Works: Shall I be in order when my turn comes in saying something in reply to the outrageous statements which the hon. member has already made?

Mr. SPEAKER: I shall be able to tell the hon. member when the time comes.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I want to know from the Minister, when he replies, whether, if the House gives authority to build this seven miles of railway, the Government intend to build it on the surveyed and authorised route, or whether they intend to act as they have done in connection with the Narrogin-Dwarda line. Is it intended to spend £3,000 on the survey and clearing and then to hold up this work on the plea that an investigation is required as to whether the authorised route should be

followed or not? It seems to me that the district from Bencubbin to Mukinbuden and along the route of the proposed extension has already been very much favoured. I have before me the "Hansard" reports of the debate on the Wyalcatchem-Mount Marshall Railway Extension Bill in 1919. On that occasion the member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) and I were greatly concerned as to the intentions of the Government.

The Minister for Works: It could be said of you, "O thou of little faith."

Mr. JOHNSTON: I have no faith in the Minister so far as the construction of any railway is concerned, and I shall be very careful before I vote to give him authority to construct this line.

Hon. M. F. Troy: Do you mean the Lake Clifton line?

Mr. JOHNSTON: No, that line has been built and purchased without Parliamentary approval. If the Government get authority to build this line, they will build it, and railways authorised in 1914 for the Esperance and Narrogin-Dwarda districts will not be built at all.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Has it been put before your executive?

The Minister for Works: It is very ungenerous for you to say that; besides, it is not true.

Mr. JOHNSTON: When the Wyalcatchem-Mount Marshall Railway Extension Bill was under discussion in 1919, the member for Kanowna said—

There is a thought that passes through my mind, if in authorising the construction of a new railway, we may be jeopardising the work that has been authorised in another part of the State.

To that the Premier replied by way of interjection—

No, that is not so. I have given you my word that it will not do so.

The member for Kanowna continued—

That word is inviolable. I trust the word of the Premier implicitly in a matter of this kind.

This railway, which it is now desired to extend, was only authorised in December, 1919, and it has been built. The railway is open for traffic, and the Government now desire to extend the line from Bencubbin and Mukinbuden for a further seven miles. Yet the Esperance railway, the Dwarda-Narrogin railway, and the Nyabing-Pingrup railway, have not been constructed.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member can refer to other railways authorised without mentioning particular lines.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Important parts of the State having large settlements, which have been waiting for railway communication since 1914, have not yet been catered for, and their progress is proceeding at the slowest possible rate despite Acts authorising their construction.

The Minister for Works: You are not justified in saying that.

Mr. JOHNSTON: On the same evening that the member for Kanowna received that assurance from the Premier, I said—

I am pleased that the construction of this railway has been authorised and I hope it is the intention of the Government to give priority in connection with future constructions to authorised lines, such as the Narrogin-Dwarda, which has been promised for over five years.

On that occasion, Mr. Speaker, you permitted me to make that reference to the Narrogin-Dwarda railway while I was speaking on the Wyalcatchem-Bencubbin extension to Mukinbuden. Before I made those remarks the Premier had given this assurance—

Many soldiers want to go on the land, and I am asking the House to agree to this because I desire to let these men know that the House has agreed to the line going there in due course.

I do not know what "in due course" meant, but I believed it meant in the order of precedence. Yet we find that the line from Bencubbin to Mukinbuden has been built and that the Government now desire to extend it for seven miles beyond Mukinbuden. It has not been built in order of precedence, but its construction has been rushed with unseemly haste, while older settlements, which were promised railways before the war broke out, have been unable to get the promises carried into effect.

The Minister for Works: You are like the little boy "If I cannot have my cake, you shall not eat any."

Mr. JOHNSTON: I am not going to remain silent while the Minister builds a railway to Lake Clifton without approval, and refuses to build these lines which have been authorised by Parliament.

Mr. Hickmott: You must have fallen out with our beloved Minister for Works.

The Minister for Works: I am not beloved now.

Mr. JOHNSTON: We are in this unfortunate position, that in the dry areas, into part of which it is desired to extend this railway for seven miles, the season is not a good one. I regret that a part of this State is having a dry season this year. The Government had better leave new railway proposals in those localities alone for the present, and confine their energies and concentrate their efforts upon the construction of railways in those well watered and bountiful parts of Western Australia which to-day are blossoming like gardens. We should not trust the Government or the Minister for Works with power to construct any new railways until the programme that was favoured by the railway advisory board and by the highest professional and engineering authorities in the service of the State as far back as 1914, is carried out. Those are the railways the Government ought to build. If we authorise this line, after £2,000 or £3,000 has been spent upon it, I fear the Government may find some opportune time for holding a fresh inquiry with regard to its route. We

must be careful in this matter. We must also ask the Government to be certain that the route is the best possible one before we give them any power to construct the line. We have on the Table of the House a report of the advisory board, but there is no plan attached to it.

The Minister for Works: I have the plan here and took it from the Table.

Mr. JOHNSTON: That plan was here weeks ago. When the Bill was introduced the other day I asked for the report of the advisory board in order that I might compare the route recommended by it with the plan put forward by the Minister for Works. The Government then bring down the report of the advisory board which speaks of a plan, but the plan that is supposed to be attached to it is not here. No member, therefore, is in a position to say whether this railway is being constructed along the route recommended by the advisory board, or otherwise. They have recommended the full extension from Bencubbin to Merredin, but whether this seven miles is part of that or not, it is impossible for us to say.

The Minister for Works: I told you in my speech it was part of it.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I cannot remember everything the Minister for Works says. When we get a report from the advisory board referring to a plan, we are entitled to have that plan laid on the Table of the House with the report. It is characteristic of the slipshod methods of the Government in respect to railway construction proposals that this plan should have been omitted from the report to which it refers.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Are they building the line without authority?

Mr. JOHNSTON: I would not be surprised if that were so. There seems to be a great desire on the part of the Government to build this particular line, although they refused to build those which were authorised as far back as 1914.

The Minister for Works: It will serve a number of settlers.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I suppose the Minister for Works is asking for authority to build a railway with a view to building it. In July last he wrote to a local governing body in another part of the State regarding the Narrogin-Dwarda railway, saying—

You can rely upon it that the work will be pushed on with as much speed as circumstances will allow.

The Minister for Works: So it was.

Mr. JOHNSTON: The letter continues—The difficulty is the procuring of rails, but I am sanguine that we will be able to get our supplies within a reasonable time, and we are proceeding with the clearing and earthworks in advance, which you may perhaps regard as a guarantee of good faith. (Sgd.) W. J. George, Minister for Works and Trading Concerns.

A month after the Minister asked these people to accept this as a guarantee of good faith in him and in the Government, he stopped the whole of the work then in pro-

gress. I am not disposed to approve of this railway being built unless I have some assurance that the promises of good faith made by the Government are going to be carried out better in the future than the promise of the 26th July last.

The Minister for Works: Is that not verging on blackmail?

Mr. JOHNSTON: No. I want to know the policy of the Government in regard to railway construction, and why the Esperance railway, authorised in 1914, has not been built, as promised by the Government when they introduced this Bill in 1914, and as instructed by Parliament. This House has laid down the order of precedence in which new railways shall be built, and the Esperance line was placed first. That railway has not been built, and yet the Government are introducing a measure for a new railway which, if they have their way, will be built without any delay at all. I hope the Bill will be withdrawn for the present.

The Minister for Works: It will not be withdrawn.

Mr. JOHNSTON: The Government should not go on with it, and the House should not give them power to do so, until they know what is being done in regard to previously authorised railways. If the Bill is brought forward again after the Narrogin-Dwarda railway and others that were authorised in 1914 have been built or are in hand, I shall be pleased to give the measure my full and hearty support.

Mr. PIESSE (Toodyay) [4.52]: I am astonished at the remarks of the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Johnston). This extension will serve a large settlement of returned soldiers, many of whom are struggling under adverse conditions. Their land is very rich, far richer than that which would be served by the Narrogin-Dwarda line. For every bag of wheat that is likely to come from the Narrogin-Dwarda district 100 or even more bags are likely to come from the Lake Brown country. I hope the House will support this Bill. The hon. member has never visited the district.

Mr. Johnston: I have seen some of it.

Mr. PIESSE: His interest ends at Bencubbin. No doubt a few more hotels will be built if that extension is made.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Why should this railway be built before others?

Mr. PIESSE: The settlers there are farming in a larger way than are those in the Narrogin-Dwarda district. They have no facilities in the way of roads or water supplies such as the other settlers I speak of enjoy, and yet they are developing a large section of agricultural lands. This extension will place them on a better footing than they are on at present. It is a mere trifle compared with the railway mentioned by the member for Williams-Narrogin. All authorised railways, particularly those in the agricultural districts, are justified.

The Minister for Works: Are you satisfied with the route?

Mr. PIESSE: I am not here to condemn the Narragün-Dwarda railway route, but from the report of the member for Pingelly (Mr. Hickmott) I should say that the route is a satisfactory one. The advisory board has reported that there is justification for the alteration of the route.

Mr. Johnston: They did not inspect the other route.

Mr. PIESSE: This particular extension is justified in the interests of settlers who are struggling along there at the present day.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [4.55]: Ever since I became a member of the House I have supported the construction of every line that has been brought forward. This innocent looking Bill, however, introduced for the purpose of extending a railway for a short distance, opens up a question of far greater importance than that of railway construction. When the Bill for the construction of the Wyalkatchem-Beneubbine line was before the House, the Premier gave a definite pledge, in response to the remarks of the member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker), that the passing of the Bill would not in any way affect the construction of the Esperance line. This will be seen from "Hansard" of the 6th December, 1919. Later on, the Premier in speaking to the Bill emphasised and confirmed the promise he had made by interjection. As far back as 1914 a definite pledge was given to Parliament that authorised railways would be constructed in the order in which the Bills were passed through Parliament. That pledge was confirmed by a specific resolution of the House on the motion of the member for Kanowna during the 1917-18 session. While some hundreds of miles of railway have been authorised by Parliament over periods extending back to 1914, we find to-day that the line last authorised, namely in December 1919, has been given precedence over all other railways. Have we arrived at the stage in the government of the country when members, because of past experience with Ministers, are forced to decline to accept the pledged word of any Minister no matter under what circumstances it may be given? We have had a debate ranging round the question of the deliberate breach of the pledged word of a Minister, and last year we dealt with the question of the unauthorised purchase of a railway. To-day we are coolly asked to authorise the extension of a line which has been constructed and completed in absolute defiance of the pledge given by the Premier. I shall not vote for the authorisation of the construction of any railway, I do not care whether it is to serve 50 or 5,000 settlers, until faith has been kept with Parliament and the pledges given in past years are carried out. It is humiliating to the House. If members are

expected to sit down and listen to the solemn pledges given by Ministers, after unanimously carrying a motion laying down the order of precedence in the matter of railway construction, and later on silently witness the construction of railways which ignore and flout the decision of Parliament and treat the pledges of Ministers as mere scraps of paper, then Parliament has become nothing but a joke. We had better shut Parliament up altogether and hand over to the Executive not only the power of administration but also the right to legislate. I do not know what this line has cost—probably £120,000 or £130,000 for about 30 miles. The railway was authorised in the concluding days of the session of 1919, and to-day we find it a complete and going concern. We are now asked to extend it another seven miles, whilst all the railways passed in 1914, and since, have not been even commenced.

Mr. Piesse: This line is completed, and has hauled a large quantity of grain.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No doubt. And so would the Esperance railway have hauled a very large quantity of grain had the opportunity been granted during the past six or seven years by Government.

Mr. Piesse: You did not oppose the building of this line.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No. If the hon. member reads my speech on it—I have not looked it up, but I recollect it perfectly—he will find that I protested against Parliament passing Bills which might tend to mislead the persons interested. I pointed out that under the decision which already stood on the records of the House, this line could not be constructed until all the lines previously authorised had been built. I said that, in view of the resolution in question, we were misleading the people concerned, because, although we were passing the Bill, it would not be possible to construct the line for many years. I said that believing, of course, that the decision of the House would be respected. It is playing with the House for Ministers to give pledges and to accept resolutions, and then immediately to ignore resolutions and pledges and proceed with the construction of some other railway. Where do members stand?

The Minister for Works: We stand all right.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not believe for a moment that the Minister for Works is responsible for the construction of this line. I know him to have a greater regard for his pledges. It is all very well to say that rails were available, could be conveniently obtained from the section between Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie.

The Minister for Works: The Esperance line was started.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is a subterfuge which places the Government even in a worse light. Ministers seek to get behind their pledges by merely sending out half a dozen men to commence the earthworks of some railway. Ministers claim that thereby they are obeying the instruction of Parliament. Then, immediately afterwards, they close

down the construction of the line, withdraw the men, and proceed to build some other railway authorised years after the one abandoned.

The Minister for Works: That is not the course we adopted.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is what has been done. Apart from the Esperance railway, this particular work was started before any attempt had been made to construct the Margaret River railway, the Dwarda-Narrogin railway, or the Nyabing-Pingrup line. We have the concrete fact that already a large quantity of wheat has been hauled over this railway, against the position that all the other railways are in the same condition as six or eight or ten years ago.

Hon. M. F. Troy: What was the reason given for building this railway first?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not know. The only reason that I heard the Minister give in moving the second reading of the Bill was that the rails were conveniently available from the Coolgardie-Kalgoorlie section. Being handy, they were taken down to the site of this work. It was just as handy, almost, to take them down to Esperance.

The Minister for Works: Oh, no!

Hon. P. COLLIER: Even so, to give as a reason for the abandonment of a pledge the fact that rails were located at some point nearer to a recently authorised line than to a line authorised long ago, which is a mere trifling thing in itself—

The Minister for Works: Our measures had been taken with regard to the Esperance railway, and the work was going on all the time, and is going on now. We shall presently have to ask Parliament for an extension of eight or ten miles in connection with the Esperance railway.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Esperance railway was authorised away back in 1915, and the Government are still going on with it. Not one pound weight of rails has yet been laid on that line.

The Minister for Works: That will start in January.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Minister for Works has managed not only to go on with, but to complete, this other railway which was authorised in 1918.

The Minister for Works: Plate-laying will start on the Esperance line in January, unless the ships get sunk.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is useless for the Minister to expect the House to be satisfied with a statement of that kind. What was the reason for such haste regarding the construction of this particular line?

The Minister for Works: The fact that there was a large quantity of wheat to be moved, and we wanted to help the farmers settled on those lands to get their wheat to market without being put to extra and unnecessary expense.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Does the Minister ask us to believe that there are no settlers adjacent to the routes of those other lines which have been authorised for years? We must accept the position that when those lines

were authorised by Parliament they were justified, and that there were people already on the spot and requiring railway communication six and seven and eight years ago. Those people have had to wait all this time, while special consideration has been extended in this particular case. I shall vote against the Bill, although it is only for an extension of seven miles, and although I am just as keenly anxious as any other member of the Chamber to see settlers furnished with railway communication. I consider it an affront to the House to bring down this Bill, having regard to all the circumstances. The Minister for Works is the last man I would have expected to do such a thing. No matter how justifiable the extension may be, I shall vote against it; and I hope the House will register a decision against this Bill in order to bring home to Ministers that they are not at liberty to treat members as a pack of children, that they cannot ignore resolutions arrived at after due consideration and deliberation in years gone by, and that when a pledge is given by Ministers the House expects the pledge to be observed.

Mr. LATHAM (York) [5.11]: It is not the intention of the Country Party as a whole to oppose any legislation which will mean the opening up of the interior of this vast State of ours. I personally agree that a great deal of consideration should be given to a measure like this, particularly in view of the fact that several railways authorised by Parliament are now and have for some time been awaiting construction. Repeated attempts have been made to obtain from the Minister for Works a statement when these railways are likely to be started, but so far it has been impossible to get any information at all from the hon. gentleman.

The Minister for Works: I could not give you what I did not possess.

Mr. LATHAM: The Minister should have recognised the necessity for the additional seven miles of line in this particular instance when the work was in hand.

The Minister for Works: I suppose you know that I have not anything to do with the route of the railway.

Mr. LATHAM: The hon. gentleman was then Minister in charge of the department now asking for this authorisation. While I shall not oppose the Bill, I consider that before it goes through the second reading, the Minister should make a definite announcement as to when we may expect the construction of the railways which were authorised in 1915.

Hon. P. Collier: What is the good of definite announcements?

Mr. Johnston: We have had a few already.

Mr. LATHAM: Perhaps I may treat the Minister with a little more consideration than the Leader of the Opposition does.

Hon. P. Collier: But you know we have had these definite announcements in the past.

Mr. LATHAM: I think it is not too late to bring home to the Minister the error of his ways.

Hon. P. Collier: You think the sinner comes to repentance?

Mr. LATHAM: No doubt there is some ground for that view. I sincerely hope the Minister will make the announcement I ask for. It does not matter by what Government those earlier railways were proposed; the authorisations made by Parliament must be respected. In other parts of the State there are settlers in a far more unfortunate position by reason of want of railway communication than the settlers in the area to which this Bill refers.

Hon. P. Collier: What about Narembeen?

Mr. LATHAM: Yes, where people have carted their wheat for ten solid years over 22 miles of very bad roads. We have a similar condition of things in many parts of the State, and we should demand justice for those parts.

Mr. J. H. Smith: In some districts the settlers have to cart their produce 50 miles.

Mr. LATHAM: Consideration will have to be given to some gigantic schemes of railway construction. Perhaps I am influenced in supporting this Bill by the circumstance that a considerable sum of money will be saved to the Government by constructing this seven miles while the plant is on the spot. But surely to goodness we are not going to pick out the choice parts of the State for the purpose of spending public money on them.

Hon. P. Collier: We have a right to ask for the carrying out of past railway authorisations.

Mr. LATHAM: Quite so. I hope the Minister will realise that the House has that right. I hope he will announce to-day when it is proposed to start the construction of those other railways. Just fancy! The line was authorised seven years ago. People have been on the land for 10 or 12 years waiting for the line. They have been producing just as much wheat as has been produced along the route of the proposed Wyalkatchem extension. This sort of thing causes people in the country districts to be discontented. We have a perfect right to do something for them. To-day we are asked to settle people under the Premier's immigration scheme. Are we to get people to assist us, knowing that promises made year after year are not carried out?

The Minister for Works: I do not think the people would be so unreasonable. They know that there has been a war and that we were not able to get the money to build the lines.

Mr. LATHAM: Yet people realise that, when inclined, the Minister can bring forward a Bill to construct a line years after their Bill has gone through.

Mr. Piesse: This is only a small line.

Mr. LATHAM: That is so, and I agree that it will save the State a little money. It is the principle that I object to. We have an Act authorising work in 1919, which was four years after the authorisation of the railways I refer to. Now we are

asked for an additional authorisation for a further seven miles and perhaps still another 15 or 20 miles will be requested later on. The country warrants the construction of the line. I believe it would be in the best interests of the State if the line were constructed. I want the Minister for Works to make a statement as to when he proposes to construct lines authorised as far back as 1915.

Hon. T. WALKER (Kanowna) [5.17]: It seems to me that the member for York (Mr. Latham) considers that after the utterance of the fiat to the Minister, that completes the whole concern. We have had promises, definite statements and assurances—and even resolutions passed by this Chamber—time and again, not by one Minister, but by every Minister sitting on the Treasury bench in respect to some line.

Hon. P. Collier: We have lost faith in them all.

Hon. T. WALKER: What is the good of asking the Minister for Works to make a statement as to when a certain line will be started? It is only adding to our fault and it is only a disgrace to us that we still show our faith in promises broken again and again. There is a line in this State that has been started—

The Minister for Works: Stopped and started again.

Hon. T. WALKER: —and deliberately stopped. There was a promise that the construction of the line would be resumed immediately a report was received verifying the justice of the work. The report came along, showing the Minister's action to be false and dangerous to the community and yet that line is not commenced. Then we have a line started within a very short time indeed. Months come and months go and we have a glorious harvest of broken promises, nothing more. If the promises of the Government were smashed up, the pieces would fill truck loads and sink the biggest steamer that ever crossed the Atlantic. They have broken promises time after time. Still, we have the innocence of the deputy leader of the Country Party prompting him to say: "Please tell us you will do it, and we will be satisfied." It is becoming a by-word amongst the public generally that they cannot trust politicians, and Ministers above all.

The Minister for Works: I found that my banker trusted me to-day, anyhow.

Hon. T. WALKER: It is like Wragge's weather forecasts; we can be sure the weather promised will not be experienced. I yield to no one in the desire to see Western Australia provided with the necessary facilities of transport. I am aware that no country can advance without the iron canal, so to speak. Unless we have the means of getting to the markets rapidly, enabling the production from the soil that has to be cultivated to be disposed of quickly, we cannot go ahead. It

has been the policy of every country that has advanced, to first build railways. That was the policy for the development of Egypt and of Canada. The United States of America owes her progress to the multiplicity and excellence of her railway communications. Western Australia, to follow along those lines, must have railway communication; at any cost, this is absolutely necessary. The mere price of railway construction should not keep that progress back for long because the cost to the country of the absence of those facilities is enormously greater than the temporary expenditure of capital involved in construction. I intend to stand by my guns and make Parliament too, stand by its guns. It has given definite instructions to Ministers. On the 27th February, 1918, a resolution was carried to the effect that the first railway to be constructed should be the Esperance-Northward line. The member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Johnston) moved an amendment definitely declaring that the railways should be constructed in the order of authorisation. That, however, was defeated and the original question was carried by 27 votes to 15. Later a member of the primary producers' organisation in this Chamber—the Country Party—tried to have that resolution rescinded and a division was called. There was no division as the House could not divide; the mover of the motion was the only member who voted for it. The whole House ratified the resolution a second time. In spite of that, Ministers have constructed lines without any authorisation whatever, and without taking this House into their confidence. We have built and paid for railways without any authorisation of this Chamber. In face of this, the member for York, in his innocence, says that he will vote for the Bill but that members should demand a statement from the Minister for Works. What is the value of such a statement or promise?

Mr. Latham: We can throw the Bill out on the second reading if he does not do so.

Hon. T. WALKER: It is not a matter for the Minister; surely it is one for the House. We should say to the Minister, "You shall build no more lines until you fulfil your promises and until your pledges materialise."

Mr. Harrison: Irrespective of whether other parts of the State need railways more?

Hon. T. WALKER: What does Solon say?

Mr. Harrison: You heard what I said.

Hon. T. WALKER: Quite so; all things in order. Regarding all things one undertakes, one thing done and that done well is good for that side of the House.

Mr. O'Loughlen: They should keep their contracts.

Hon. T. WALKER: Surely it is honourable to fulfil one's contracts. It is a most important thing that this should be done.

Mr. Harrison: When it is a matter of serving the people?

Hon. T. WALKER: That is the point. It is serving the people. These lines I refer to are not toys; they represent services—

Mr. Harrison: Wherever they are more greatly needed.

Hon. T. WALKER: That is so. Promises have been made for 20 years regarding a certain line. Land was parted with; public buildings were erected; settlers were taken there—some have been ruined in consequence—all on the strength of those promises; yet they have been absolutely and deliberately ignored. Surely it is time we took Ministers to task. There is a lack of spirit in our public life that we cannot make Ministers respect this Chamber. Something has departed. To-day we are a dead and lifeless body as much to blame as Ministers themselves, because time and again this offence has been repeated and yet we can still be satisfied. In effect members say: "Tell us, if you please," and it is done. I contend they should do nothing more until the Government have carried out what they have undertaken; they should fulfil their contracts before we give them permission to construct any more lines. Surely that is sound morality!

Mr. Latham: It should not be necessary to do that with Ministers of the Crown. Surely their word should be their bond.

Hon. T. WALKER: Does not the hon. member know that, although it should be, it is not. That has been the principle upon which Parliamentary government has rested. There was the time when a Minister's assurance was the strongest evidence of honour. His honour, as well as his position on the Treasury benches, were at stake. A Minister realised that he pledged his right to sit on the Treasury bench every time he pledged himself to the House.

Mr. Harrison: This question means capital expenditure.

Hon. T. WALKER: Where?

Mr. Harrison: Do not the receipts count?

Hon. T. WALKER: I do not know what the hon. member means.

Mr. Harrison: You do not want to.

Hon. T. WALKER: Don't say that! Don't be a child!

Mr. Harrison: I am not.

Hon. T. WALKER: Well stand up to it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. T. WALKER: Our public life should be such that we can trust Ministers and the inviolate honour of Ministers. In days gone by the Minister who could not carry out his promises, even though through no fault of his own, retired. He would not stick to the post. But it is not so now. It should be, as the Deputy Leader of the Country Party says, but it is not so. Therefore, I say, although this line and the other lines awaiting construction may be needed, I shall give my vote to the encouragement of no contract until I see some evidence of faith in respect of contracts already entered into.

Mr. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [5.30]: Reference has been made to the motion successfully moved by the member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) some years ago prescribing that all railways be built in the order of their authorisation. I spoke emphatically against that motion, and so I am in no way pledged by it.

Hon. T. Walker: But Ministers are.

Mr. ANGELO: On that occasion I pointed out what an absurd motion it was, that at any time a new goldfield might be discovered, or some rich agricultural district requiring rapid development come into the limelight, and that, whether agricultural or goldfield, its development would be hampered by the motion carried in this House that all railways be built in the order of their authorisation.

Hon. P. Collier: But although you opposed it, the motion was carried, and so became a resolution of the House.

Mr. ANGELO: It was nothing more nor less than a pious resolution. Could you ask Cabinet Ministers to delay the building of a railway if suddenly another Golden Mile were to be discovered? The Government have obtained a loan of six millions of cheap money and with it are going to develop the South-West. Many railways not yet authorised will have to be built down there, railways probably of greater urgency than are those already authorised.

Mr. Johnston: Is that what it is coming to?

Mr. ANGELO: I do not say the railways already authorised should not be speedily pushed on with, but I hold that when urgent necessity arises, a mere resolution of the House should not bind Cabinet. Three years ago the Government arranged a trip to the eastern wheat belt. I was one of the few fortunate enough to visit Lake Brown and the surrounding district. There we saw some of the finest land and most prolific crops observed on the whole of the tour. Lake Brown is to be the terminus of this proposed extension.

Hon. P. Collier: Nobody says they ought not to have a railway. The point is that others ought to have had a railway years ago.

Mr. ANGELO: I agree, but I am not going to let my vote be governed by an absurd resolution that railways shall be built in the order of their authorisation, notwithstanding that more important railways might be required.

Hon. T. Walker: Did you say you spoke to that motion?

Mr. ANGELO: I did.

Hon. T. Walker: Your name does not appear in the "Hansard" report of the debate.

Mr. ANGELO: If it was not on that motion, it was on a subsequent motion moved to rescind the earlier one. It has been pointed out that the plant is already on the spot. If it is to be shifted away, and returned to the place later, it will mean a big unnecessary expenditure. The Minister tells us the rails are available from the line being taken up in the Coolgardie district. Also I understand that almost all the 50 or 60 settlers around Lake Brown are returned soldiers.

Hon. P. Collier: There are just as many returned soldiers in other districts requiring railways.

Mr. ANGELO: But the 50 or 60 at Lake Brown were specially induced to go there

because of the richness of the soil and the desire of the Government to extend wheat production. Moreover, promises were made that they should have better facilities for getting to market. That country is not adapted to road making, and at present it is almost impossible for the settlers to reach their market.

Hon. P. Collier: Other people have been awaiting such facilities for years.

Mr. ANGELO: The Minister has not said that he will not build the other authorised railways; but these rails happen to be handy, the plant is on the spot, and if we are to look at it economically, now is the time for the proposed extension.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [5.37]: This Government will go down to history as the Government of broken pledges. I am astounded at the apathy of the party behind them and at their arguments designed to cover up the trail of broken promises. My electorate has been promised a railway for many years. That railway is most urgently needed. Enormous settlement has taken place down there, and the settlers are without railways and practically without roads, notwithstanding which nothing is heard of pushing on with that railway.

Hon. P. Collier: The member for Gascoyne says there are 50 settlers to be served by the proposed new line. In your district there are more like 300 settlers waiting for a railway.

Mr. PICKERING: Yes, there are 20 groups of them already. The railway should have been constructed long ago. In 1914 certain railways were authorised. Subsequently it was decided by resolution of the House that they should be built in the order of their authorisation. Despite what has been said by the member for Gascoyne, that motion was agreed to by a majority of the House, and was afterwards confirmed by the defeat of a motion to rescind the resolution.

The Minister for Agriculture: I cannot follow your argument.

Mr. PICKERING: I am not anxious that you should.

The Minister for Works: Didn't you quarrel with the route of the railway in your electorate?

Mr. PICKERING: Yes, up to a stage where it was useless to quarrel further. Since then I have been anxious to see the railway built.

The Minister for Agriculture: You would not build a railway until a district was producing.

Mr. PICKERING: I do not know how we are to cater for group settlement in the South-West without a railway. Settlers there are experiencing the greatest difficulty in obtaining necessities of life. I had a letter from a man in one of the group settlements who tells me that the wives and children of the settlers are without sufficient bedding and clothing. For lack of communication they cannot get necessities.

The Minister for Agriculture: Do you say they are unable to get necessities?

Mr. PICKERING: I say I have a letter conveying that statement.

The Minister for Agriculture: And you believe all you hear?

Mr. PICKERING: I am just as much entitled to believe those people as I am to believe the Minister.

The Minister for Agriculture: You went down to address an indignation meeting at Busselton in this connection.

Mr. PICKERING: That is untrue. Moreover, it is offensive, and I should like it withdrawn.

Mr. SPEAKER: If it is offensive to the hon. member, the Minister must withdraw it.

The Minister for Agriculture: I do not regard it as being offensive.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member concerned is the judge of that, and he says it is offensive. Therefore the Minister must withdraw the statement.

The Minister for Agriculture: If the hon. member takes offence at it, I will withdraw it.

Mr. PICKERING: I am not very much concerned at the attitude of the Minister, but I am concerned about the question before the House. I have repeatedly applied to have the line in my electorate pushed on with, and the unvarying excuse has been scarcity of rails. Yet a railway of 23 miles has been constructed in the interim, and now we are asked for authorisation for another seven miles.

The Minister for Works: Your electors would not stand up to your statements.

Mr. PICKERING: My electors are only too anxious to see the line built, and the Government's promise fulfilled. Since the railway of 1919 was authorised we have given authorisation to the Piawaning-Northward railway. In view of the broken Ministerial pledges, what is to prevent that extension being built out of its order of authorisation? The Leader of the Opposition, when speaking on the second reading of the Piawaning railway Bill, said much the same as he had said on the Bill of 1919. Mr. James Gardiner, when Colonial Treasurer, putting up a fight for the railway, said it was not the fulfilment of promises out of order, but the giving of a promise so that the people might know that in due order eventually they would get their line. We have no guarantee that the Piawaning railway will not precede the building of many railways already authorised. I shall be surprised if it is not so. It has been put up as an argument that because the plant is already there, this proposed extension should be built. That plant should never have been there, but should have been on the route of the railways to which priority was promised by the Minister.

Mr. Harrison: On what ground?

Mr. PICKERING: Because the lines authorised were authorised on the ground of expediency. Can the member for Avon claim to be a judge of expediency in relation to the precedence of one line over another?

Hon. P. Collier: If these lines were warranted years ago, surely they are more warranted to-day.

Mr. PICKERING: Much more so, and certainly the warranty in my district and the urgency of the work are beyond doubt. I ask that the railway in my district be built in the order of its authorisation. If this order had been followed, that railway would have been built before the Wyalcatchem-Mt. Marshall extension.

Mr. Johnston: And before the Lake Clifton line was built.

Mr. PICKERING: Yes. What district has not its quota of returned soldiers? Why should one district be held up more than another on this account. Throughout my district there are large numbers of returned soldiers—

Hon. T. Walker: So there are in the Esperance district.

Mr. PICKERING: No one district can claim distinction in this respect. At Busselton members can see evidence of the large numbers of men who went from that particular part of my electorate. Therefore, the argument advanced that because there are returned soldiers in this district, the line should take precedence, is without any basis of value. The definite promises of Ministers and the Acts of Parliament passed should be given effect to. It has been distinctly understood that this is the procedure, but the procedure has been more honoured in the breach than the observance. It is time the House took a definite stand on this question. We should insist upon these promises being kept.

The Minister for Works: Are you sure of your statement?

Mr. PICKERING: If I am wrong, it will be open to the Minister when he replies to put me right. The railway in my district should have been completed before the Mt. Marshall extension. One argument which has been put up every time I have urged the necessity for its construction was that there were no rails. Yet the same 30 miles of rails used in the construction of that line would have been adequate for the construction of the line I have so long advocated for my electorate.

Mr. HARRISON (Avon) [5.47]: We have reached an important stage in the history of Western Australia with regard to the question of capital expenditure. I maintain that capital expenditure should be used where it will produce the greatest good. The greatest benefit to the greatest number and the greatest earning capacity should be considered. The main factors governing our expenditure in this direction should be the area of land to be served by a proposed railway, the number of settlers who will be facilitated by its construction and the return that may be expected from the capital expended.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: If you apply that test, you will kill the railway in your own district.

Mr. HARRISON: I wish to remind members of what was done some time ago. On

the 27th February, 1918—I am quoting from "Hansard" page 609—the member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) moved a motion as follows—

That in the opinion of this House the first railway to be constructed in pursuance of the programme of railway construction authorised by Parliament should be the Esperance northward line.

During the debate an amendment was moved by the member for Williams-Narrogin as follows—

That the following words be added to the motion—'And that all railways should be built in the order of precedence in which they were authorised by Parliament.'

The Minister for Agriculture: That was turned down by 35 votes to 7.

Mr. HARRISON: Yes, the amendment was defeated on those figures.

The Minister for Works: The member for Williams-Narrogin knew that all the time, and yet he persisted in talking as he has done.

Mr. Johnston: I was not referring to that, but to your promises and those of the Premier.

Mr. HARRISON: Subsequently, the motion was put and was carried on a division of 27 to 15. I opposed both the amendment and the motion. I repeat that in incurring capital expenditure at this stage, we should ensure that it will return the best possible results. If the Minister has the material and the men ready to carry this line a few miles further, and if he is satisfied that its extension will be in the best interests of the country, I shall support the second reading.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington—in reply) [5.52]: The member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Johnston), smarting under a fancied injustice and a perverted imagination, with the best of motives so far as his constituents are concerned, has made the motion for the second reading of this Bill a peg on which to hang his views with regard to the Narrogin-Dwarda railway. I hope I shall be permitted to say a word or two with regard to that railway for which the hon. member has so much affection. That line was started under the decision of Cabinet, and every effort was made by the Public Works Department to press on with the work so that we should be ready, on the arrival of rails, to lay the plates.

Mr. Johnston: According to the file it was stopped by the Premier without consulting Cabinet.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Sir James Mitchell is Premier of the State by virtue of the choice of the united party. This gives him absolute power, more power than any Premier has had since the days of the late Lord Forrest. Therefore, I conclude that the Premier acted quite within his rights in requiring further investigation to be made. This was done and, as the file will show, the papers afterwards came to

me. A year before, the advisory board had made a report which I had never seen; nor had any of my officers seen it. On receipt of it, I did what any man in a position of trust should do—I directed the Premier's attention to the file and to the circumstances it disclosed, and asked him for his instructions and decision. His decision was "The line is to be suspended." I am not endeavouring in any way to urge extenuating circumstances or excuses for myself. I take all my responsibilities, always have done and always shall do, and I say to the member for Williams-Narrogin, to this House, and to the people of the State so far as my words can reach them that, in the face of the advisory board's report, had I finched from my duty, I should have been a traitor to the State and false to my oath as a Minister. I was in the district only a few days ago and met a number of old friends, some of whom I have known for 30 years. By them I was asked what all the bother was about and when I explained the circumstances they replied, "That is all right; it is common sense." If I went into the hon. member's constituency and explained to his constituents what I am putting before the House, I undertake to say that even the printed pamphlets of his speech, which he has distributed throughout the district, would fail to evoke any favour from them.

Mr. Johnston: You are welcome to go there and explain. I invite you to do so.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I shall not accompany the hon. member, anyhow.

Mr. Johnston: The Premier, too, should go and explain his broken promises.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The report of the advisory board showed that there was a fertile belt of country—

Mr. SPEAKER: Is the hon. member referring to the Narrogin-Dwarda railway?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I must; I cannot help it.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot give the history of it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Very well, I hope to do so later on.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member will have an opportunity when the question comes before the House again.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The trouble is that the member for Williams-Narrogin mentioned this as a reason why no further power should be given to the Government as desired under this Bill, and why the word of the Minister for Works should be regarded as rotten.

Mr. SPEAKER: I stopped the hon. member from pursuing that line of argument.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I think I should be allowed to refer to it. However, I shall endeavour to get over it in another way. All that has been done is to suspend action. At the present time a Bill is being prepared for submission to the House to show where, in the judgment of those responsible as advisers to the Crown, a

deviation of this line should be made. So far as I can tell at present, the terminus will still be Narrogin. I would have told the hon. member that the other night but, owing to his eagerness, he would not allow me to speak.

Mr. Johnston: You refused to get up and every member here knows it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I did not. If the hon. member has for years regarded me as one worthy of respect, he now appears to consider me beneath his contempt. For all that I feel just as much a man as I did before. Much of what the Leader of the Opposition said I cannot vitiate. I know perfectly well he has not exceeded the bounds of fair criticism and fair political warfare. Whether he was quite as earnest as he would like us to believe is a question on which there might be a little difference of opinion. As to his sincerity, I have no doubt whatever.

Hon. P. Collier: I exonerate you from blame.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I shall still retain the respect of the hon. member. A great deal has been made of the argument about railways being constructed in the order in which they are authorised. I have before me a long list of railways which have been passed, and most of them have been built. With those that have not been built, I shall deal presently. While I agree that the obligations undertaken by a Premier or a Government should be treated with every respect by an incoming Government, I take the stand that if to the incoming Government, apart from political bias or party feeling, there should be revealed circumstances which were unknown before, it is for the incoming Government to consider the position in the light of the best interests of the State, grasping, gripping and holding the full responsibility for their action. As with other Governments with which I have been associated, whenever we have deviated on any of these points, we have always been ready, and we are ready to-day, to take the full responsibility for our actions. We are prepared to explain—I will not say defend—to the House our reasons for doing these things, and it is for the House to judge of the result. If and when in their wisdom a majority of members decide against a Government then they must go out of office. To say that, because of some cast iron resolution passed by this House, when circumstances arise that the dictates of commonsense suggest a reconsideration of the question, it should not be so reconsidered, is an insult to the intelligence of the House, and no member would uphold such a thing. The hon. member spoke about the Government ignoring and flouting members of Parliament. It would be wrong for any Government to ignore the voice of the people as uttered by their representatives here. It would be doubly wrong to purposely and knowingly flout the will of Parliament. Only in circumstances such as I have

indicated would Ministers be justified in reconsidering questions of this nature. If Ministers had failed to do so in the past in connection with matters of importance, they would have laid themselves open to the hostile criticism of members forming His Majesty's Opposition. I have no fear as to Parliament becoming a joke and of members being regarded in the same light. The member for York (Mr. Latham) said he had been unable to obtain information from Ministers. I do not know to what he referred. I claim that every information possible has been given to members and to the House. It is impossible to give information as to the time when a railway will be built when we have not the rails with which to complete a line and see no probability of getting them. New rails have been costing up to £22 15s. per ton, and there would have been a difficulty in getting them even at that price from the Broken Hill Proprietary, Newcastle, New South Wales.

Mr. A. Thomson: Where did you get the rails for this particular line?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: For several months I refrained from ordering any rails. From my experience I felt I was warranted in saying to the Premier there would be a big drop in price. The holding back of orders for seven or eight months has meant a saving to the State of between £70,000 and £80,000, because what I forecasted came about. The Wyalkatchem-Bencubbin extension was built for the purpose of helping settlers in that particular district. To show the justification for the line I would inform the House that we have conveyed 21,000 bags of wheat on that railway already. Had we not constructed that line a considerable quantity of that wheat could not have been carted to the siding, for some of the settlers would have been at least 40 miles away. If this short extension of seven miles is not made many people will have to cart their wheat as far as 21 miles. The member for Katanning (Mr. A. Thomson) has mentioned the people in the Nyabing-Pingrup district. While the hon. member was away in England a deputation from the settlers there waited upon me at Woodanilling. But for the action of the Government the hon. member would not have had as many constituents as he now has owing to the construction of that line. It would have been foolish to have hauled rails from the Coolgardie-Kalgoorlie section to Spencer's Brook and taken them to Nyabing-Pingrup when we could put them into the Mt. Marshall line after conveying them less than half the distance. Ministers are not in office to act the part of fools or children, any more so than would be the case with respect to the member for Katanning. If that hon. member, as a contractor, requires timber, he gets it from the nearest place of delivery, and saves as much railway freight as possible. If I pull up rails and use them indiscriminately without ascertaining what the cost of transit would be to the State, I am not fit to be in office. The member for Avon (Mr. Harrison) has dealt with the "old man of the sea" in connection with the motion to

which the member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) referred. He stated that the amendment moved by the member for Williams-Narrogin on that occasion was given a tremendous whack when it came before the House.

Hon. T. Walker: After I had given an explanation in regard to the motion.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member's motion was then carried placing the Esperance line first in order of precedence. When hon. members are fighting a matter, why can they not be clear? They have tried to create the impression that there has been a lot of chit-chat amongst members, whereas the whole thing is recorded in full in "Hansard."

Hon. W. C. Angwin: A definite promise was made by the Government that the lines would be built in the order in which they were passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for Kanowna has referred to the Esperance railway. This has been an unfortunate work. Its life has been full of vicissitudes. It has been started and stopped, and so on. Some 17 miles of the earthworks were built as well as some bridges, and then the work was discontinued, and could not be started again. We had 10 miles of rails down there, and we now have more than 30 miles of sleepers there. If the 100 miles of rails which are on order from England arrive in time the platelaying will be started in January, or earlier if possible, and then carried through to completion. Within the next week or so I shall be asking the House for a little deviation of the route at the end of the 60 miles, a deviation of five or six miles. Will the hon. member refuse that?

Hon. T. Walker: Where are you going to take it?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We must deviate a matter of five miles in order to get water for the locomotives. Would the House refuse a request of that sort.

Hon. T. Walker: Why not bring down a proposal to connect up with Norseman straight away?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not know why we should do that. Are there any people in Norseman? Within the last three or four months the people of Grass Patch appealed to me for a grant for a hall to enable them to buy one at Norseman and remove it to Grass Patch.

Hon. T. Walker: Norseman connects with Kalgoorlie and the markets there, and Norseman is not dead.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I only know what the hon. member's constituents have said.

Hon. T. Walker: They would not say it was dead.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There are several halls there.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The letter was quite plain. The Nyabing-Pingrup railway has been referred to by the member for Katanning. A promise was given when the Nationalist Government came into office

that the line would be started as soon as possible.

Mr. A. Thomson: The member for North-East Fremantle promised that it would be started after the Lake Grace line.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Government could not find the money. It is due to lack of money that these railways have been kept back.

Mr. A. Thomson: That is no argument.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Busseton-Margaret River railway seems to have tickled the member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering). The clearing of the railway is going on and the yard is being put in. Within the last few days I understand a contract has been let for sleepers, and there is an engineer in charge of the work. The only authorised line that is not going on is that connecting Narembeen with Merredin. I have explained time after time why that line has not been proceeded with.

Mr. Johnston: It is a very important line.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The reason why it has not been gone on with is the report of people whose word the then Premier could take that the land is of a class that is no good for farming and will not grow wheat. It is wodge country. The hon. member wants me to build 50 miles of railway into country that will not grow the stuff railways are supposed to carry.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The hon. member will not agree with that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for Sussex spoke about the Government having broken their promises. I have found that the people of his district are more satisfied with the Government than they are with their member.

Mr. Pickering: You have no right to say that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am speaking of what I know.

Mr. Pickering: I could say the same about your electorate.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Probably so. The hon. member certainly did his best for me a little while ago.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for North-East Fremantle asked what the estimated cost of this extension was. The extension itself is for seven miles, and there is a portion 1¾ miles long yet to be built on the first authorisation. This makes a total of practically nine miles, and the estimated cost according to the Engineer-in-Chief is £28,000. It should hardly be necessary for me to say more about the land to be served than is contained in the report of the advisory board that has been laid on the Table of the House. The general tone of the report is laudatory so far as the country is concerned. The extension will not in any way interfere with the junctioning at Merredin or at Burracoppin, nor, if it should be thought later on necessary to carry it on to junction with the Bullfinch line, will it interfere with that; nor is it likely to make such junctioning more expensive. The question of where the line should

junction will require careful consideration. It is no use bringing down railways to a common centre, as apparently will be done in the case of some lines. It is no use having narrow strips of country for a considerable distance between three or four different lines. We ought to construct our railways so that they will give the greatest convenience to the largest area of land. Where there is an area of land served by one railway and served well, it does not seem a good practice to follow to construct another line parallel with it at a short distance from the other.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: During the tea adjournment I have been reminded that both north and south of the proposed line there is considerable soldier settlement. Quite a number of our boys are there, doing their best to settle down. I am, of course, not oblivious of the fact that there are soldiers settled in all parts of the State, and that, as a matter of strict justice, the soldier settlement should not be put forward as a special reason for this extension.

Mr. Willcock: It should not be an argument one way or the other.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. At the same time, I may draw the attention of hon. members to the fact that there are soldiers in the district.

Mr. SPEAKER: Unless the hon. member is now replying to statements made during the debate, that is rather matter for use in moving the second reading.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: On this blank portion of the map which I hold in my hand, there is what is called Lake Brown; and the configuration of the country, combined with this lake, makes the cartage distance a very heavy one. As I said previously, some 21,000 bags of wheat have been carried over the distance of the extension. It is apparent, therefore, that the district must have great claims to consideration, seeing that men went there as they did, before the railway line was built, before there was even what has to-day been satirically termed a Minister's promise of a railway. The men went there and produced 21,000 bags of wheat, a fact which to my mind carries the conviction that those who have advised the Government regarding the extension are correct in what they have put forward. Another question raised is whether this extension might be a peg in for going another seven miles, and then yet another seven miles, further eastward. Regarding that point I have at present no information to give the House that would be of material value. I understand, however, that full investigations are being made. If those investigations disclose the existence of a belt of reliable wheat-growing country extending to the east, hon. members would not for one moment say that the Government should not propose, at any rate later, to carry the line further east. I would point out, too, that the line of devia-

tion, a mile on either side of the proposed route, is not expected by the engineers, from the sections they have got, to be very much required. However, it is always as well to have a margin, because as construction of the line proceeds there may develop peculiarities in connection with the land, or other circumstances, rendering liberty to deviate desirable. I believe hon. members are in a position to judge, from the remarks I have made, whether or not there are strong reasons justifying the Government in putting forward the Bill. Despite the criticisms which have been uttered, I hope the House will recognise that the Government, in asking for the extension, do so with the fullest regard for the interests of the whole State, and not desiring to do injustice in any shape or form to any other part of the State. I hope hon. members will realise that the Government have introduced this Bill with the desire to assist people, hard-working and big-hearted people, who have gone out to settle on those lands. If we have any right whatever to go in for land settlement as we have done, surely we have a right to take care of and help those whom the representations of various Governments have caused to take up land. If it were possible, I would like to see the Bill for this extension carried unanimously. After the explanations I have been able to give—so far as I know, they are absolutely correct; and there has been no attempt at specious promises—I hope hon. members will see fit to authorise the extension and enable the Government to proceed with the work. We have the men there and the plant there; and, as has been pointed out by a previous speaker, it is almost an absolute necessity in these times to seize the opportunity, if it presents itself, of doing work economically, even if such a course renders one subject to criticism, partly hostile, but all good-natured, such as I have had to accept to-day on behalf of the Government.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	27
Noes	..	..	..	..	14

Majority for 13

Ayes.

Mr. Angelo	Sir James Mitchell
Mr. Brown	Mr. Money
Mr. Carter	Mr. Plesse
Mrs. Cowan	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Davies	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Denton	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Durack	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. George	Mr. J. M. Smith
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. A. Thomson
Mr. Latham	Mr. J. Thomson
Mr. C. C. Maley	Mr. Underwood
Mr. H. K. Maley	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Mann	(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Simons
Mr. Collier	Mr. Walker
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Heron	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Johnston	Mr. O'Loghlen
Mr. Marshall	(Teller.)
Mr. McCallum	

PAIR.

For—Mr. Teesdale | Against—Mr. Clydesdale

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clauses 1, 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Deviation:

Mr. LATHAM: Judging by the map laid on the Table, I doubt whether the scope of the deviation, one mile, will be sufficient. The country to the north-east of the proposed line will be some 18 or 20 miles distant from the railway. Do the Government think the land in the north-east corner of the area will be selected, or do they propose to build another line parallel with this extension?

Mr. Mann: That land is already selected.

Mr. LATHAM: All the more reason why the line should go further north.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 4 to 8, Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

BILL—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the previous day; Mr. Stubbs in the Chair, the Premier in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported on Clause 38, the interpretation clause under Part V., dealing with licenses reduction.

Clauses 38, 39—agreed to.

Clause 40—Licenses Reduction Board:

Mr. MANN: I move an amendment—

That Subclause 1 be struck out with a view to inserting a new subclause.

I propose to move for the inclusion, in lieu of the subclause to be struck out, the one appearing on the Notice Paper which sets out that, for the purposes of this part of the Act, the licensing magistrates appointed under Section 20 (a) shall be constituted and known as the licenses reduction board. If the amendment be successful, I shall move for the deletion of Subclauses 2 and 10 as well. If the board is to be given a reasonable trial, it should be appointed at once and it should not be one that will be merely appointed from time to time as necessary. It

should be the one body in control of the liquor trade. During the second reading debate the Premier stated that the board would be one to be appointed from time to time. The amendment will enable the board to be appointed to the permanent control of the liquor trade. It is thought that by that means better control of the liquor trade will be achieved.

Mr. Underwood: What is the matter with the trade now?

Mr. MANN: There would be better control if there were a permanent board than if it were of a temporary nature, appointed only from time to time.

The PREMIER: I hope the House will not agree to the amendment. I have already told the Committee that the licensing court will be largely the licenses reduction board. I agree that it is better to have one set of magistrates instead of two to deal with the trade. The reduction board must cover the whole State, whereas the licensing court may not cover the whole State. The Bill provides that the court may delegate their powers, for they could not adequately look after the interests of Eucla and Wyndham at the same time as they were looking after the interests of the community in the metropolis. If the amendment be agreed to, and we have one board, that board to be the court, it will be impossible for the court to cover the whole State.

Mr. Underwood: The whole clause is impossible.

The PREMIER: At any rate, it is impossible to have a court to deal with the whole State. There are many things that could not be dealt with, such as renewals and so on.

Mr. Mann: In the case of renewals, if objections were raised by the police, they should be heard by the court.

The PREMIER: The board would deal with reductions and the court would deal with other things. The court might be the board for the purposes of that part of the State between Geraldton and Albany, together with the goldfields, but for other parts of the State that would be quite impossible. Under the Bill it is proposed that districts may be grouped under a licensing court. The convenience of the people concerned would be best consulted if the clause were passed as printed. So far as they can do the work, the board will be the court. No good would be achieved by adopting the amendment, for the provision would then be mandatory, whereas the Bill makes it optional.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They have power to delegate their authority.

The PREMIER: The position will be very awkward if the amendment be carried, particularly in connection with the more remote districts.

Mr. Mann: If the measure is to succeed, the board and the court should comprise the one set of individuals.

The PREMIER: I agree with that, but, in view of what I have pointed out, it will be seen that if the amendment is carried, the Act will not be properly administered regard-

ing the outside districts. For the settled part of the State, the members of the court will be the members of the board.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not think that the difficulty foreshadowed by the Premier will arise, because the power to delegate their duty is contained in Subclause 7 of Clause 7, which we have already agreed to.

Mr. Mann: That was the recommendation of the Commission.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Seeing we have already passed that clause, there will be no difficulty in having this work carried out in the more remote parts of the State. The Committee should lay it down that we must have one court. From many aspects, it is desirable that the control of the liquor trade shall be in the hands of one set of men. The body having the authority and responsibility to reduce licenses should be the same tribunal empowered to grant or transfer licenses. If we set up one body to exercise control over the trade, there will be a uniform policy and it will be impossible for a man who has been refused a license in one part of the State, to go elsewhere and secure one.

Mrs. Cowan: That will be possible under the renewal clause.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is not so. The principle of administering the measure by means of one board is approved by the Premier, whose intention is to appoint the same men as far as possible. The Premier approved of the principle embodied in the amendment but considered that it would not be a workable proposition owing to the great distances over which the board and the court would have to operate. As the board can delegate authority to deal with the more remote parts, that gets over the Premier's objection. It is essential that the policy pursued by those controlling the liquor trade shall be uniform. I know a man who has a license in a goldfields town who was practically drummed out of the trade in Perth. He was refused a license but he went to the goldfields and secured one there. I believe he has two licenses.

Mrs. Cowan: Under the delegatory powers provided, that can be done now.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is not so.

Hon. T. WALKER: We ought to know a little more about the necessity for the board. It is an innovation that may not be congenial to our past legislation and to the existing state of opinion on the problem. We have not heard a word as to its actual necessity.

The Premier: Yes, we have.

Hon. T. WALKER: No, it is a supposition that the provision is in the nature of reform. Is not this a suggestion arising from the trade for the purpose of prolonging the life of the better class of publican?

The Premier: No, I do not think so.

Hon. T. WALKER: Why cannot we deal with this question on the local option vote?

The Premier: Local option has failed.

Hon. T. WALKER: In other parts of the world it has been eminently successful. If the Premier says it has failed where this board exists, that is to say in Victoria, I

reply that they have not had in Victoria local option as it is understood here. Until recently, if it was desired to get the opinion of the people of Victoria, a petition had to be obtained which was signed by one-fifth of the electors on the roll. The petition was then sent to the Minister administering local option, who, if he found it in order, asked himself whether there were available funds for the payment of compensation. If no such funds were available, no further steps were taken. That was their so-called local option.

Mr. McCallum: Was ever a petition presented without a vote being taken?

Hon. T. WALKER: For a long time the fund was in practical bankruptcy. It was all quite different from the system here. Until 1906 licenses in Victoria were granted by the municipalities. Here we have a workable local option scheme that comes, not by petition, but by law and the will of the people. If the Act is administered, the proposed board is not necessary, for we shall have reduction without it. Where, then, is the need for the board? Already we have heard from the Premier that he wants this board to be, in effect, the licensing bench. The amendment is to make it exactly that. What is the object of the board? Merely to, as it were, cut down competitors of an undesirable character in the trade, and to establish on firmer footing the continuing hotels. Under this board we shall have a sort of insurance which will be another kind of vested interest. The publican, if he has a good hotel, will know that he is bound to survive, while if he has a poor one, he will be bought out. An insurance fund is to be created to buy him out. So every man in the trade, whether he be strong or weak, is bound to get something out of the trade. There is not any publican in a good way of business but wants to see reduction, for it lessens competition. When all these steps have been taken, the publicans surviving have been given not merely Government partnership, but a sort of governmental security. It is here where every man who desires to see faith kept with the general public has room for complaint. The 1911 Act declared that in 1921 the question of compensation should cease. Notice was given in lieu of compensation. At the expiration of the period the hotels were open to the will of the people. Now it is not so.

The Premier: They can be closed by the vote of the people.

Hon. T. WALKER: The Premier has taken care that the people shall have no local voice. He has substituted a State voice, and in such a way that it would be almost miraculous to carry an affirmative. It has ignored the assurances given to the general public under the 1911 Act, and has given to the trade a new lease of life. He is creating an insurance fund to make the trade at least endurable to everyone who enters it. If those who enter it do not succeed, they will be bought out, and so he is creating a larger vested interest in the trade. What does vested interest mean in anything but a difficulty to remove it if it be an evil? Such an interest is more respected

than even human life or happiness. What is sunk there is considered inviolate. That is what he is doing, and where is the necessity for it? Are the Government in earnest in their professed desire to let the people have a voice on this question?

The Premier: Of course we are.

Hon. T. WALKER: How can they be if between the people and the Government another government is put, for that is what it means. Outside of this Chamber and outside the will of the people an independent body are to have power either to increase or decrease. They will have more power than this Chamber or the people themselves. The people cannot reduce.

Mr. O'Loughlen: In Kalgoorlie there are 50 hotels which could be wiped out to-morrow.

Hon. T. WALKER: But patience is necessary. It is a matter of education.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What would be the advantage if they were wiped out?

Hon. T. WALKER: Where the principle has been put into vogue, there can be no question of the resultant prosperity to the people. What are the board to do? They are to sniff about for the perfect hotel which the licensing court should be able to do without a reduction board. If the Act were properly administered there could be no mere grog-shop existing. The licensing court and the police are sufficient to hound an evil doer in that respect out of his chance of getting a livelihood. The Act is not administered by the licensing court or the police force. The weakness of the 1911 Act is that it was never administered.

Mr. O'Loughlen: That is not borne out by the evidence.

Hon. T. WALKER: I think it is.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The temperance people paid a tribute to the police.

Hon. T. WALKER: I have unbounded admiration for the zeal, effort, and ability of Inspector O'Halloran. He is a marvellous man who has done a tremendous amount of good in eradicating some of the worst features of this evil. I respect the police. But with all that the Act is not administered on the bench or by the police. They are spasmodic. We can discover a breach of the Act on any Sunday or on any day after the closing hour in almost every part of Perth.

Mr. Mann: Can you see a possibility of better administration under the board?

Hon. T. WALKER: I cannot.

Mr. Mann: Why not?

Hon. T. WALKER: The board will stave off local option from coming into effect. It will give a new life to the trade. That is my great charge against it.

Mr. Mann: That has not been the case in Victoria.

Hon. T. WALKER: It has been. The hon. member knows there has never been local option in Victoria in the sense in which we understand it.

Mr. Mann: What about two years ago?

Hon. T. WALKER: If the proper democratic local option were adopted in Victoria with the reduction board, the chances of suc-

cess would be reduced, because there would be two forces playing at the same thing, the one minimising the effect of the other and neither of them concentrating on the evil. Between the two stools the question of reform would fall to the ground. I would like the Premier to explain why he has suddenly become converted to this method, and why he is deserting the promise given in the Act of 1911 to afford local option at the end of the period.

Mr. Davies: The Committee repealed that last night.

Hon. T. WALKER: But why? Only because of this new Bill.

The PREMIER: I would remind the member for Kanowna that the Acts passed by Parliament are not like the laws of the Medes and Persians—unalterable. We spend most of our time in amending, altering, perfecting, and bringing our laws up to date. The hon. member said the Act of 1911 had never been administered and had done no good. I maintain that it did a power of good.

Hon. T. Walker: I never said that.

The PREMIER: I think the hon. member did. That Act cleaned up the trade wonderfully. The hon. member was in charge of the Act for some years. In Victoria during the 22 years from 1885 to 1907, 217 hotels were closed under local option. Under reduction board control, during the 12 years from 1907 to 1919, 1,282 hotels were closed. The temperance alliance of Victoria agree that the reduction board is a far more effective means than local option of dealing with the trade.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Why go to Victoria?

The PREMIER: I do not know that we need seek better evidence than the evidence of experience, and this is the experience of Victoria. Surely that is ample evidence to support the proposal. It means that the hotels which ought to be closed will be closed. Under local option it is impossible to close hotels in undesirable centres; hotels are closed when the closing means no real benefit to the community and other hotels which ought to be closed are allowed to continue. This is a more commonsense method of dealing with the trade and it is fairer to everyone. It is quite true that we gave, by the Act of 1911, ten years' notice in lieu of compensation. But by this new method hotels can be closed and the board will pay compensation which will come from the trade. Hotels must be closed under this system so long as funds are available. It is a very much better system than the old one. The hon. member has all he had before, if he wants to wipe out the liquor traffic.

Hon. T. Walker: Your State wide poll and your majority absolutely destroy any chances in that direction.

The PREMIER: The hon. member has now two barrels to his gun whereas before he had only a single-barrelled weapon.

Hon. T. Walker: This is nothing but a bluff.

The PREMIER: Not at all. I am anxious for reform, and I want those hotels which are no longer needed to be closed.

Hon. T. Walker: The drink will not go, and that is what I want to bring about.

The PREMIER: If the hon. member desires to wipe out all the sales of liquor he has the opportunity to do so. We have agreed that we may appoint several licensing courts for the State.

Mrs. Cowan: Power should not be placed in the hands of one man to grant renewals.

The PREMIER: A court to deal with an area in the north could have all the power of a court appointed in the south. We have already provided for the grouping of districts, and the control of grouped districts by licensing courts. If the amendment is carried there will be only one court. We cannot send up to Broome or to Derby every time an application is received. Ordinarily, a court would be appointed to deal with licenses from, say, Roebourne northward, but under the amendment the court would be required to sit in Perth to deal with the whole thing. In my opinion the intention set out in Clause 7 would be better than the present proposal.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: What necessity is there for reduction, and what is the matter with our present licensing system?

Mr. Mann: We have too many hotels and some are not suitable.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The licensing benches have done their work well. The administration of the licensing laws must have been reasonably good, or some member would have shown what flagrant breaches had occurred. A reduction board would cost the State about £10,000 a year.

Mr. Mann: About £8,000.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: In Kalgoorlie there are roughly 100 hotels, and if 50 were de-licensed there would still be enough to provide for the requirements of the public.

The Premier: An over-supply.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It is asserted that where there is an excess of hotels there is drunkenness, disorderliness, crime and lunacy. There is, however, no more law abiding town in the Commonwealth than Kalgoorlie, with all its hotels. It is not necessary to tax the people in order to reduce the number of hotels. If there are too many hotels in the one place they will reduce themselves. In Menzies there were 13 hotels. These were reduced to nine, and three of the nine then bought out the other six. There is now only one left. Why should we pay £10,000 a year for a reduction board?

Mr. Mann: You are not going to pay; the trade will pay.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Those who drink tea will not pay. We hope Western Australia will develop, and that the population will greatly increase in the near future. Increased population will mean the necessity for further hotel accommodation, and yet we propose to appoint a reduction board to decrease the number of licenses. Local option has proved a failure. In cases where there were too many hotels the people have voted continuance, and where there were not enough they voted for reduction. The

entire vote of the people of the State, however, was in favour of continuance. That fact does not entitle us to appoint a board whose duty it would be to reduce. The member for Kanowna spoke about what was done in 1911, but the majority of the members here now were not here in 1911. Those who are here now have just as much right to say what shall be done, as we, the great people who were here in 1911. That is why I support the amendment. The present licensing system is inexpensive; and, like the member for Perth, I want to avoid a doubling of boards. Later I shall speak regarding the number of the board. I consider the number should be one, not three. Let some member give a definite reason why there should be reduction, and why there should be the expense of the board at all.

Mr. McCALLUM: By Clause 7 we have affirmed the principle of the licensing board, and by Clause 37 we have repealed the local option provision. The present clause puts the board in place of the local option vote. The question now is, how in districts where reduction is desired it shall be effected. On behalf of the Royal Commission I inquired into the operation of local option in Eastern Australia. My investigations showed me that local option was an absolute failure throughout the Commonwealth in dealing with undesirable hotels. In Victoria the strength of the liquor trade in over-hotel'd districts was too great to permit of the residents obtaining reform by the local option vote. The same thing applies to New South Wales. In Woolloomooloo and Pyrmont I was shown on almost every street corner in dirty little back streets dirty disreputable hovels built in the early days, gathering places for bad characters, and undesirable for any respectable person to go near. Such shanties could not, of course, obtain new licenses nowadays. Woolloomooloo and Pyrmont gave the largest majorities for continuance in New South Wales. The stories of what happens in those districts on voting days show that reform under local option is impossible. The Premier quoted figures for Victoria to the end of 1920, but I wish to point out that up to the 31st December, 1921, the Licenses Reduction Board there had closed 1,437 hotels. Prior to the establishment of the Licenses Reduction Board in 1908, local option had resulted in a net decrease of only 72 hotels during a period of 22 years. In New South Wales polls were taken in 1907, 1910, and 1913, and the total number of hotels closed by local option is 345. In New Zealand a local option poll has been taken at every general election since 1903, with the result that 484 hotels have been closed. Thus there is no doubt as to which system has been most effective. The Victorian board stands out as having done the most effective work in putting the trade on a decent footing. Before the establishment of the Licenses Reduction Board the same position existed in Victoria as in New South Wales. The same

to expect men acting in an honorary capacity, called together occasionally, to deal effectively with a trade that has so many ramifications.

Mr. McALLUM: That is so, to a large extent. We have to go on what is presented to us in court. Even now, we have not the machinery to get information that should be available to us and we have had to send out the police to get it.

Mr. McCALLUM: And I am glad of it. I want the Committee to follow that decision out to its logical conclusion. We should set up the one constituted authority to deal with this question. In Kalgoorlie the trade, the public and everyone interested acknowledged that the number of licenses there could be reduced by 50 per cent. At least half of the hotels there should not be in existence, and, to say the least of it, some of them are not carrying on their business within the law. In some cases, instead of the hotel keeping the licensee the licensee has to work on the mines, leaving his family to conduct the hotel in his absence.

The Premier: The court or the board, do you mean?

Mr. MANN: The member for South Fremantle has dealt with many of the things which I intended to traverse in reply to the arguments against the amendment. In order to emphasise how necessary it is that there should be one board for the whole State, the last local option poll showed that in One, with a population of 1,050, there were 43 licenses or one to every 50 persons.

The Premier: Two bodies in one?

Mr. MANN: At any rate, there was one license for every 50 persons. At Pilbara, there was one license to every 59 persons. It is essential that the one board should travel throughout the State and decide upon the number of licensed houses to be closed, and also which of the hotels should be closed. It is essential that the board members should know the character and personality of those carrying on the trade.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It is to be hoped that they will give decisions different from those of the last reduction board.

Mr. MANN: Those decisions were given by honorary justices. I hope the amendment will be agreed to because under it, more effective work will be done with better administration and better results than is possible otherwise.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I rather favour the views expressed by the member for Pilbara. There has been no general demand for the establishment of a reduction board. The result of the last local option poll would show that the people of Western Australia are not in favour of a reduction in the number of licenses, yet this provision makes it mandatory.

The Premier: Quite right too.

Mr. WILLCOCK: It may be right. We have heard a lot about Kalgoorlie. Why are many of the hotels continuing there? If

closed down, they expect to get compensation from the people throughout the whole State.

The Premier: They will not get much compensation there.

Mr. WILLCOCK: They may not get much compensation, but the people of the whole State should not pay for the closing down of those hotels.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Only the drinkers will pay.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Why should the people in the metropolitan area, in Geraldton or other parts of Western Australia pay compensation to people in the Kalgoorlie area? For the first two or three years, all the money in the compensation fund will be spent in that particular area.

Mr. O'Loughlen: I do not think so.

Mr. WILLCOCK: Why, then, has the number of licenses in that area been given such prominence?

Mr. O'Loughlen: Because the position there is so glaring.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The indications are that the reduction board may concentrate in that particular area. I would favour the State being divided into a number of districts for these purposes. If one hotel is closed in a particular district, it enhances the value of the remaining hotels there. The publicans of the metropolitan area have no interest in the closing of a hotel on the goldfields. As a matter of fact, taking the vote for the whole State at the last local option poll, there was a majority of about 2,000 in favour of continuing the present conditions.

Mr. O'Loughlen: That is only a small majority for the whole State.

Mr. WILLCOCK: But that majority emphasises that there has been no clear expression of opinion in favour of reduction. Power should be vested in the existing licensing authorities to close up hotels where warranted. It is clear that there are too many hotels in Kalgoorlie and why should not the licensing court close them down now?

Mr. McCallum: Why do they keep open?

Mr. WILLCOCK: For various reasons.

Mr. Mann: Hoping for better times.

Mr. WILLCOCK: In some instances on the goldfields, the licensees continue in the hope that a new gold field may be discovered. So long as they retain their licenses, they realise that there is, comparatively speaking, no difficulty in securing a transfer to the district where the new find is made. In one place there is a population of one who is the licensee and he has conducted his hotel there for many years. This board will last only six years, but during that period it is estimated that £22,000 per annum will be paid into the compensation fund. I am not in favour of its being mandatory on the Licenses Reduction Board to close hotels to the extent of the amount in the fund. Under such a principle, we may have highly desirable hotels closed.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. MANN: I move an amendment—

That Subclause 2 be struck out.

This is consequential on the amendment just carried.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. Richardson: Will not Subclause 3 also require to be consequentially struck out?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: On the second reading it was stated that the fees and expenses of the Licensing Court would come out of the compensation fund. Suppose the Licensing Court is sitting as a court, and at the same time as a Licenses Reduction Board; how are the costs to be differentiated?

Mr. MANN: The whole of their costs will now be paid out of the compensation fund.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Subclause 9 is clear as to the payment of the expenses of the Licenses Reduction Board, but now that board is to be identical with the Licensing Court, I should like a little information. If the court goes to Kalgoorlie as a court and sits there also as a Licenses Reduction Board, how are the costs to be differentiated? Will they both be paid out of the compensation fund?

The PREMIER: The board will not be paid as a board if it is paid as a court. Certainly the costs will not be paid twice. I do not know just how the expenses will be differentiated. It would not be equitable to debit the whole cost of both bodies against the Licenses Reduction Board. Of course, mainly the work will be work of reduction.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Under Subclause 9 the whole expenses of the board have to be paid out of the compensation fund. I should like to know whether the expenses of the court are to come out of the same fund.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: There will be nothing left for compensation.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It would seem as though the whole of the expenses were to come from the compensation fund.

The Premier: The subclause does not say that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: But it makes provision for the board, and since we have passed the amendment the board and the court are one and the same. If the cost of the court has to come out of the compensation fund, there will be very little left for payment of compensation. If the costs are to be differentiated, it ought to be stated in the Bill.

Mr. MANN: I move an amendment—

That Subclause 10 be deleted.

This is no longer necessary.

Amendment put and passed.

Mrs. COWAN: Are the deputies of the court to be paid?

The Premier: Yes, certainly.

Mrs. COWAN: Then that is a further charge, and no provision is made for it in the Bill.

The PREMIER: I did not understand the question. The court of course will be paid, but the deputies of the court will all be magistrates. That goes without saying.

Mr. MANN: I move an amendment—

That Subclause 11 be struck out.

This also is no longer necessary.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I move an amendment—

That the following proviso be added to the clause:—"Provided that no person who constituted the court for the closing of hotels in the metropolitan district consequent on the local option vote of 1921 shall be eligible for appointment to the Licenses Reduction Board."

I move this because of the glaring inconsistencies in the work of that court, and because of the wave of public indignation that followed some of the court's decisions. I am not quarrelling with the decision for reduction. It was necessary to make some reduction, but I claim that the court were biased in favour of certain hotels. Well conducted hotels were closed down, while discreditable hotels were allowed to continue. In certain districts big residential hotels costing up to £10,000 to erect were closed up, while wine saloons providing no accommodation whatever—

Mr. Johnston: And on 15 foot frontages.

Mr. Wilson: Where are they?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: All over the metropolitan area.

Hon. T. Walker: But where did they keep them open and close hotels?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: In the Leederville-Subiaco district, in the Claremont electorate, and in the Belmont electorate.

Mr. J. Thomson: They had the police evidence to go upon.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: In one instance that evidence was supplemented by the hon. member himself in favour of a wine saloon.

Mr. J. Thomson: I am proud of it.

Mr. Mann: And his town clerk sat on the bench.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Yes, and it was not likely that he would give a decision adverse to the mayor. Which is better for the country, to close an hotel which cost £10,000, or a wine saloon where it would be impossible to get a bed or a meal?

The Minister for Works: It is a jolly shame that that hotel was ever closed.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: That was not the only one.

Mr. Johnston: The same applies to Midland Junction.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: There are rumours as to the reason why they were closed.

The Premier: The people voted for it.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I am not objecting to licensed houses being de-licensed but I claim that the bench did not exercise the judgment we expected of them. They allowed wine saloons to continue and, while de-licensing magnificent structures, permitted second-rate hotels to exist. One of the best hotels in the State—that at Belmont—was de-licensed.

The PREMIER: I hope the Committee will not agree to the amendment. It has nothing to do with the Bill. The hon. member is asking us to pass judgment on the licensing bench who dealt with the question.

Mr. Munsie: They deserve to have judgment passed on them.

The PREMIER: We have no more right to do that on the evidence before us than we have to pass judgment on the manner in which the closed hotels were conducted. It might be that the law of the land was faulty in the case of Claremont, or that some complaint was received regarding Nedlands. We have no evidence to show why the bench closed these hotels.

Mr. O'Loghlen: We have read the evidence.

The PREMIER: This is not the place to insert such an amendment.

Mr. O'Loghlen: I have entered a protest, anyhow.

Hon. M. F. Troy: Stick to your amendment.

Mr. O'Loghlen: I am going to stick to it.

The PREMIER: In this measure we should not say that men who did their duty to the best of their knowledge—

Mr. O'Loghlen: I question that. Some of them might have had a little interest as well as knowledge.

The PREMIER: The hon. member should not say that. They had the evidence before them. If all hotels were well conducted, a well-run hotel would have to be closed under reduction. We do not even know the names of the men upon whom we are asked to pass judgment.

Mr. O'Loghlen: That does not matter.

The PREMIER: It does. If we disqualify some persons unknown and unheard, we shall be doing a very wrong thing.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Then we shall get a decent bench.

The PREMIER: The hon. member should not press his amendment.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Yes, I shall.

The PREMIER: I cannot believe that the Committee will endorse such an amendment. Naturally the people who lost their licenses would consider that the bench were absolutely wrong, but the bulk of the people said licenses must be reduced and, acting on the instructions from the electors, reductions had to be made.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Why close up the best hotels?

Mr. Clydesdale: The court showed very bad judgment to say the least of it.

The PREMIER: I am not prepared to admit that, and I do not think a majority of members here know sufficient to say that. This would be a very strange provision to put in a Bill.

Mr. O'Loghlen: I admit it is novel.

Mr. Willcock: But it is justified. The decisions were just as strange.

The PREMIER: We shall have that evidence before us when we make the appointments. Is it intended to say who shall be appointed? That might be more reasonable.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Do you know now?

The PREMIER: No.

Hon. M. F. TROY: We know from experience that these people were not capable.

Hon. P. COLLIER: We know some who ought not to be appointed.

The PREMIER: I know 10,000 who ought not to be appointed, but I am not going to insert a clause to say that those 10,000 should not be appointed. I do not yet know the three who will be appointed.

Mr. O'Loughlen: I want a different bench.

The PREMIER: We are likely to have a totally different bench.

Mr. Munsie: It is wanted badly.

The PREMIER: We hear a great deal about the will of the people—

Mr. O'Loughlen: I am not objecting to that at all.

The PREMIER: I hope the Committee will not agree to such an extraordinary amendment.

Mr. Munsie: It was an extraordinary decision and they deserve to be disqualified.

The PREMIER: The Committee should not accept the amendment on the argument put forward.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It might be that the amendment is somewhat novel, but the circumstances are such as to warrant a novel proceeding. I should very much prefer to stipulate who shall be appointed to the board, but seeing it is almost impossible to do that, I think we shall be justified in doing the next best thing by specifically disqualifying those who have demonstrated their unfitness to occupy positions on the board.

The Premier: Is it a question of dealing again with the same buildings?

Hon. P. COLLIER: The decision of the court had nothing at all to do with the vote of the people. The people voted for reduction, but gave no instructions to the bench as to which premises should be closed. The court had full and free discretion. Let us look at the possibilities attending the appointment of the board. It will be a board operating throughout the State and called upon in its career of five or six years to close perhaps hundreds of licensed premises. If we may judge from the view held by the court who sat in the metropolitan area, the result of their operations may be that some of the main hotels in the State will be closed, and we shall have nothing left but mere obscure wine saloons with 16, 18, or 20ft. frontages and a little dark back parlour, without accommodation for a cup of tea, a sandwich, a bed or anything else. The board will conceivably close great palatial two-storey buildings with accommodation for dozens of boarders and the travelling public, and leave open for the convenience of the public these wretched little hovels of wine saloons. That is what will happen if the Government are so foolish as to appoint to the reduction board the men who sat on the court and closed the hotels in the metropolitan area.

Mr. Munsie: The first one they would close would be the Savoy.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Within two years of the closing of one of the hotels a sum of £10,000 was invested. It might be argued that the owner knew he was taking a risk in view of the fact that the local option vote was to be taken soon after. He calculated, however, that the court would exercise common sense. Although it was shown before the court and on the testimony of the police that, during the period the then licensee had been in possession, the hotel had been conducted on excellent lines, because of the reputation the hotel had acquired during the control of a previous licensee, the man was made to suffer. These men who have deliberately closed fine buildings with ample accommodation for the public and left open wine saloons have demonstrated their unfitness to sit on the board. We ought to protect the public to the extent of saying that any person who has shown that he is unfit for the position shall be disqualified. The Premier is too busy to devote close attention to all matters that come before him, and in a hurried moment he may not be able to give full consideration to the applications that are placed before him in respect to this matter. I would, however, be prepared to accept an undertaking from him that he will give careful consideration to these particular appointments. Failing that, the Committee would be wise if it carried the amendment.

The PREMIER: It is laid down that there must be a classification of hotels where a reduction is provided for. Men who are guilty of certain offences under the Act lose their licenses, but I do not know whether any of the hotels that have been closed were closed under the conditions that we ourselves set up. I can assure the Committee that full and fair consideration will be given to the appointments to be made to this important bench.

Mr. RICHARDSON: I would not like to see this provision embodied in the Bill. It would be unjust to place it there. I hope the Premier will give the Committee an assurance that he will give consideration to the qualifications of those gentlemen who will form the bench.

Hon. M. F. TROY: I hope the amendment will not be withdrawn. Most members are satisfied that a wrong has been done to licensees as the result of the decisions of the licensing court in Perth. Places have been left open which should have been closed, and others which have been closed should have been left open. It is absurd to appoint persons who have failed to give satisfaction.

Hon. T. WALKER: The proposal of the member for Forrest has served to draw attention to the necessity for men of the highest calibre and probity being placed in a position to regulate this traffic. We now have the Premier's assurance that when appointments are made they will have his unqualified attention. It would be unwise to place this amendment in the Bill, and I hope it will not go any further.

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

Ayes	..	..	17
Noes	..	..	23

Majority against .. 6

AYES.

Mr. Chesson	Mr. McCallum
Mr. Clydesdale	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Collier	Mr. Simons
Mr. Corboy	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Heron	Mr. Troy
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Lutey	Mr. O'Loughlin
Mr. Marshall	(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Sir James Mitchell
Mr. Carter	Mr. Money
Mrs. Cowan	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Durack	Mr. Plesse
Mr. George	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Gibson	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Harrison	Mr. J. M. Smith
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. J. Thomson
Mr. Latham	Mr. Walker
Mr. C. C. Maley	Mr. Wilson
Mr. H. K. Maley	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Mann	(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause as previously amended, agreed to.

[Mr. Stubbs resumed the Chair.]

Clause 41—Duties of board:

Mr. MANN: Paragraph (a) proposes that the trade shall buy itself out of business, shall cut its own throat. I move an amendment—

That Paragraph (a) be struck out.

If that amendment is carried, I propose to move that the following be inserted in lieu:—“As soon as practicable after the 31st December, 1922, and once in every six years thereafter to ascertain the number of publicans' general licenses, hotel licenses, wayside house licenses, and Australian wine and beer licenses in each licensing district, and the approximate number of inhabitants in such district, and having regard to all conditions to fix the number of licenses necessary for public convenience to be retained in such district, and to certify the proportion between the number of inhabitants in such district and the number of licenses necessary to be retained as aforesaid, and the number of inhabitants per license so to be retained shall be deemed the statutory number for such district: Provided that in no case shall less than 100 be regarded as the statutory number for any district.” Under the amendment the board will be able to carry out their functions properly. In Kalgoorlie, for instance, they would inquire what number of hotels were necessary, taking into consideration residents, visitors, and travellers; and the board might decide upon an hotel for, say, every 500 or 600 persons.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The words which the hon. member proposes to insert conflict with something already agreed to. In this connection the period is limited to six years, whereas the proposed paragraph speaks of “every six years thereafter.” The hon. member is very optimistic as regards compensation. The 2 per cent. will not allow much in the way of prohibition.

Mr. Mann: It will mean £100,000 in six years.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Bill is a retrograde step compared with existing legislation. However, both parties are agreed to have the poll in preference to local option. There are scores of hotels to be closed on the goldfields alone.

Mr. O'Loughlin: Some of them will be closed up for £100.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I do not think so. The fund will provide compensation for the closing of very few hotels.

Mr. Mann: It will provide £20,000 a year.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Not in my opinion. I agree with the member for Pilbara that the cost of the board will be at least £10,000 a year. The board will have a big staff of clerks, as they will have the money coming in easy. Victorian conditions are entirely different from those of Western Australia. Victoria closed a large number of old hotels, many of them mere shanties. Western Australia is a new country, with hotels of a standard generally much higher than the Victorian. For that reason compensation will be far more costly here. Moreover, before the provision expires, prohibition may be brought in.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I fail to see the object of the member for Perth. The main thing in connection with this part of the Bill is licenses reduction. The new paragraph proposed by the hon. member is not comprehensive as regards reduction of licenses. On this point the Committee need to be very careful that they are not misled, even though quite unintentionally. The suggested paragraph simply makes the board a gatherer of statistics, and not an instrument for reduction of licenses. The proviso to the suggested paragraph is already provided for in Clause 29.

Mr. RICHARDSON: I oppose the amendment because we have already agreed to give the reduction board a life for six years. The member for Perth wishes to extend that life by providing for extra duties which will extend beyond the six-year period. Thus, an anomaly is created at once. Members generally understood that the board would be given a trial. I would not have voted for the board had I not thought it was merely an endeavour to secure reduction where it was known that reduction was necessary, but had not been achieved by local option. I would not vote for a proposal which would prevent the people from having some say in the reduction of licenses. It was generally agreed that the reduction board should have full power, but now the suggestion is that the presence of 100

people at a centre will be sufficient to enable a license to be granted.

Mr. Wilcock: That is the minimum.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Yes, but they can make that the maximum.

Mr. RICHARDSON: That is the point. It is possible that in scattered districts it may be necessary to have a license for 100 people or even for less than that number, but I would hesitate to agree that 200 people should warrant the granting of two licenses.

Mr. PICKERING: The clause in the Bill does not provide all that is necessary, but the amendment suggested goes rather too far. In some centres there are hotels which, while more than sufficient in winter, do not meet the requirements during the summer months. Some provision should be made to provide for that position, for it would be a calamity if hotels were closed at the summer resorts. As the position is before the Committee, the trade may contribute to its own extinction, and the interests of those concerned should be safeguarded.

The PREMIER: It is intended under this part of the Bill that hotels shall be closed. If the Committee do not desire hotels to be closed, members should vote against the board for the reduction of the number of licensed houses. Contributions are limited to a period of six years and the amount in the compensation fund cannot be very large. It may be as much as £100,000 and it will take all that to close the hotels that should be closed. We must keep faith with the people. We have taken away the right to reduce licenses by means of the local option vote and we have told the people that we will substitute the method proposed in the Bill as being better. The argument against local option was that the right hotels were not closed in the right places; under the Bill hotels will be closed where they should be closed. In Victoria the reduction board has closed hotels where they were necessary, but where that result was not achieved by a local option vote. I think it would be scandalous if the Committee went back on the determination that hotels are to be closed. If the amendment is carried, there will be very few hotels closed. It is true that there are more hotels on the goldfields than are required and that the hotelkeepers of Perth will contribute to the general compensation fund which will be used for the closing of hotels in Kalgoorlie without any benefit to the Perth hotels. That, however, is not the point. Are we to have this board deal with these matters?

Mr. Mann: The clause is not equitable as it stands.

The PREMIER: It is quite clear. The collection of the money used for these purposes is limited to six years and if the £100,000, which it is expected will be collected, were available to-day, it could be used in closing hotels in excess of existing requirements. The Committee should determine that the reduction board is to do its work untrammelled by the conditions the member for Perth seeks to impose. Let the issue be a single one.

Mr. McCALLUM: Some basis or guiding principle should be fixed for the board to follow.

The PREMIER: You must leave that to the board.

Mr. McCALLUM: There is a direction in the Bill that the board must spend all the money collected in the closing of hotels, but there is nothing to tell the board to which district it should go, nor yet what should be taken as the basis for the work. It is possible, although not probable, that the same conditions may exist under the board as obtained under local option and hotels may be closed in districts where there are the fewest number in existence.

Hon. P. Collier: They might start in Perth or Fremantle and leave the goldfields untouched.

Mr. McCALLUM: They might start in Leederville and Subiaco where reduction was carried. Why not have a minimum below which the board could not go?

The Minister for Mines: That would not be equitable.

Mr. McCALLUM: The basis is provided in Victoria.

The Minister for Mines: In some places the hotels are essential for tourist purposes.

Mr. McCALLUM: At the same time, we can provide some principle which the board can follow. Whilst the Bill is limited to six years, it has to be realised that that is the way it started in Victoria, but the measure was re-enacted, making it practically permanent to-day. That is probably what will happen here. If this provision obtained, it would work out that ultimately the trade would pay for its own extinction.

The PREMIER: Of course it would.

The Minister for Works: The last man would get all the compensation left in the fund.

Mr. McCALLUM: But he would pay for his own compensation. In Victoria, some 1,400 hotels were closed for an average amount of £514 each and over 100 of them were in the heart of Melbourne.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Some of them were rookeries.

Mr. McCALLUM: Some of the hotels closed were larger than any in Kalgoorlie. If that result was achieved in Victoria, it should not cost as much in Western Australia, particularly in the mining districts where the hotels are only small buildings. I should like the Premier to agree to some proposal laying down a basis for the operation of the board. It is true the amendment does not provide for any reduction.

Mr. Mann: I have an addition to make to it.

Mr. McCALLUM: Would the Premier agree to have some satisfactory basis fixed for the direction of the board? As the clause stands, it is likely to work considerable hardship.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I hope the clause will pass as printed. We have agreed to reduction, and to the appointment of the board; consequently we should give the board oppor-

tunity to do its work. It is a pity that hon. members should be so prone to the making of comparisons between this State and Victoria. There could be no two States more dissimilar. It is like comparing a camel and a cow.

The Minister for Mines: Which is the cow?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Victoria. The member for Perth may know Perth, but he does not know very much about the rest of the State. In, say, Carnarvon the amendment would close the hotels. There is no population in the immediate vicinity, but many miles back are to be found the people who require all the accommodation the existing hotels can provide. I hope the clause will be agreed to.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. MANN: I move an amendment—

That the following be inserted to stand as paragraph (b)—“As soon as practicable after the 31st December, 1922, and once in every six years thereafter to ascertain the number of publicans’ general licenses, hotel licenses, wayside house licenses, and Australian wine and beer licenses in each licensing district, and the approximate number of inhabitants in such district, and having regard to all conditions to fix the number of licenses necessary for public convenience to be retained in such district, and to certify the proportion between the number of inhabitants in such district and the number of licenses necessary to be retained as aforesaid, and the number of inhabitants per license so to be retained shall be deemed the statutory number for such district: And shall reduce the licenses in such district to such statutory number.”

I want to give the board direction how to carry out their duties, and to prescribe how the reduction shall take place.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The amendment is absurd. In each district different principles will apply and will vary almost from week to week. If a goldfield were to be discovered close to a railway line, the board would say the statutory number of licenses could not be exceeded. At Yalgoo there are five hotels for about 100 people, yet if a new find were to be made up there 20 or 30 miles out, there might be an immediate demand for 10 hotels instead of the existing five.

Mr. Mann: The amendment directs the board to inquire into all phases of the question.

Mr. WILLCOCK: In any case, the board would have to go up there, make inquiries and formally record their finding.

Hon. M. F. TROY: The amendment is impracticable. There are, along the railways, depots where there may not be more than a dozen inhabitants.

Mr. Mann: Such places will be taken into consideration.

Hon. M. F. TROY: The principle might work all right in the metropolitan area, but it would be utterly impracticable in the back country. The same applies to Mullewa

and dozens of other places which are railway depots for the back country.

Mr. Mann: This says “having regard to all the conditions.”

The Minister for Mines: But conditions are changing.

Hon. M. F. TROY: The provision could not operate satisfactorily.

Hon. P. COLLIER: There might be sound objections to the amendment but there are equally sound objections to the clause as printed. There are difficulties attached to fixing a population basis and making it apply to such a large State. However, there should be something in the nature of an instruction to the board as to the lines on which they shall proceed. The consensus of opinion is that a large number of hotels in Kalgoorlie should be closed, but there is nothing to prevent the board from commencing operations in Perth or Fremantle. It is our duty to give the board some guide. Surely it is not beyond the capacity of the Committee to do this.

The Minister for Mines: Clause 45 does that.

The Premier: Anything of that nature can be added to Clause 45.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It might be more appropriate to add it to Clause 45.

The PREMIER: I am open to consider any amendment which will assist the board to determine what should be done, but I cannot accept an amendment which practically means there shall be no reduction.

Mr. Mann: My amendment does not mean that.

The PREMIER: Largely it does. I am willing to report progress and I hope members will draft a suitable amendment.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.49 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 28th September, 1922.

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