

sider the fight which took place in the old country when limited liability companies first came into force it will be seen that there is very little difference in principle under which a limited liability company was first authorised by law, and the principle which I submit should be adopted on the present occasion. Up to 1862 in England there was no such thing as a limited liability company. These companies were originated in order to obtain capital to a large amount from numerous people, too numerous to render a partnership manageable; and by means of that capital to carry out a larger undertaking than a single individual could carry out. That was the original reason for the formation of companies. But it very soon was found that this was inconvenient; because up till 1862 in a company formed under the ordinary Acts the shareholder's liability was unlimited, and up to that time it was urged that to allow a shareholder to have a limited liability was to infringe upon the general principle of trade—that if a man was to obtain profit out of a transaction it was fair and reasonable that he should run the risk of all loss. However, the Act was ultimately passed and I venture to think that by the passing of that Act trade in the old country was increased to a very large extent and people were encouraged to put capital into undertakings which otherwise they would have kept in their own pockets. And it is to prevent anything happening to this Bill which may render it a dead letter that I would urge that the clause making a limited partner liable if he interferes with the management should be struck out from the Bill. That principle should be deleted from it. I would point out that the general public would run no more risk in this case than it did in a company with a limited liability; because under the Companies Act they have to file with the Registrar of Companies, as they have to do here, a list of shareholders, and they have to show the amount of capital they are contributing, and in addition they have to show to the general public if a search be made the amount of calls to

which the shareholders are liable. That is a general indication to the public, and by searching in the records, if they are properly kept, the public can get sufficiently correct information as to the financial stability of the company. Apply that principle to the limited partnerships, and insist that after the name of any firm some words should be inserted which will show that the firm is under the Act; and go further and insist that the return required under the Act should not only show the amount the limited partner has contributed to the firm, but also the amount he is still liable to contribute under the articles of partnership. If that is done, anybody trading with the firm will at once know the liability is limited, and the public will not suffer, and I venture to think that the public, by reason of the increased trade, and by reason of the increased facilities for the employment of capital, will ultimately benefit. I shall support the second reading, and shall certainly endeavour in the Committee stage to insert the amendment I have indicated.

On motion by *Mr. Walker*, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.53 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Friday, 4th December, 1908.

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

QUESTION—METROPOLITAN WATERWORKS EMPLOYEES' HOLIDAYS.

Mr. BATH asked the Minister for Works: 1, Are the men employed on the Metropolitan Waterworks allowed annual holidays on full pay? 2, Is the treatment meted out to them in the matter of holidays different from that of the employees on the Goldfields Water Scheme, the Railways, or under the Public Works Department? 3, What are the rates of wages? 4, What is the payment for overtime?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, Annual holidays on full pay are only granted to those wages men who do not receive payment for overtime. 2, Yes; the conditions of life as compared with that of employees on the Goldfields Water Scheme, Railways, and Public Works Department are different. 3, Plumbers and main layers, 10s. and 11s. per day; carpenters, 11s. 6d. per day; best labourers, 9s. per day; casual hands, 8s. per day; engine-drivers, 10s. per day (7 days per week); firemen, 9s. per day (7 days per week); trimmers, 8s. per day (7 days per week). 4, Overtime is paid at ordinary rates except when out of town, and then time and a-quarter allowed for whole time worked.

QUESTION—ARBITRATION AWARD, TAILORING TRADE.

Mr. BATH asked the Premier: In view of the result of the investigations of the Inspector of Factories as to the non-observance of the award in the tailoring trade will the Government have the inspection continued in the future?

The TREASURER (for the Premier) replied: Yes.

QUESTION—IMMIGRANTS' FREE PASSES.

Mr. UNDERWOOD asked the Premier: Is it a fact that free passes are granted to immigrants looking for land and refused to residents of the State?

The TREASURER (for the Premier), replied: Free passes are usually

granted to persons coming to the State for the purpose of selecting land. Prior to 1904 they were issued generally, but owing to the privilege having been abused the issue was abolished in that year, and only in special cases are they now granted to persons resident in the State. Any selector, however, after making an application, may obtain a refund of his railway fare if the deposit exceeds it by 50 per cent.

QUESTION—STATE BATTERY, LENNONVILLE.

Mr. TROY asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Has the attention of the Minister been drawn to the destruction by fire of the Lennonville State Battery? 2, What is the intention of the Minister in regard to the re-erection of the same?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: —1, Yes. 2, No decision will be arrived at until the receipt of a report showing the extent of the damage.

QUESTION—BAIL MONEY ESTREATED.

Mr. SCADDAN asked the Attorney General: 1, Have the efforts of the bondsmen, McAuliffe and Boileau, been successful in bringing the absconder Simpson to justice? 2, If not, will he now call upon the bondsmen to pay their bonds? 3, If not, why not?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied: —1, Efforts have been and are being made by the police at the expense of Messrs. McAuliffe and Boileau to secure the absconding accused. These efforts have not been successful so far. 2, No, I do not propose doing so. 3, Because I am satisfied that the bondsmen acted in good faith throughout and are now assisting and have assisted the police in every way.

QUESTION—LIQUOR LAW, SUN- DAY TRADING.

Mr. HUDSON (for Mr. Heitmann) asked the Premier: Has there, in the knowledge of the Police Department,

been any appreciable increase or decrease of Sunday trading in hotels during the period of Saturday half-holiday in Perth and suburbs?

The TREASURER (for the Premier) replied:—The Commissioner of Police reports that there were 142 less prosecutions, or a decrease of more than 50 per cent., against non-bona fide travellers in Perth and suburbs during the period that the Saturday half-holiday has been in force than was the case during the same period of the previous year. It was also noticed that there were not so many people about the hotels on Sundays as previously. The same number of constables were employed in visiting the hotels during each period.

PRIVILEGE—PAPERS NOT COMPLETE.

Mr. JACOBY (Swan): I desire to address the House on a question of privilege. On the 20th November I moved for the production of certain papers concerning the applications made to the Railway Department for the stoppage of trains, the delivery of goods and the provision of a railway siding at Stoneville. The motion was carried and papers have been laid on the Table. In these papers reference is made by the then Commissioner of Railways, Mr. George, to certain shorthand notes taken by him at a deputation that waited upon him in connection with the siding, and certain promises made. I regret that these shorthand notes do not appear on the file. The House ordered that all papers should be laid on the table, but this order has not been obeyed, for the document in question is missing from the file.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. H. Gregory): I have not the slightest knowledge of what the papers which have been tabled contain, but if the hon. member will tell me what papers he thinks are missing, I will be only too pleased to try and find them for him. The file was obtained from the Railway Department, and as soon as I ascertain why the transcript of the shorthand notes in question is not attached, I will notify the House.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Treasurer:—Report on the Perth Museum and Art Gallery for 1907-8.

By the Minister for Mines:—Papers relating to the purchase of slimes at the Norseman State Battery.

BILL—REVENUE LICENCES.

Introduced by *the Treasurer* and read a first time.

BILL—PUBLIC ENTERTAINMENTS TAX.

The TREASURER (Hon. Frank Wilson) moved for leave to introduce a Bill for "An Act to impose a Tax on Public Entertainments."

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

Ayes	..	..	..	19
Noes	..	..	..	14

Majority for 5

AYES.

Mr. Butcher	Mr. Keenan
Mr. Carson	Mr. Layman
Mr. Daglish	Mr. Male
Mr. Davies	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Draper	Mr. S. F. Moore
Mr. Gregory	Mr. Osborn
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. Price
Mr. Hayward	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Hopkins	Mr. Gordon
Mr. Jacoby	(Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Swan
Mr. Bath	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Bolton	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Collier	Mr. Walker
Mr. Gill	Mr. Ware
Mr. Holman	Mr. Troy
Mr. Hudson	(Teller).
Mr. Scaddan	

Question thus passed.

Bill read a first time.

APPROPRIATION MESSAGES.

Messages from the Governor received and read recommending appropriations for the purposes of the following Bills:—

Stamp Act Amendment. Revenue Licences. Public Entertainments Tax.

BILL—BUNBURY HARBOUR BOARD.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

BILL—VERMIN BOARDS.

On motion by *the Honorary Minister* further report of Committee adopted.

BILL—BRIDGETOWN-WILGARRUP RAILWAY.

Second reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Mr. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret): In making a few remarks on the second reading of this Bill, I may say I notice that the people who will be served by the railway are not very numerous. We find on the slips submitted by the Premier to this House, setting forth the quantity of land occupied in that district and the acreage under cultivation, that the areas are very small, too small, I think, to justify this House in accepting the proposal for the construction of the line, unless some strong evidence is advanced by some hon. member on the Government side, who has been in close touch with the country through which this railway will pass. The line is to be 22½ miles length; it will cost roughly about £35,000 to construct, and it will serve a population of 350 people, 110 of whom are resident occupiers. Now I suppose it is fair to assume that this population of 350, in an area like that, would be quite different from a population of a smaller extent on the goldfields. For instance, we might take it that a large number of these people are juveniles. It would be interesting to know how many adults there are within the area that this line will serve. We know that the whole population is 350, and that there are only 110 residences there, so that will give to the House a very fair idea of what we are asked to do. We are asked to spend £35,000 to serve those few people. It has been stated by the Premier that this line will open

up a great area and it will mean a lot of settlement; but it is strange that in connection with other parts of the State we have to justify the settlement of population before we can have the question of the construction of the line brought before Parliament. I notice in these agricultural areas, we bring a line along and we expect that line to plant the population there. I am not one who desires to oppose these lines for opening up agricultural areas, but I do so on this occasion because of the condition of the finances of the State, which render it necessary that Parliament should be careful, and that the Government at least should be fully certain that the expenditure is warranted. When we come to think of the small number of people we will be called upon to spend such a large sum of money on, I venture to say there would be no possible chance, if these people were not in an agricultural area but were on the goldfields of having a measure of this character brought before the House. We find that even the area under cultivation, according to the statement set forth, is only 2,640 acres, and we are asked to spend £35,000 on it. Unless this House is satisfied, that it is absolutely certain this settlement will be quadrupled within a short space of time, I venture to say it will not be possible to entertain a proposition of this character. I do think that the Government should have some justification for voting so large a sum of money. We have had enough during the last two or three years of rushing these spur lines through Parliament at the last moment, and then depending on them. There is nothing put forward at the time to justify their construction, but we have to live in hope.

Mr. Bath: And die in despair.

Mr. TAYLOR: And as I am reminded, die in despair. I do think it is unfair to ask the paying railway lines of the State to be further saddled with lines of this character, unless the population is settling there very rapidly, more rapidly in fact than we have ever had any population settle in agricultural areas. Unless that happens in this case

the line cannot become a paying concern, or anything approaching it. While I recognise it is not absolutely necessary that a spur line should be a paying proposition from the start, it is necessary, at least, that there should be some hope held out that it will become payable. We have enough to do in carrying the railway system along as we have been doing for years. Every new line is adding a greater burden on the paying railways in existence. We have repeatedly asked in the House for sectional returns, and if we had these returns it would at once place members in the position of seeing whether railways of this character should or should not be constructed. But we have no knowledge whether they are paying, or how much they are paying, except from what we learn in a casual way. I think hon. members should take this aspect of the question into consideration before voting for the Bill. I do not desire to oppose the Bill, but I do want to hear from hon. members, who know these areas, that they will at least give the House further information on the subject before we are called upon to give our vote. There is another objectionable feature in the Bill, and that is the 10 mile deviation, five miles on either side. I say that is not necessary. I am of opinion that the Survey Department would be able to survey the line and give to the Government the necessary information on that subject.

Mr. Layman: The line is already surveyed.

Mr. TAYLOR: Then as it is surveyed this Bill should authorise the Government to build the line on that survey. We should in this House vote on the line as surveyed, and not allow these deviations. We simply know that a deviation is made just according to certain influences that are brought to bear after the passage of the Bill. Then that should not be left in the hands of the Government. We have had an instance in connection with the Kataning-Kojonup railway line, and I say the deviation here, as it was there, is too great.

The Treasurer: It is a good job it was allowed.

Mr. TAYLOR: Perhaps it was for some people, but not for the country. It was not in the best interests of the State that the deviation was allowed. I do not think it is necessary in a short distance of 22 miles to allow any such deviation. Surely our surveyors should be able to tell us exactly where the line should go, and leave, perhaps, a mile or so because of engineering difficulties, but even those difficulties should be discovered and overcome before the Bill is taken through the House. The idea of an engineer desiring to have a five mile limit on either side in the construction of a railway line of 22 miles, is to me absurd; if he did his survey work properly he would at least be able to get over all engineering difficulties, and then submit a correct proposition to the Minister, and the House would be given the opportunity of deciding on the survey that had been made. This big deviation will possibly mean that some people will be 10 miles away from the line, and then it will be too late for a member to say that he would not have advocated the construction of the railway if he had known that such a deviation was to take place. I certainly object to the deviation, and while I am not altogether opposed to the construction, unless sufficient reasons are forthcoming from hon. members who represent these districts, I certainly will record my vote against the second reading. I am not satisfied from the statement made by the Premier that the line is altogether necessary, when I find that we will be called upon to spend £35,000 to serve a population of only 350 people and 110 resident occupiers. I say, considering the tightness of the finances of the State, this line will not pay interest and sinking fund for at least two years. If I were sure that this line would pay in three years I would vote straight away for it, even if it were 100 miles long. We will be called upon to take from our falling revenue £1,400 to pay for interest alone, an amount that means a good deal in these days when we find on the Notice Paper that measures for

increased taxation are proposed for the purpose of bringing in a miserable amount in the manner suggested by the Treasurer; taxing every form of amusement; taxing the only thing that helps to make our people bright and happy in their present depressed and straightened circumstances. We are going to tax the only bright spot in their lives—the relaxation after the day's toil. I want to point out to the Treasurer that it is unwise to construct out of loan funds works that will not be remunerative in the near future. If any person can tell me that 350 people are going to make a railway line of 22 miles pay, then I am pretty well finished on the subject. I do not think it is reasonable to expect it. The railway from here to the goldfields has for many years been carrying the railway business of the State; and this will be another burden on the profitable line. I want to warn the Government. The Treasurer should recognise that he ought not to further tax the railway system to the tune of £1,400 which he will have to find for three years at least, and possibly for 10. The Attorney General smiles, but he knows that it is absolutely true; and if he were speaking in Hannan-street, Kalgoorlie, on this very subject it would be one of his topics on which he would wax eloquent.

The Attorney General: It will scarcely be for 10 years.

Mr. TAYLOR: I say the State is not in a position to carry that burden even for less than 10 years. There are 350 people to be served, and among these I suppose at least one-third are under the age of 10 or 12 years. Then there is another portion considerably under 20 years of age. In the farming areas the people generally have pretty large families, and I suppose the rule will obtain in this district.

The Honorary Minister: I hope so.

Mr. TAYLOR: The Honorary Minister hopes so. He will recognise that the case for this expenditure is a bad one. The whole argument in favour of this railway is what it is going to do; but what proof have we that it is going to do anything? There are only 350

people, with some 2,640 acres to be served. Certainly the yield per acre appears to be very satisfactory; but I am told there is a large area of inferior land close to where this railway is going.

Mr. Underwood: The average yield for this land is better than the average for the State.

Mr. TAYLOR: I hope those who are representing agricultural areas will give the House something in justification of this proposal. If the Bill passes the second reading I will, in Committee, endeavour to remove that clause providing for deviation on either side of the line. I think we should know where the line is going, and if our engineering staff cannot supply surveyors to give us that information it is time to reorganise the department. I will wait till I hear from hon. members opposite before I decide whether or not to oppose the second reading, but unless some evidence be forthcoming I will certainly oppose it. In any case when in Committee I shall make an attack upon that deviation.

The HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. J. Mitchell): I desire to say a word or two in reply to the hon. member. I am one of the agricultural representatives and I certainly know this country. I know that the argument of the hon. member against the line is no argument at all. He has referred to the agricultural lines already built. Well, we know that the cost of running these spur lines is not as great as the cost of running the main lines.

Mr. Gill: Will you say that again.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I say that the cost of running these spur lines per train mile is not as great as the cost per train mile for the trunk lines.

Mr. Gill: The Minister may know agriculture, but he does not know railways.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I know that on these spur lines we do not have expensive stations; we do not have stationmasters, nor do we have interlocking gear. I have not driven an engine over these lines but one can understand something about them without working on them. Take the Goomalling-

Dowerin line. That little line has already carried over 8,000 tons.

Mr. Taylor: On what population?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I do not know, but it is an easy matter to increase the population. It is the land we desire to open up; it is not for the people we build the lines, but to open up good land. This district of Dowerin supplied 8,000 tons of freightage, and of course that 8,000 tons was carried over the other lines of the State. Not a ton of it stays at Goomalling; it goes into Northam, Fremantle, or Kalgoorlie. This 8,000 tons of haulage supplies revenue. If we allow 2s. 3d. per ton, which I suppose would be a fair proportion to allow against the earnings of this traffic over the other lines, we find we come out with no loss at all. It is patent to everyone that these spur lines supply freightage for the other lines. Moreover, they open up the country. It is patent to every hon. member that every person we put on the land is worth something to the State.

Mr. Johnson: It does not apply in every case.

The HONORARY MINISTER: These few people to be served by this new railway might easily become 1,100 settlers. I know the district; I know that it is capable of great development. But it never can be developed without this railway. The Dowerin district, which has done so much for the State, could never have been opened up without a railway. These 14 miles of railway have been responsible for a freightage of 8,000 tons.

Mr. Bolton: Is that Goomalling to Dowerin, or Northam to Dowerin?

The HONORARY MINISTER: It is Goomalling to Dowerin. When we remember that the tonnage is largely wheat, we realise some of the good that has been done to the State by this line. If hon. members will be fair they will admit that the State has not suffered, at any rate.

Mr. Taylor: Why, you have only a total of 2,640 acres of crop in this Wilgarrup district.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The line from Bridgetown to Wilgarrup will run through good country. It will I hope

eventually run through to Denmark. The land to be served will probably prove to be the greatest dairying country in Australasia. It is an ideal dairying country, and the Premier described something of its grazing capabilities last night. He told members of its possibilities as a fruit-growing country. I was with him when he visited this place, and I can support him in all he has said. This country will be maintaining a very large population in the near future. To the uninitiated, to the man who knows the goldfields but not the agricultural areas it may appear to be ungenerous land. Unfortunately for Western Australia, most of the lands until cleared and broken up look ungenerous. But, without exception, the improving of the land has always paid, and so it will in this district down at Bridgetown. It enjoys the best climate perhaps in the State, and for the purpose of intense culture it is second to none in Western Australia. I have not the figures with me, but I think I am safe in saying we import 13,000 tons of potatoes in the year. This quantity might be grown in that district, and I claim that if we lose £1,000 on this line and save to the State only one-half the value of this 13,000 tons of potatoes the country will be the richer for it. Because, after all, our trouble to-day arises from the fact that in the past we have sent the money out of the State for the food stuffs for our people. There is no doubt about the value of the goldfields to this State, and no doubt that if the goldfields had been fed from the lands of this State we would have been a very rich country to-day. Many hon. members know that there is very little land near the railway lines not already taken up.

Mr. Johnson: And very little of it worked.

Mr. Taylor: It is being held for speculative purposes.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I do not believe it is being held for speculative purposes. Every day almost I have people from the Eastern States coming to me in search of land. They all want to get near a railway. I know as well as other hon. members that the Commissioner of Railways says we have lost

£8,000 a year on these spur lines. Yet, knowing that, I am not at all afraid to advocate the building of further spur lines. We could afford to embrace a policy that would involve the building of 1,000 additional miles of spur railway lines, and within a year or two every acre within 15 miles of these additional railways would be taken up.

Several Opposition Members interjected.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I wish those pests opposite would stop interjecting. Some of them know nothing about the country. They have never seen it, and never will see it. Even if they saw it they would not see it, because they have not the eyes with which to see it from an agricultural point of view. I say it will be taken up and that it will be improved. The lands of the State are being improved. There is tremendous progress from one end of the State to the other. We know that our lands are being satisfactorily opened up. The settlers are now being supplied with the necessary capital, and they are improving the country. This piece of country we propose to open up below Bridgetown is ideal country for the small holder, ideal country for dairying, ideal country for intense culture, and I am certain that no other State in the world would hold land such as we have between Bridgetown and Denmark unserved by a railway, and so long as I am in Parliament, and so far as my influence goes, there shall be no stopping on my part until we have opened up the rich lands of the State by building agricultural railways. This is little known territory. The Leader of the Opposition knows what it is. He drove through it. He knows it is impossible for people to settle there unless they are provided with means of communication. The hon. member knows as well as I do that the freight from the Eastern States is much lower than cartage over 40 miles of that country, and unless we put a railway there, we must give the trade to the Eastern producer. That is perfectly obvious, and particularly so is it in regard to the goldfields supplies, because the port of Fremantle is so much nearer to

the goldfields than is Bridgetown. that is, even when the producer of this district gets to the railway. I know this country, and I say this is a step in the right direction.

Mr. Taylor: You have not made out very much of a case for the railway.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I know that some members must put up opposition to every proposition from this side of the House.

Mr. Taylor: That is not fair.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I know too that members opposite have not seen this country. We have to remember that in addition to the cultivation of the soil we will have in that district valuable timber which will supply some loading in the earlier years for this railway.

Mr. O'Loughlen: How much jarrah is there?

The HONORARY MINISTER: There is a considerable amount of jarrah and karri down there, any amount of it, and the hon. member knows that the only line we built into the jarrah country, that from Donnybrook out, is a paying proposition. I can congratulate the hon. member upon representing a district which contains the only paying spur line of the lot in the first year after construction. If that line from Donnybrook pays, there is no reason why this line from Bridgetown should not pay for the first year or two, and until this timber is cut out. I support this Bill as I will support any Bill for the construction of a railway into the rich lands of this State. It is perfectly obvious to me that we must either open up the country or stand still. Until now we have depended on the goldfields, but now we intend to develop our agricultural resources, and when we remember that we are sending away something like £1,000 per day for butter alone and many hundred thousands for many things that could be produced in these districts, surely members will realise that they owe a duty to the country, and that it is right and proper that we should develop our agricultural lands in order at any rate to feed ourselves. It has already been said that if this thousand pounds we send out could be kept in the State, if those sovereigns converted into food for

the people on the goldfields could be put into the pockets of the producers of this State, they would do a great deal more for us, and we could afford to lose something on these spur railways if the calculation as to the loss is to be made up as the Commissioner of Railways has made it up in connection with his return in regard to these particular railways.

Mr. Taylor: The people are losing too much money now on them.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Then we will have to lose some more. At any rate I support the second reading of this Bill, because I know that the railway is a good proposition, and that it will bring nothing but good to this State and to the people of the State.

Mr. BATH (Brown Hill): It is rather an unfortunate thing in this House that when members look to Ministers for facts in these matters they very often get nothing but flabdoodle instead, and it is also unfortunate, as pointed out by the Honorary Minister himself, that in travelling in various parts of the country Ministers talk in a large way about constructing a railway here and there in order to make themselves good fellows, and their talk is construed into a promise, with the result that Ministers have to redeem it and very often have to fasten on the taxpayer of the State a white elephant or a wild-cat scheme. It is, I admit, an excellent thing to develop the agricultural resources of Western Australia; but in doing that, it is just as well always to inquire who is going to pay the piper; and while perhaps the people of the State may be looked to to do their best and to render every assistance towards the development of any industry worthy of encouragement, we can reach a limit in calling upon one section of the community to pay the piper for the benefit of other people who are profiting by the expenditure of money. The member for Mount Margaret (*Mr. Taylor*) was quite justified in the fact he stated, that in the past the people served by the goldfields railway have been too frequently called upon to bear the burden incurred by the unprofitable nature of railway construction elsewhere. So far as railway construction is concerned, whether it be agricultural or mining railways, since

the present Ministry have been in power, I have come to the conclusion that as we have to submit to a certain amount of loan authorisations each year, it is better to adopt the lesser of two evils and support the expenditure of that loan money even in railways that for the first few years will be unprofitable, in preference to adopting those methods of expenditure in other directions which seem so favoured by the Treasurer. We do have a chance in the future of getting some of the money back, and I am certain that in many instances these lines will ultimately become profitable, but in the case of other loan expenditure, there is no possible hope now, fifty, or one hundred years hence of ever securing any money or of doing anything other than making the interest and sinking fund charges on the expenditure on those works a permanent burden on the taxpayers. Therefore, I am inclined to look on this proposition a little more favourably from the point of view that it is perhaps better to expend loan moneys in this direction, than in those wasteful, and I might add, unsound ways favoured by our present Treasurer.

The Treasurer: What are those other ways?

Mr. BATH: Providing entertainments and fares for the producers' conference.

Mr. Collier: Providing dinners at the Palace Hotel for the producers' conference.

Mr. BATH: The list could be extended until Tuesday next of items of the kind which have been adopted by the Treasurer.

The Honorary Minister: The Treasurer had nothing to do with that.

Mr. BATH: No! You were responsible for that lot, but the Treasurer is supposed to exercise some responsibilities in regard to loan expenditure, irrespective of what department is responsible for the actual expenditure of the money.

The Honorary Minister: That came out of revenue at any rate.

Mr. BATH: That is only one item. There are dozen of others, and we will have an opportunity of referring to them. The transfer of ordinary administrative salaries to loan funds has been adopted by the present Government.

The Treasurer: Not at all.

Mr. BATH: It has been condemned by the Auditor General in his report.

The Treasurer: That started long before our time.

Mr. BATH: As has been pointed out by the Honorary Minister, I have had an opportunity of looking at this country which is to be served by this railway. I have been from Bridgetown to the Warren river, and undoubtedly there is some excellent country in places which will be served by this line. Of course there is a great deal of country which is jarrah country, and which I do not think will be suitable for anything but pastoral purposes.

Mr. Layman: What about the timber?

Mr. BATH: I do not think there is such a large quantity of timber.

Mr. Layman: They are the finest timber forests in Western Australia.

Mr. BATH: Karri, but not jarrah.

Mr. Layman: Karri and jarrah.

Mr. BATH: Not to any great extent.

Mr. Layman: Yes, to a very great extent.

Mr. BATH: Well, they are not on the route we followed going to the Warren. There is undoubtedly some excellent country there so far as karri is concerned. It is country that in the future will be the scene of a dairying industry in Western Australia; but as I have said before in regard to this proposition, it seems to me to be altogether a wrong idea to tack this country on to our existing railway system, or to attempt to serve the district by making a railway connection via Bridgetown, because it means that the distance to the nearest port is very considerably increased, I have already contended when this matter was previously discussed in a general way, that it would pay the Government to ascertain if there is not a suitable place for a port upon the southern coast of Western Australia, somewhere along the coast adjacent to this area, which would serve as an outlet for the trade of this area and obviate the necessity for the produce and trade being dragged along the existing railway. I am not aware that any close survey has been made, or that there is any port along the coast, but I think it is a matter well

worthy of investigation by the Government, because if we are to develop a dairying industry in that district, and carry it on in a profitable manner a port will be absolutely necessary. In the Eastern States it has been found a great advantage. In New South Wales, of which I have some knowledge, the success of the dairying industry is due to the fact that the dairymen there are adjacent either to the sea or to navigable rivers, with the result that they have cheap carriage for their butter and other dairy produce to the main markets in the Eastern States for local consumption or for shipping to foreign markets. Until such a port is opened up in this area, there is much of that karri timber that will not be available for the use of the State, and it will mean that, in order to encourage settlement and develop the agricultural industry, this timber will be destroyed, and I believe not many years will elapse before another generation will curse the day the people of Western Australia were so wasteful of their splendid timber resources. I think it is a disgrace that so much of that magnificent karri timber should be destroyed in the way it is for agricultural development. I believe that we could utilise our karri timber and, at the same time, have the land available later on for agricultural purposes, otherwise when the day comes when that timber will be needed in our country, or when the requirements of our export trade demand the opening up of the new timber areas, coming generations will say we have been absolutely wasteful in destroying our timber resources in the way we have done. For a few years to come there is no hope, if this railway is constructed, of its being a paying proposition. I believe that eventually it will be, for there is land there suitable for intense culture which will ultimately provide a traffic to make the railway pay. I would not like future settlers to be permanently handicapped by linking up the line and thus necessitating long railway carriage, for it would be far better if a port were discovered on the South coast, and so provide an outlet for produce which could be carried at a very cheap rate. There is one thing in connection with the estimate we have

before us as to the cost of the line, and that is that these figures are absolutely misleading to members. If we turn up the report of the Commissioner of Railways, we will find that on those lines already constructed a very considerable additional cost has been involved already in making them fit for traffic. The Commissioner in his report says—

“The term ‘Developmental Line’

has been adopted as the original appellation of ‘Agricultural Line’ now embraces similar construction in the mining districts on the goldfields. The three first of such lines constructed have now been in use during the whole of this year, and last winter showed in a marked degree the want of some better material for packing the sleepers than that supplied. The original packing consisted of the soil alongside the line, composed in the main of rich loam, about the very worst material that could be used for the purpose as the soil retains the water and allows of no drainage, the main requisite necessary for the keeping of a good road; the chief point in using broken metal for ballast being that it keeps the road bed dry or rather allows the water to readily drain off. In the goldfields the soil is even more friable than in the agricultural districts, and therefore more difficult to cope with when wet. Some portions of these lines are constructed through sandy districts, and here the road has been packed with sand, which has enabled it to stand the present winter better than the last, and I would recommend that all new lines of this nature be so ballasted during construction, as at that time the work can be done much more economically. On the Katanning to Kojonup spur line in particular the trouble has been more severe than on the other two, and in consequence a large proportion of the rails have been crippled. There is another point against the use of soil for packing and boxing up sleepers, that the soil is favourable to the luxuriant growth of weeds, particularly in the agricultural districts, where grass and other seed is so abundant. The grass grows

vigorously on the newly-disturbed ground, and the rails are thereby kept greasy, the grass itself providing moisture when run over by the wheels and causing the latter to slip on the grades, hence the account appearing in the morning Press of 15th November, 1907. The waterways have also proved insufficient, and many additional ones had to be constructed. Furthermore, the cattle stops provided are unsuitable, and as a natural result stock are a fruitful source of trouble—sleep in particular continually crossing over the stops into the next man’s paddock—consequently it has been necessary to spend money on the structures to make them secure. It would be better to keep to the standard design. The lines taken over during the present year have similarly given trouble through want of ballast, which should be provided. In connection with the construction of these developmental lines I would point out that had the sleepers been 7 feet long instead of 6 feet 6 inches, greater stability would have been attained.”

The Minister for Lands : Which railway does he refer to ?

Mr. BATH : Reference is made to spur lines. Where so much cost is necessary immediately after the construction of the railway, the amount should be added to the total estimated cost of the line.

The Minister for Works : The Commissioner asks for a standard design. We are increasing the ballasting on all these lines.

Mr. BATH : When the Minister gives us this estimate of the cost of the line it is misleading, for almost immediately after they are completed more money has to be spent on them in order to make them fit for traffic. This cost should be placed before us in the original estimate, for it is misleading to give us what is really under the actual capital cost.

The Minister for Works : These comments refer more particularly to the first three lines we built. We have increased the ballasting in the bad places on all subsequent lines.

Mr. BATH : Another matter which is referred to, although I cannot put my

hand on it at present, is with regard to the sleeping, and it is said that the sleepers are bad.

The Minister for Works : We have been using square sleepers lately.

Mr. BATH : That means added cost.

The Minister for Works : It is included in the estimate.

Mr. Bolton : Does this estimate provide for square sleepers ?

The Minister for Works : Yes.

Mr. BATH : The estimate as it stands is not a correct one. I desire also to refer to the provision in the Bill allowing the Government to resume the land suitable for closer settlement along the railways. Perhaps the Treasurer when replying will inform me in how many instances the Government have exercised the power given them to resume suitable land along the spur lines with the object of having it closely settled. Much stress is always laid on this provision, especially by the Premier, when introducing these railway proposals.

The Minister for Works : Several notices have been sent out.

Mr. BATH : There would be a greater likelihood of getting the unanimous support of the House to the Bill if the Government would give an assurance that this power will be exercised not only for show purposes but in reality, and give us a guarantee, as a *quid pro quo* for consenting to the construction of the line, that so far as the powers of the Government under the Act permit they will resume the areas which in existing circumstances are likely to be left uncultivated for years, and by making them available for the right class of settlers induce people to go there at an early period. If this is done the result will be that the land will be taken up by bona fide settlers soon after the line is constructed and therefore the line will very quickly become a profitable concern. The burden caused by the construction of some of these agricultural railway lines has been placed on the wrong shoulders. We find that there has been a loss on all the spur railways with one exception—the Donnybrook railway, which is a timber line. The net loss is £8,604 and has to be borne by the

taxpayers of the State. In order to try and make the returns from these railways as high as possible the Government first placed on them a special rate and afterwards replaced that rate by the ordinary railway one, but imposing at the same time what is called a "special toll," so much per ton for produce carried over the railway. At the same time the people who hold land along these railways have obtained a large unearned increment from the expenditure of the money which the taxpayers have to pay, as they have been able to sell their land at a greatly increased price without any effort of their own. No member, however much he may favour agricultural railways, believes in the expenditure of State funds in order that people may have the value of their land enhanced and reap a profit by selling out and getting an increment to which they themselves have not contributed. That is why I believe this power should be exercised to a greater extent than it has been in the past. It seems that the power provided in the clause is merely given for show purposes and has not been utilised. This railway proposition would commend itself more to members if the Government gave an assurance that they would utilise the powers of the clause and make the land adjacent to the railways available for cutting up. If this were done, a great many people in the State—without going outside of it—who are looking for land and who are sending in inquiries to individual members every week and also to the Lands Office, but have not been able to get land within a reasonable distance of the railway, could take it up and have fair prospects of succeeding on their limited capital. I intend to vote for this Bill, because I believe it is much better to expend loan moneys on these lines than on the methods to which the Treasurer seems committed—methods of expenditure which are entirely unproductive and which pile up loan indebtedness without contributing to the revenue which goes to pay interest and sinking fund.

Mr. HAYWARD (Wellington) : As I had an opportunity of seeing this country many years ago, having assisted in starting the farms there. I am able to

give some first-hand information with regard to the land. I had full opportunities of seeing the country all round the district. Although it is not corn-growing country, I consider that for dairying and for the growing of potatoes it is the finest part of the State, not only on account of the climate but also owing to the soil. I have known bigger crops of potatoes grown there than anywhere else in Western Australia. As hon. members know, it does not pay to cart potatoes very far, and at present the only way in which the settlers can get the potatoes to market is over very bad roads. It is therefore easy to account for the few settlers in the district now. I am confident, however, that as soon as railway communication is provided there will be a very large number of settlers going in for mixed farming, dairying, and especially potato growing, in the district. It must also be apparent that the line will tap some of the finest forests in the State. That alone would be sufficient to justify the Government in constructing the line. The member for Mt. Margaret (Mr. Taylor) has laid great stress on the proposed deviation. I know the country well, and have the plan before me and I do not think one can find any part of the State where a line is cut more direct than this one. With regard to the construction of the line, perhaps one of the heaviest items will be in connection with the timber. So far as earthworks are concerned the land is good, sound country, with plenty of ballast almost alongside the route all the way. I do not think there will be any extra cost in that direction. The line will cost very little for upkeep. I do not think I need say any more. I can only repeat that I believe in a very few years the line will be a paying proposition and will induce very large settlement.

Mr. JACOBY (Swan): It seems to me that we have a very happy-go-lucky method in dealing with these railway propositions. I regret that we have nothing more to guide the House than a mere statement from the introducer of the measure, as to the probability of the success or otherwise of the line. I should

have liked to see reports from the officers of the State, who are in a position to give some ideas, first as to the probable paying of the line, and then as to the route to be traversed. Although I do not intend to vote against the second reading I must enter my protest against being asked to support the measure upon the very meagre information placed before this House in connection with the Bill. If we asked the officers of the Railway Department to report upon some of these spur lines, the result, it is anticipated, would be of an adverse character. We have the right to have before us all evidence, even if it is against the railway proposals of the Government, so that we may come to a decision founded on facts and not on mere statements of an optimistic character made to the House. We know that the Bridgetown-Wilgarrup line is expected to ultimately be part of the through line to Albany, and the grades on the Perth-Bridgetown line are such, that we shall be for ever heavily penalising through traffic that will be likely to pass over that line when the connection is made with Albany. It would have been better for us to have had the views of our expert officers on this matter so that we might have given consideration to the subject with the full knowledge of the circumstances. I think also that the time has arrived when the House itself should, in addition to getting reports from officers of the State, have its own committee to get that evidence that perhaps might not always be given to us in the shape of reports. I raise this protest because in the next session of Parliament, if further lines are proposed, I intend to oppose them unless we have the fullest information from those who are capable of telling whether the lines are justified or not. I listened with interest to the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition in regard to the additional values that must arise to the owners of property already on the route of this new line. And it appears to me that it would be but justice if we made some provision in these railway Bills in order to secure to the State some small portion of the added value that is

given to privately held lands in the districts served by these railways. It would be better instead of putting a toll upon freight that passes over the spur lines, to exact that toll from the added value given to the land. It appears that we are building a tremendous lot of new railways in this country to serve a comparatively small number of people. Those of us who are settled in districts already served, see large areas unsettled, or if they are settled, large portions of them absolutely uncultivated; and it appears to me we are getting to this stage when we should commence to secure the full development of the land already served by the railways of the State before we start to open up in other directions. We are increasing the administrative expense for we have to provide police, postal, and other services in every direction, and if we look at the immigration returns we find that for the current 12 months we cannot anticipate getting more than 4,000 new people in this State, men, women, and children. How many miles of railways are we opening up to accommodate these new people? We have an enormous territory but we cannot expect to develop the whole place in five minutes. There is just as much justification for building 100 railways as for building the few lines now before the House. However, regarding the country beyond Bridgetown the railway should stop very soon the large expenditure that we are now incurring in purchasing produce from the Eastern States, particularly in regard to potatoes. I believe that the country there is ideal for potato growing, and we have already sent away to the Eastern States during the last nine months over £50,000 for the purchase of potatoes. Not only is this country capable of stopping that outflow of capital, but it will enable us to take advantage of our natural geographical position to supply the great demands for similar lines that are now being made by the Far East. We have an enormous market awaiting us, and in connection with exports of an experimental nature which I have been interesting myself in. I have had frequent inquiries made as to whether we could sup-

ply potatoes. I believe there is a great market awaiting us.

Mr. Hayward: There are plenty available now.

Mr. JACOBY: We sent £50,000 away to the Eastern States this year for potatoes. It is a pity they were not available earlier. I intend to support this Bill. I do so with a considerable doubt as to whether I am doing my duty to the country, knowing as little as I do of the actual facts that should have been placed before this House to justify the passage of the Bill.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara): I have no doubt, like the hon. member who has just sat down regarding this Bill, but I am going to oppose it. I made up my mind some time ago to oppose all these agricultural railways until the land alongside our present railways is brought into use. I have heard the same thing about these Bills ever since I have been in the House; and even before I was in the House I read it in the newspapers about what we are doing to open up the country. But here is something about land settlement. The *Statistical Abstract* tells us that last year we increased the acreage under crop by 34,000 acres only, notwithstanding that we put down hundreds of miles of railways for the purpose of opening up the land.

The Minister for Works: How much was ringbarked?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I will come to that shortly. That is the result of the construction of the railways. The member for Kanowna last night was speaking about land settlement, and when I told him there was none, he seemed to be surprised. The only land settlement the Government was guilty of was the settlement of land just in the public eye. I would recommend two or three applications from the *Statistical Abstract* as an excellent lotion to remove the dust from the eye. I would like hon. members to take a few applications from this *Abstract* and I am sure that they would be cured. It is absolutely useless for any man to talk about increase in agriculture. The member for Swan has just told us that last year we sent away from this State

£50,000 for potatoes. For the last ten years I have heard of the enormous quantity of good potato land that was being opened up here. In connection with almost every Bill that was brought forward we were told that the land through which the railway would pass was splendid land for root crops. And after all the opening up that we have done we find now we are still importing potatoes instead of people. I would like to say in regard to ringbarking, I considerably doubt the reports, and I have reason for doing so. Ringbarking can be done a good deal in the way of imagination. By the way the *West Australian* gives the Treasurer credit for having an imagination. You will see hundreds of acres of land along our railway lines which is supposed to be ringbarked. It has been ringbarked, but it is now overgrown with suckers and we know that it has in consequence become harder than ever to clear. All this is put down in the *Statistical Abstract* as land partially cleared. The peculiar thing about the figures supplied is in connection with the question of ringbarking. They appear to give us any amount of information regarding ringbarking. They tell us there are 57,000 acres of land alienated along the railway, and they tell us further there are 71,000 acres ringbarked. These must have been ringbarked before having been alienated. I feel confident that some of the land alienated is certainly not ringbarked. In regard to settlement along the railway lines, I find 51,000 acres are alienated, and there are 10,600 acres under crop, or a percentage of about 4.6. I am not a mathematician but that is near enough for my purpose. It is pleasing to see that these figures are a little better than those for the whole of the State, which is not 4 per cent. When we are building railways to open up the country, and when alongside of the railways already built only about three per cent. of the land is in use, it is time to take a pull, and to put down our feet on building railways to catch votes. The thing I dislike about the speech of the Leader of the Opposition is the statement that he is going to support the Bill. I think it is a very bad thing for

him to do, and I trust he will change his opinion. He stated in speaking of the timber, that we could well leave that alone for a time. I most certainly agree with him; but in the meantime we will work some of the land that has no timber on it, and there are millions of acres already supplied with railways in this State. The Leader of the Opposition has another impression—of course it is easily accounted for because it is contagious—that we must spend loan money; and agreeing that we must spend it he says that this is the best way to do so. I have no doubt that loan money has entered into our Leader's soul; but I hope he will get over that and recognise as I do that it is possible to run a country without loan money at all. The Honorary Minister stated that we on the Opposition side always opposed measures of this kind, and he called us the pessimists of the Opposition. This is the second railway that I have opposed since I have been here. I have supported as many Government measures as it has been possible for any member to do; and to contend that we always oppose these things just for the sake of opposition is silly in the extreme. With regard to resumption, there is a clause put in everyone of these Bills providing that the Government may resume land. There are many things that the Government may do but they take particular care that they do not do them. There is such a provision in the Bolgart Railway Act, and what do we find? We find that a fortnight ago the agent of the Midland Land Company had a big sale of the land that this line is going to serve. The next week we hear that the line is started. If these resumption provisions are worth putting in the Bill, they are certainly worth carrying out, and there is no place where they could be better carried out than in connection with the Bolgart railway. That line will be built now for the express purpose of benefiting the Midland Railway Company, and no one else. We all know that the land alongside that railway is the only land near that railway, and that it belongs to the company. There was one most damaging statement made by the member for Wel-

lington. He said that this is splendid land, really good land, and he concluded by saying that there is any amount of ballast all along the line. Now, I have never found potatoes growing in ballast. The fact that there is ballast to be had all along this line proves to me that the land is very poor. And if there is one thing above all others upon which we can rely it is the testimony of the member for Wellington. It is not, I think, necessary to run a railway just to get ballast.

The Treasurer: But there are some good swamps there too.

Mr. Hayward: You know the worst land is always chosen for a railway route.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I do not care if the ballast is in the swamps, or the swamps on the ballast. The hon. member should not have assured us about that ballast. If the ballast be there then the potatoes will not grow. When we get information like that from an hon. member who knows this country so well we must look with an eye of suspicion upon the information printed and disseminated through this Chamber. For these reasons I intend to oppose this Bill. From the information supplied, and from the lack of other essential information I have perhaps more occasion to oppose this than other lines. Still, I am going to oppose the others also until lands lying along the existing railways are brought under cultivation.

Mr. FOULKES (Claremont): I am glad that mention was made by the member for Swan of the necessity for having a committee to deal with railway Bills. The late Mr. George Leake, when Premier, undertook to introduce a Bill that would provide for a committee being appointed to inquire into all railway projects, and practically into all proposed new works. Such a committee would be able to give full information to the House. In the British Parliament, when people come forward asking for Acts of Parliament the House itself does not deal with the particular subjects but invariably refers them to a select committee. For some three or four years I had opportunities of seeing how the system worked there. It was the duty of the

promoters of any undertaking—that is, the people who wanted these Acts of Parliament—it was their duty to call evidence and furnish full information with regard to the country and the character of the work for which they required such Act. As a result of my observations I can strongly recommend such a system to the consideration of the Government. At the commencement of each session a committee should be appointed to whom all Bills of this nature should be referred. Then, I take it, it would be the duty of this committee to call for evidence among the people of the district—the people who are anxious to get the railway—and to obtain that evidence at first hand. Thus they would familiarise themselves with the capabilities of the district. Opportunities would of course, be given to the member for Pilbara and other hon. members who were opposed to any particular work to attend the sittings of the committee and to cross-examine the various witnesses as to the necessity for the particular work. The result would be that when this evidence was printed and circulated among hon. members the House would be able to judge of the merits of the scheme. I know that was the idea of the late Mr. George Leake, and I should strongly urge the Government to adopt the same system. I am sure the result would be advantageous to the House as a whole and to the country at large. A good deal has been said with regard to the Government resuming land along these new railways. I would like to see the Government make arrangements to purchase these lands or to get options over them before they announced their intention of constructing a railway through a district. They would have no difficulty at all about securing these options before the Bill was spoken of; and once they had these options they could then take time to decide whether they would build the line or not. That, I am sure, is what a business man would do if he were going to spend hundreds of thousands of pounds upon a railway. It would pay the Government handsomely and the land owners would know nothing of the

purpose for which the lands were required.

Mr. Hudson: What about that Fremantle scheme?

Mr. FOULKES: I know nothing about that, but I am quite sure that if the matter were taken up in time the Government could secure a very large area of country which would be the means of settling a great number of people. I submit to the Government that the time has arrived for appointing committees to deal with works of this character.

Mr. TROY (Mount Magnet): Like some other hon. members I am extremely doubtful as to the course I should pursue in respect to this Bill. I want to do the right thing and I am loth to interfere with the opening up of this country. I believe that this country cannot be opened up without railway systems; railways running into the unopened districts. Still, when I look back upon some of the railways constructed by the Government during the past few years I doubt whether any member of this House is doing right in supporting a railway project without having the fullest information before him.

The Treasurer: If you were to look back which would you strike out?

Mr. TROY: The Bolgart railway. I do not think there is any justification at all for that railway. I went to the department and had a look at the plans of all the land lying along that railway, and around that railway, and I found that the greater proportion of it belongs to the Midland Railway Company. I think it is most dishonest to use the people's money for the purpose of enhancing the Midland Railway Company's land. To-day that company is offering land for sale on the score that the Bolgart railway is being built; and because of this the land will bring a considerably enhanced price as compared with what it would have brought 12 months ago. I disagree entirely with the remarks of the member for Pilbara in regard to the spending of loan moneys on works such as this. We all appreci-

ate the work done by the Agricultural Bank in lending the farmers money for the development of their property. Without the Agricultural Bank the farmer could not get on very well; and what is the case with the individual is the case with the State. We must borrow money, as cheaply of course as possible; but we must borrow money in order to produce new wealth. At the same time I will admit that there is every reason why this borrowed money should be expended wisely, and that in many instances it has not been so expended. I was doubtful as to how to vote, but I want to give every opportunity of opening up the country, and because of this I will vote with the Government. But I do hope that the next time such a proposal is brought down to this House full information will be furnished with it; and also that longer notice will be given before hon. members are asked to vote on the question. Hon. members, I think, ought to be given an opportunity of visiting the district and seeing it for themselves.

The Treasurer: It was before the House last year.

Mr. TROY: This is the first time I have seen it. I think, speaking generally, that longer notice should be given. However, in order to give an opportunity of opening up the country I shall vote for this Bill.

(Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.)

Mr. ANGWIN (East Fremantle): Like other members, I regret very much we are compelled in the present conditions to embark on the construction of new railway lines, but I realise it is necessary to provide communication for those settled on our more distant areas. We must either build railways to distant areas or stop land settlement. When we realise the large number of persons willing to settle on our lands it is regrettable that it is now a matter of impossibility for them to obtain holdings adjacent to our existing railways, so as to set about cultivating them with a profit to themselves; but, I am sure, that while Parliament exists as at present—I am not referring to members

of this Chamber—it will be almost a matter of impossibility to alter the condition of affairs so as to provide for closer settlement and more cultivation adjacent to our railways than we have at present. But, in the meantime, until that is done, we have to take the position as it stands; and the only way of getting over the difficulty is opening up new areas and providing further railway communication in order to bring our lands under cultivation. It is well known that it is now almost impossible to obtain any land within 25 or 30 miles of a railway, so that we have no option but to build new railways to where there is land available for settlement; and I trust we will have more of these railways to develop the large areas at present required for cultivation. Last night the member for Kanowna referred to the settlement brought into operation during the last 12 months, and we know that it is almost impossible to obtain a sufficient area of land within a convenient distance of a railway on which to settle a large number of people on the class of settlement to which he referred. Seeing that is so, I support the Government in the railway they have brought forward, and shall support any railway of this description that will open up land on which we can settle large numbers of people. There is no doubt in my mind but that members would have obtained greater information by means of the proposed committee, but if the suggestion of the member for Swan were carried out, that we should obtain a report from the Railway Department dealing with these lines, we would get in every instance a report looking at the matter from a commercial point of view. The department would object to any new lines to open up any of the areas in the interior. The only lines they would agree to would be lines that would pay from the commencement. It would be a matter of impossibility to maintain the development of this country if we were not to build any further railways, but were to stop railway construction until the time arrived when lines would pay working expenses. I certainly think it is necessary for the development of the country to provide more railways than we have done in the past.

Mr. LAYMAN (Nelson): In rising to support the second reading of this Bill for the authorisation of the construction of the Bridgetown-Wilgarrup railway, I desire to make it clear that I am not prompted to do so merely because the railway, when completed, will go through a portion of the district I have the honour to represent, but I am prompted to do so because I consider there is every justification for the construction of the line. I consider it an urgent and necessary work. I have been able to conscientiously give my support to every agricultural railway Bill that has been brought down to this House, and I claim that this line has every justification and more to warrant its construction than any of the other lines, simply because it will open up a large area of agricultural country of a class we have very little of within easy distance of our railways. The bulk of the agricultural land already opened up is more suitable for growing cereals; this land is more suitable for intense culture, for dairy farming, and closer settlement, and for growing potatoes, onions, and other root crops. I would like to quote a few figures in support of my argument. In looking up the statistical returns I find that we have 465,000 acres under wheat, oats, and hay crops, and only 2,164 acres under maize, potatoes, onions, and other root crops; and 2,164 acres is only about the size of an ordinary farm; but it is all the land we have in the State under cultivation for these crops. I would point out that the 465,000 acres under cultivation for cereals provides sufficient produce to meet the local demands. We have got up to the local demand in these particular lines, wheat and chaff, and we have to look to some other outlook for our surplus produce; whereas, with regard to dairy produce, we find on looking up the returns that last year we paid away £341,891 for butter, £129,313 for bacon and ham, £66,426 for eggs and poultry, £34,627 for cheese, making a total of £572,257 for produce that could be produced in this district that will be opened up by this railway. And I claim

that it is the duty of the Government and of the House to endeavour to have this country opened up for the establishment of farms to grow this produce and other things we require in the way of foodstuffs. I consider that no country can become great and prosperous until its agricultural resources are fully developed. The Government are quite right in turning their attention towards opening up this country. The Leader of the Opposition said that he had no intimation that this line was to be constructed. I would like the hon. member to refresh his memory by looking up the Loan Estimates of 1906; on them he will find a sum for the construction of this line.

Mr. Holman: What was the date when those Loan Estimates were introduced?

Mr. LAYMAN: I do not know the date.

Mr. Taylor: It was in the small hours of the morning.

Mr. Holman: When we had not time to read them.

Mr. LAYMAN: There was time. There was an item of £12,100 for the Bridgetown-Wilgarrup railway on the Loan Estimates of 1906. So this has been under review for some time. I may point out also that this line has been talked of in politics almost since I can remember. It was a pet scheme of Sir John Forrest's.

Mr. Taylor: That does not justify it.

Mr. LAYMAN: But it goes to show that it has been before the public a great length of time. It was also promised by Sir Walter James when he was Premier. So it is no new scheme. There was also a statement made by the member for Mount Margaret that there were not sufficient settlers in the district to warrant the railway. The hon. member said there were only 110 families.

Mr. Taylor: I did not say anything of the kind; I simply read a statement put forward by the Premier that there were 110 resident occupants.

Mr. LAYMAN: I would like the hon. member to calculate and see how much 110 families would reasonably be expected to hold if each held 1,000 acres, which is not a very large area. They

would have every inch of the land taken up.

Mr. Taylor: According to the Premier's statement, they hold 41,000 acres.

Mr. LAYMAN: I am merely saying that if these 110 families each had 1,000 acres along that line they would have every inch of the land taken up within four miles of the line for the whole length. I think 110 families is a fair number for which to ask for a railway. I would point out that the return was not made out very recently; I think it was made out when the Loan Estimates were brought down.

Mr. Taylor: The return only reached us yesterday.

Mr. LAYMAN: I can assure the hon. member that there is a great number of new settlers going to that district. During the last year over 30,000 acres of land have been taken up there. I consider there is quite enough land settlement there to justify the construction of the line, knowing as I do that there are so many people taking up land there. As I have just pointed out, over 30,000 acres were taken up and actually approved during the last 12 months, and there are many who would like to get on that land, but, unfortunately for them, the bulk of it is covered with valuable timber.

Mr. Taylor: How much of it was taken up last year?

Mr. LAYMAN: That is within easy distance of the railway.

Mr. Taylor: These returns show that only 57,000 acres have been taken up to date.

Mr. LAYMAN: Most of the 30,000 acres has only recently been taken up, and the selectors have not got their farms in working order yet; consequently there is not a very great deal of land under cultivation. The time is not very far distant when the whole of the land under reserve for timber will be under cultivation, and I venture to say this will be the garden of Western Australia, or rather the garden of the whole of Australia. In addition to the agricultural land within easy distance of the line, there is a great deal of valuable timber forests, both of jarrah and karri. There is a belt of one

of the finest jarrah forests in the State at no great distance from the line which will be opened up by mill-owners and sleeper cutters. At the terminus of the line there is a very fine forest of karri. The line will pay right from the start, in the same way as the Donnybrook-Preston line. The same arguments were advanced by the Opposition with regard to the Preston line, as there have been on this occasion; but the former project has proved a success, and I am sure the one now under review will be even a greater success. Another feature about the country is that there is no waste land, no sand, no land that cannot be utilised. It is all either agricultural or timber country.

Mr. Taylor: There is a lot of gravel country.

Mr. LAYMAN: That reminds me of the remark by the member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood), who said, when speaking in reply to the speech of the member for Wellington (Mr. Haywood), that the line would be travelling through a ballast pit from end to end. I am sure Mr. Haywood never meant that interpretation to be placed upon his words. There is gravel at certain places along the line, and there will be no difficulty in ballasting the railway. Everyone who knows anything about our timber lands, is aware that the jarrah forests are nearly all in gravel country. There is a great deal of splendid jarrah forest along the route, and necessarily there is a deal of good ballasting. The member for Claremont (Mr. Foulkes) called the Government to task for not having placed these railways in the hands of a committee to report upon, and he stated that, in the House of Commons, this course was always adopted. I would point out to that gentleman that the business in the House of Commons is so great that it would be impossible for the whole House to go into the details of every railway proposed. It is the duty of members in a House like this, to travel round the country and see it for themselves, and not leave a question of this sort to be decided by three or four men. I am quite convinced there is not a member of this House who has visited the country,

who will vote against the line. Even the Leader of the Opposition will support the proposal, because he has seen the country and knows its virtues. I feel convinced the Bill will pass, and it goes without saying that I strongly support it.

Mr. GILL (Balkatta): Like some members who have preceded me, I regret we had not more information in regard to the construction of this railway on the introduction of the measure. The Premier certainly dealt with the quality of the soil and some of the prospects, but there are many aspects from a railway point of view it is desirable the House should have before consenting to the construction of this, or any, railway. In connection with past railway proposals we had no reports from persons competent to express an opinion on a railway and, as far as I can see, there are no such reports presented on this occasion. The member for East Fremantle (Mr. Angwin) is evidently opposed to the idea of railway experts reporting on proposed lines.

Mr. Layman: The railways are not the consideration, but the country we are opening up.

Mr. GILL: We have also to look at the financial consideration. It is the duty of the Works Department, or whoever intended to construct the railway, to get an opinion from a competent railway expert before they decided on a matter of such importance as this.

The Minister for Works: Are you referring to the construction? We do that from the Works Department.

Mr. GILL: I am not satisfied that the recommendations of railway experts with regard to proposed new lines are adopted. Do railway experts report on the lines, on the route, on the grades, on the weight of rails desirable to be laid down?

The Minister for Works: I would be sorry if the reports were always adopted for if so, we would have standard railways everywhere.

Mr. GILL: I object to the Works Department taking so prominent a part in matters they are not competent to deal with. That is a grave mistake. Take

the case of this railway. We have here an estimate of the cost of construction, totalling £35,000. That is most misleading, for there is no provision as there should be—although it is not the custom in this State—for rolling stock. If we are going to increase the mileage of the railway system rolling stock must be provided, for the same quantity will not do for one thousand miles as is sufficient for five hundred.

The Treasurer: The distance of this line is only 25 miles.

Mr. GILL: But there are other lines, and if rolling stock is provided for all of them, the supply for the State generally must be short. The Commissioner of Railways has made a complaint on that score. I have always contended that rolling stock should be provided for in the estimate. In the Eastern States when they are going to construct a railway, this provision is made, so much being charged for railway stock. That is only right and reasonable, whether the railway is in an agricultural or any other district. The Commissioner explains how the percentage of rolling stock has been reduced, owing to the increased mileage of the new lines decided upon, and suggests that it is desirable to make provision in the estimate of the cost of construction for rolling stock with which they will be worked. This is only a reasonable proposition. There is yet another aspect. The Commissioner in dealing with spur lines complains of that, and rightly so. He says in his report, "While I am aware that low cost has been the controlling element in their construction, I may perhaps be permitted to draw attention to the fact that low cost in construction is very liable to be altogether nullified by high cost of subsequent maintenance." That aspect of the case was dealt with by the Leader of the Opposition when speaking this afternoon. Not only maintenance and construction, but also the equipment necessary for the railway should be provided. I also notice that there is no provision whatever made for shelter sheds. It is absolutely necessary that sheds should be provided, for in that part of the country where the rainfall is

heavy, settlers wanting to send their products away, cannot dump them down on the ground without there being any shelter, otherwise they would be all destroyed, not only on account of the weather conditions, but also owing to the fact of cattle straying along the lines.

The Minister for Works: We are making provision for fencing the sidings.

Mr. GILL: It is no use providing for fencing the sidings unless there are proper cattle guards. Are they being provided also?

The Minister for Works: Yes.

Mr. GILL: It is to be hoped that these will be an improvement on those constructed in the past, for there are serious complaints with regard to them. If there are not proper cattle guards the fences are useless. There should be shelter sheds provided along the line, otherwise it is more than likely that rain will destroy the goods left at the sidings. These matters are not mentioned, but if reports were obtained from competent railway authorities they would be attended to. We find in the Bill that the grade of the line is one in forty, and for this grade only 45lb. rails are to be provided. I am satisfied that no competent railway man would suggest that rails of this weight would suit the traffic. This cannot be described as an ordinary spur line.

The Minister for Works: Does not the speed of the train make a difference?

Mr. GILL: Yes; but if we take the Premier's word and that of the member for Nelson (Mr. Layman), it is hoped this line will be continued, and that the time is not far distant when it will be a through trunk line to Denmark. In such a case 45lb. rails would be of no use whatever. For spur lines such as those in the agricultural districts the 45lb. rails perhaps answer, but for a line intended to be made a trunk line, some better provision should be made to cope with the traffic we expect to get on it if the line runs through. Judging from the remarks of those who should be competent to know there is the prospect of heavy traffic on the line at some future date. That being the case, the grades are too stiff and the rails are too light, and it will mean that we shall have to go over

that railway again in the very near future, and regrade and re-rail it. The estimate is therefore most misleading and the proposition is not a fair one to put before members. I have another objection, and that is concerning the clause providing for deviation. It is not a reasonable proposition, and I shall vote against it. I hope members will strike out the clause which provides for a deviation of five miles on either side of the line. It appears to me that no survey has been made.

Mr. Layman: A permanent survey has been made.

Mr. GILL: Then what is the reason for putting in this clause? It looks to me as if it were made in the dark. I am satisfied hon. members will remove the clause. I may mention to the House that I intend to oppose this railway, not because of the objections I have raised, not because I do not think the country is not good enough—because I think that portion of the State is very good, and although I am not thoroughly conversant with it, I have been given to understand that it is a rich portion of the State—but my objections are, as I mentioned at the elections, that I considered the Government were not justified in spending any more money in the construction of railways until they brought those lands alongside the railways already constructed, into use. I am satisfied that a great number of members will take exception to this attitude, but I cannot help it. I am satisfied there is sufficient vacant land available for scores of thousands of settlers, land that has not been brought into use and will not be brought into use while the Government are spending loan money, and while by doing so they are enhancing the value of land that is locked up. The Government should set to work to do their utmost, instead of spending loan money to enhance the value of locked up estates which are right alongside our existing railway lines. There is one little matter I would refer to in connection with the working of spur lines. When the Honorary Minister was speaking I interjected and said in effect that they were more expensive to work than ordinary lines. The Minister did

not accept my word as the word of an authority. However I have a paragraph here which is a statement by the present Commissioner of Railways in regard to spur lines. This statement was made in connection with the taking of evidence before the Immigration Commission, and Mr. Short, who was then Chief Traffic Manager, said:—

“Such spur lines would be costly and inconvenient for all purposes of working traffic. They would have to be worked from the existing loco. depots at Beverley and Wagin, which in case of three of them would involve excessive expense in light running, or else indefensible delay to main line trains; or else a separate small locomotive establishment would have to be organised at three additional stations, a course which, on account of capital cost and cost of maintenance, is to be avoided if possible. I estimate that 29,640 train miles per annum would be necessary for light running, and that one-half of this service at least should be debited against the spur lines. By careful management one-half should be capable of being utilised for the service of the existing line.”

Mr. Layman: But this is not a spur line; it is an extension of the Donnybrook-Bridgetown line.

Mr. GILL: I am satisfied it is not the intention of the Minister to make Wilgarrup the terminus of the extension. Perhaps the hon. member can tell me whether that is so.

Mr. Layman: No.

Mr. GILL: Then it will be worked as a spur line. As a matter of fact I do not think hon. members know exactly what it is going to be.

Mr. Johnson: The hon. member for Nelson wants it to be a terminus.

Mr. GILL: I want to state for the benefit of the Minister for Agriculture, who said that the train mileage is cheaper on the spur lines than on the main lines, that such is not the case. The Honorary Minister may have got that out of a report, but he is evidently not conversant with the term “train mileage.” That term is most misleading and is calculated to mislead any person. “Train mileage”

simply means that which is charged up when a train is running with a load behind it. The engine runs down to where there is a spur line: the train is left in the siding and they pick up the brake van and run to the end of the spur line. That run is not charged up; that is called a light run and is not charged as "train mileage." They only charge train mileage when they carry goods, consequently it is most misleading to anyone not conversant with the term. The term is used because it looks well in a report. Any railway officer, if he is going to compare the working of his line with another line, compares the train mileage. Looking at it from an expense point of view it is a losing game. The working of these spur lines is far more expensive than the working of the main trunk lines. I am not going to take up the time of the House long, but I wish to say I am satisfied that the time will come when we will have to run the railway from Bridgetown right through to Denmark. I am convinced of the fact that the country is good and at some future time the dairying industry will be one of considerable magnitude and especially in that portion of the State. But until we have devised some means of establishing the dairying industry, until we have some scheme by which we can establish that industry in that portion of the State, we are premature with our railway. The Premier in introducing this Bill told us the railway would go through heavily timbered country. We know the expense of working country where the timber is heavy. We want people with capital to settle there before we can do any good with it, and then we will have to give them a good deal of assistance.

Mr. Layman: Marketable timber will assist to make it payable from the start.

Mr. GILL: The men you want there are men with capital and, as I have stated, the Government will even then have to go to their assistance before they can establish the industry. There is great scope there for the dairying industry. Undoubtedly we are sending away from the State for dairy produce and fruit, approximately three-quarters of a million per annum, and this should

be retained in the State, but it cannot be retained by building railways into heavily timbered country, such as is proposed here, and then saying, "There is the country: go and establish the industry." It cannot be established by such means. We are told we are getting immigrants here, but are they immigrants who desire to go straight away on the land? If that were the case I would have no objection to offer. But if the Ministry can show me they are bringing immigrants who are capable of settling that land I will be the first to support the proposal to build the railway. But we find that they are bringing immigrants here one day and on the very next day they apply at the Labour Bureau for employment. There are plenty of immigrants at the Labour Bureau to-day who arrived only yesterday. That is the kind of thing that is ruining this country at the present time. Not until the Government have gone into this question more fully, by bringing the right class of immigrants here and giving them reasonable assistance, shall we have some prospect of settling this country, but until something of that kind is done this railway is decidedly premature. For these reasons I intend to oppose its construction.

The TREASURER: I fail to see why those immigrants who arrive in our State should not avail themselves as other residents do of the opportunity of calling at the Labour Bureau. Why the hon. member should be so indignant because immigrants who arrived yesterday were seeking employment at the Labour Bureau to-day I cannot understand.

Mr. Gill: Because we are told they are coming here to settle on the land.

The TREASURER: They would be very foolish indeed if they went on to the land straight away from the steamer without attempting to gain some colonial experience.

Mr. Johnson: At 5s. a week?

Mr. Hopkins: Twelve months for nothing would do them good.

The TREASURER: Employment for this class of people is offering at 25s. a week with tucker. That is what is being offered and that is the work that

most of the applicants at that Labour Bureau will look at. These are facts and the member for Guildford is well acquainted with them.

Mr. Swan: Five shillings a week is what is offered in some cases.

The TREASURER: The Labour Bureau is established for the purpose of finding employment for people, and I am glad to hear that it is answering its purpose to some extent.

Mr. Gill: That is what we are spending our loan money on.

The TREASURER: And why should we not let these people gain experience for 12 months before they take up land. A man who comes here with £50 or £100 in his pocket or more and is foolish enough to go direct on the land without attempting to gain some experience is courting disaster.

Mr. Gill: Are you prepared to give instructions that these immigrants will be employed only on farms?

The TREASURER: No. Why should I refuse any man the right to seek any employment he can get? I will be bound to say this though, that only about 20 per cent. of them do not go on the land. All the others do and those are the men we want. It is refreshing to hear hon. members talking to-night about the cost of these railways. I remember three years ago when I had the honour of being in charge of the Works Department, I was subjected to attack night after night, week after week, because it was alleged I could not build railways cheaply enough. I was called extravagant and it was said I wanted to splash up money and ruin the country. And when I did build railways they were the cheapest ever constructed in Western Australia, and they were constructed on lines similar to those that were built in the timber districts. Now members turn round and begin to find fault because they say the lines are not equipped as the main lines are. It was never intended they should be so equipped. It was understood that if we only gave means of transit, it was all that would be required. The people did not want any stations, and for my part I do not think that they require anything but

shelter sheds. These hon. members will believe anything they see in a report. They are like the Leader of the Opposition who in a miserable whining tone complains of the methods of the Treasurer, the dishonest methods that are bringing this country down to ruination. Why, I have never seen any such methods yet, I do not know of any methods of ours except they have been in the interests of the country. And when I interject and ask the hon. member for instances he refers me to the Estimates and says you are charging up salaries and wages to loan. That, he declares, is the method the Treasurer has introduced. The Treasurer never introduced this method at all. It has been in existence ever since Responsible Government, and it is on the Estimates each succeeding year. It was in the Estimates framed during his term of office.

Mr. Johnson: Only it is now in a more aggravated form.

The TREASURER: Nothing of the sort.

Mr. Johnson: You are spending as much out of loan as possible.

The TREASURER: He is absolutely wrong. I do not interfere with the percentage of wages charged to loan funds.

Mr. Johnson: You are speaking of works; what about the other departments—the Agricultural Department for one.

The TREASURER: Well, what about it?

Mr. Johnson: They are charging salaries to loan; and they are burying men from loan.

The TREASURER: Ah! that is the point. Well, why should not the poor man be buried from loan?

Mr. Collier: Because he ought to be buried from sinking fund.

The TREASURER: The hon. member is a contractor, and he would have the House believe that if he took a contract he would not allow a percentage for contingencies. Why, all the world over the system is adopted. If you break down a wagon, or a carriage, or a truck it is charged up against the job; and so if, unfortunately, you break down a human being from accident it is

charged against the job. These interjections are all on a par with the foolish remarks that have fallen from the Leader of the Opposition who, I regret, is not here just now. Everything he can see in connection with this country is gloomy—even this little railway Bill. It is all blurred over with distrust, mistrust, and suspicion, and all because of the methods of the Treasurer. What on earth have the methods of accountancy of the Treasury to do with the construction of this railway? But because of this he is hesitating as to whether he should support the Bill or not. Eventually he decides to support it, which is very commendable on his part. But let me point out to the hon. member who has just spoken that if we are to build this railway—a continuation of the main railway at Bridgetown—if we are to build it on the lines of the main line between Fremantle and Spencer's Brook, we will have all the intervening distance between Perth and Bridgetown laid with 46¼-pound and 45-pound rails; we will be putting down an extension of 20 miles in expensive fashion while we have 120 odd miles of 46¼-pound and 45-pound rails.

Mr. Gill: Are they not relaying that?

The TREASURER: Only for a short distance, that is all; yet all the heavy traffic of the South-Western line is carried over this railway, and the hon. member protests that we are doing something scandalously wrong if we carry out this little extension into the timber country on cheaper lines. Exception has been taken to the construction of this and other similar railways on the score there has been no special expert report. It has been advocated by some hon. members that we should have a works committee of members of the House to report upon these railways. Now whilst I quite agree that all the information available should be given in connection with works of this description, yet I would like to point out that no amount of reporting by experts can help the Government in their policy. These lines are purely policy railways—matters of policy which must be decided upon by the Government and of course

sanctioned by Parliament. The question of opening up the country and settling it is one of policy, and if you had all the experts in the world you could be dead certain of having an adverse report on nine-tenths of the railways in this or any other new country. To my mind it is not so much a matter of how many people there are in the district at the present moment, as to how many people it can successfully carry in the near future. We build the lines to attract people to the country, to overcome the complaint that you cannot get land suitable for settlement within a reasonable distance of the railway system. And I am quite sure that all hon. members who have travelled in this portion of our State will agree with me that there is no better part of Western Australia for the purpose of closer settlement than that part lying to the South of Bridgetown, Nannup, and Busselton.

Mr. Johnson: I have heard you say that with everyone of these Bills.

The TREASURER: That is the trouble. It is necessary to go on repeating these arguments that hon. members may come to a just decision in connection with these matters. This portion of the State is to a very great extent practically unknown. It has not been settled for very long, but we have there some of the best country in Western Australia for closer settlement. And we have also the first essential to make a line of this description payable from the start; we have great timber reserves. The jarrah forest extends right down one side of this railway, and when you get to Wilgarrup you tap the karri forests. Hon. members will not dispute the reports of the member for Wellington, who has travelled this country, and of the Premier himself, who has been through it time after time.

Mr. Scaddan: You must not believe all you see in reports.

The TREASURER: I am prepared to believe the members who have travelled the district. Another matter referred to by the Leader of the Opposition was with regard to the resumption of land. He asked me if the Government had ex-

exercised the powers given them under these railway Bills, to resume lands within 12 months of the completion of the line. I have made inquiries and I believe that the Government have not exercised those powers and that up to the present there is only one occasion in which they have given notice of their intention to resume. The notice was given to one land owner and he immediately showed the Government the improvements he was going to make and the amount of money he had already expended. When they were satisfied that he was doing all that could be expected of him to improve his estate they allowed the proceedings to drop. It is a safeguard to be exercised when the necessity arises. It is not put into the Bill in order that the Government can go here, there and everywhere buying up estates and re-selling them. So long as the existing owners are doing a fair thing in the matter of improving their land and in respect to the production of the soil it is not intended to exercise the powers given under that clause. But if ever the time comes when large blocks of land are being held for speculative purposes and we know of it, the clause will certainly be put into effect. Reference was made to the Bolgart line, and to the Midland Company's land sale. After all, this does not do away with the right of the Government to resume the land if they deem it necessary. The fact of the company putting up the land for sale is of little moment, for it is sold subject to the conditions contained in the Bill in connection with this railway. I quite agree that it would perhaps be considered a very severe hardship if an individual purchased land from the company at an increased price and the Government were to resume the land from that individual at the value it carried prior to the construction of the line. Still, as I say, the rights exist for 12 months and the land can be resumed if desirable. The matter of ballast has been referred to by the member for Pilbara. He reckoned that one could not grow potatoes where there was ironstone ballast. Well, I have never heard of anyone who wished to grow potatoes on

a railway line. You carry the line of railway where the contour of the country will permit you to run it cheaply. You do not as a rule pick out the low-lying country, the swamp land, and the river banks, where the best soil is to be found. The member for Mount Margaret took great exception to the deviation clause. He is going to oppose it strenuously, he says. That is a common provision to put into these railway Bills and it is a very wise provision. I do not say that five miles is necessary.

Mr. Taylor: Five miles in 22 miles is rather much.

The TREASURER: Still, you must remember we hope to continue the line, and this is a standard allowance for deviation. The hon. member surely would not wipe it out altogether.

Mr. Taylor: I did not say I should not allow any at all; I say that a mile or two would be quite sufficient.

The TREASURER: If the hon. member did not give that impression someone else did. He said if we had not officers who could give us a direct route we ought to get them. I want to say that the fact that the line is actually surveyed does not always do away with the necessity for subsequent deviation. You may, for instance, on coming to a river find that the spot at which your survey crosses is not after all suitable for your bridge. In such case you might have to deviate a mile or two before getting your bridge across. I do not think that any hon. member will say that this deviation clause is likely to be improperly used. If no difficulties crop up this line will be built along the survey. It is the usual provision in measures of this description, and for my part I think it is a very wise provision to protect the department and the State in case they have to deviate in any way. It is not necessary for me to labour the question.

Mr. Holman: Tell us something about the railway.

The TREASURER: The hon. member must have been asleep. The member for Guildford says he has heard these arguments before. No doubt he has heard that we have splendid country.

and that we have faith in our country, and that we intend to open it up with all the means at our disposal, and that we are not afraid because some members think we ought to stop borrowing, and that we realise that it is our duty to attract people to our shores and give them every facility to settle on the land. The policy of the Government to the present has been undoubtedly successful—I would like to see more of it—and I think we are warranted in pushing forward that policy with all confidence and all energy.

Mr. SWAN (North Perth): Generally speaking, I am opposed to the further construction of agricultural railway lines while the Government pay so little attention to the development of the land along our existing railways. I have listened very attentively to the discussion on this question. At the outset I did not intend to have anything to say on it, and I was rather disappointed when I found that even the Leader of the Opposition was going to vote for the Bill, but it was somewhat of a relief to me, when the member for Pilbara got on his feet, to find that there was at least one man in the Chamber with practically the same views as myself on the subject.

The Treasurer: The hon. member did not vote against the Pilbara railway.

Mr. SWAN: If there is any doubt about his vote, there is not the slightest doubt about mine. I promised the electors, when I asked them to return me to Parliament, that I was going to oppose any further extension of the agricultural railway system until the present Administration made some earnest attempt to develop the unused lands along existing lines. I maintain they have not made any earnest attempt to do so, and for this reason apart from any other I am going to oppose the second reading of this Bill. I waited a long while to hear the member for the district on the question, and, unfortunately, I was not in the Chamber when he started his speech, but I did not hear anything from him to change my opinion in regard to the direction of my vote on the subject.

One other reason why I intend to vote against this measure is that I consider the Government are dealing too lightly with a proposition of this description. Of course, I am somewhat inexperienced as a member of Parliament, but I am not inexperienced in reading the consideration of measures such as this both here and in other States, and I have never yet seen a matter of this description dealt with in such a slipshod manner as the Government are dealing with this. It seems to me to be a pretty general thing in other States to have a report from an engineer on any railway proposition, no matter how small, and although this is a comparatively short line of railway, it means the expenditure of £35,000, according to the estimate we have before us. I do not think the Government should deal with the expenditure of £35,000 unless we have a report of an engineer on the subject. That is another reason why I am going to vote against the Bill, notwithstanding the fact that I am fully seized with the possibilities of the development of this particular district, especially in regard to the dairying industry, an industry I am very anxious to see developed in this country. I believe there are great possibilities in Western Australia for the development of that industry, and particularly in the district represented by the member for Nelson; but notwithstanding this, I am still going to vote against this measure, and against any other agricultural railway proposal, until the Government do something that I consider is an earnest attempt to get a larger percentage of the unused lands along our railways under cultivation. It has been argued that this is not an expensive line; that it will be a cheaply constructed line. That is a bad policy, I consider. If this line is to form portion of a railway from Bridgetown to Albany, then I do not consider it is good policy to build a cheap railway. I have seen some of the effects of these cheap railways. The railway to Collie was a comparatively cheap railway, and I have had some experience of the effect to rolling stock of working over a railway of that description, and it

would be interesting to know how much the alterations needed on that particular line have cost.

Mr. Hopkins: Is that the line from Brunswick to Collie?

Mr. SWAN: Yes, the best line in Australia for tearing locomotives to pieces. I know that, and I do not suppose any member in this Chamber will be prepared to argue it. If there is, then I am prepared to take him on. The Treasurer has told us that we do not always take the best soil for running a railway on, or that we do not run it along the bed of the creek; but there are times when we practically do so. It is practically the case in the Collie line; and so far as any information before the House goes, the same thing may happen in regard to this proposal. At any rate, we have no information to the contrary, and in view of my experience as to the result of the construction of the Collie line, with its sharp curves and steep grades, I am going to view very closely any proposition for a cheap railway in the future, especially when it is going to be part of what will be practically a trunk line later on. The Treasurer told us that these lines are a matter of policy. Well, if they are a matter of policy, more care should be taken to have them somewhat of a paying proposition before they are handed over to the Commissioner of Railways; and if that were done, possibly the railway employees would not feel the effects of the construction of these agricultural lines the same as they do to-day. It is another of the burdens they have to bear in addition to the result of the off-handed subsidies granted to timber and coal combines in the past. That again is a reason why I am against this proposal. It is contended that this railway will assist to settle the immigrants on the land. Well, I doubt that. I doubt the wisdom of the immigration policy of the Government altogether, and I have very good reason for doing so. Notwithstanding the hundreds of unemployed we have here to-day, men who have been in the State for years, we find immigrants coming here and securing employment with-

out any trouble at all. Is anyone to believe that it is because these men are more capable than the men we have here that they can secure that employment? Some members may believe it, but I am not going to do so. At the present time in a place like the Perth Gas Works we have five comparatively new arrivals taken on.

Mr. Hopkins: Is that because of any special knowledge they possess?

Mr. SWAN: Not so far as I know. It might be possible, but because of a special capacity for accepting low wages would be nearer the mark I think. It might not be so in this particular instance, but in some instances it is. I have heard of cases where men have gone to work in different parts of the State at 5s. a week rather than hang around Perth any longer and starve in a new country.

Mr. Hopkins: Immigrants?

Mr. SWAN: Yes.

Mr. Hopkins: But they might not be worth more than that.

Mr. SWAN: Then why are the Government bringing them out if they are not worth more than 5s. a week? We have no use for them here. The Government say they are bringing out agricultural labourers. It is a very poor specimen of an agricultural labourer who is not worth more than 5s. a week. There is another thing in connection with these immigrants. I find that men who have only arrived in the State a few days are being employed by the City council, going around on soft little jobs while there are scores of men here willing to take on the work.

Mr. Layman: How do you connect that with the railway?

Mr. SWAN: I can show the connection between the whole business. As to the connection between this and the railway possibly I am making myself clearer than the member for the district did in advocating this construction: at least, I hope so. Even if I fail to make myself clear to the House I am clear in my own mind as to the reasons I have for voting against this railway. Possibly I have not made myself clear. I am very inexperienced, but I have not

a shadow of doubt that when I have been in the House the length of time the member for Nelson has been in it, I will be able to put up as good a case for any want in my own electorate as he has for anything in his district.

Mr. Scaddan: Even about the subway?

Mr. SWAN: I am glad of that interjection, because it is another reason why I oppose this Bill, and I might have forgotten it in the excitement of the moment. I have great difficulty in getting some of the requirements in my own electorate attended to by the various Ministers. The same excuse, want of funds, is put forward every time. Not only have we the population in the electorate, but there is need for the work to be done. I have this reason for saying that the necessity for this subway exists, because Ministers have promised that the work will be done, and I take Ministers at their word—to this extent, that although they made the promise before the election, I believe they made it because they thought the work was necessary. I do not believe they made it because they thought it was liable to get votes for the man who was their particular candidate at the election. I would not like to think that. However, I have the best reason to think they made the promise because the work was necessary. But while such works as this are neglected, and while the roads boards, as pointed out by the member for Greenough last night, are neglected, I am going to vote against these agricultural railways every time, and I regret very much to find any member on the Opposition side of the House supporting this proposition. It seems to be the only way we can waken the Ministers up to the absolute necessity for seriously considering the settlement of people on the land now opened up by our railways.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN (Forrest): I intend to support the Bill, but my reasons for doing so are not due to the able manner in which the measure was presented. There has been a decided lack of information before us, both on the part of

the Minister who introduced the Bill and the member for the district who supported it. In dealing with the prospects and the possibilities of this district I agree with the member for Nelson (*Mr. Layman*) that there is going to be a great future for it so far as the timber industry is concerned. The Premier has given his assurance that the Government will provide for the preservation of the timber and that areas are to be reserved for utilisation for State purposes. I am afraid, however, it is the old, old story of locking the stable door after the horse has gone. We find all along the fringe of the seaboard of the State that concessions have been given into the hands of the few. As regards this particular proposition, I do not hold with some members who have spoken as to the vastness of the timber areas. I was looking anxiously for some assurance from the member for the district as to the area, approximately, of the jarrah forests which are to be served by this line. It is the duty of a Minister in introducing a Bill of this sort, or the duty of a member enthusiastic in his support of the measure, to supply all possible information to the House and to the country as regards the timber land available. I cannot get any information on that score. I am not in the same position as other members who have spoken, for I have been through the district myself. I was somewhat hurt when I heard the Minister for Agriculture accuse members of this side, who were opposing the proposition, of having no knowledge of the district.

Mr. Layman: All who have seen the district support the proposal.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I support the proposal, but I think a better case should have been put up for it, and I am sorry that more information was not provided by the representative of the district. With regard to the karri forests, I am not going to doubt the word of the Minister or that of the member for the district. I have been through, and lived in, the Denmark country and have been through the Warren district, and I recognise that, so far as the karri is concerned, the State has a splendid asset

in that timber. We shall not realise what a splendid asset it is for some years to come, because to-day there does not exist a demand for karri anything like that for jarrah. There is not likely to be for some time. It is only in the construction of bridges and overhead work that this kind of wood is suitable. It is not good for sleepers. Therefore the karri forests have not been exploited and will not be merely because this line of railway will be opened up. It has been said that there is a large area of jarrah in the district, and if so that speaks but little for the quality of the soil. That, however, I do not think is correct, and I know there is very little jarrah, and that on the contrary the soil is more prolific than in jarrah country. There is a great deal of karri. I know myself of it, and that the soil is very much better than that where jarrah is found. Reference has been made to the Donnybrook-Preston railway. We find that a loss of over £8,000 has been incurred through the construction of the spur railways but Ministers point with pride to the one instance where a profit has been made, that is on the Donnybrook-Preston railway. I am sorry to see this line referred to as an agricultural railway; for by no stretch of the imagination can it be so called. It is a timber railway, and it is through the development of the timber in that district that the profit is shown.

Mr. Scaddan: They would not point that out in the reports.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Possibly. Being a young member, the youngest member in the House, I may be pardoned if I give more credit to Ministers than they should receive. Sometimes when I hear of the Donnybrook-Preston railway being such a huge success I point out that had not the timber existed, and had not the timber areas of that part of the country been exploited—and exploited, I am sorry to say, in too rash a manner—the line would show a bigger loss than any of the spur lines. The only reason for the profit shown is the freight received for the timber. A great deal has been said of the agricultural possibilities of the Donnybrook-Preston line, but

I have a fairly close acquaintance with the district and know there are thousands of acres unfit for agriculture. It is jarrah country, and as has been so rightly pointed out, that sort of country is no good for agriculture.

Mr. Jacoby: Some of the jarrah country is the best in the State.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: That may be so, but I do not agree with the hon. member.

Mr. Jacoby: Experience has shown that it is.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: That is not the experience of the old residents of the South-West, who always vastly prefer the rich karri lands to the jarrah country.

Mr. Jacoby: The latter is splendid for fruit-growing.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: We are not going to grow fruit only in that district.

Mr. Jacoby: But you said the land was no good.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: My reason for supporting the Bill is I know that in the district proposed to be served by the railway there are areas of karri, and that in consequence we can rely on the soil being rich. I want to deal with some of the statements made by the Treasurer, but before doing so, I have a word or two more to say with regard to the Donnybrook-Preston railway. Were it not for the fact that sawmills have been established there, and that 200 or 300 sleeper cutters are in the district, the traffic from the fruit and wheat growing industries established in the district would not provide more than ten train loads per year.

Mr. Jacoby: A great number of trees are not bearing yet.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: It will be a long time before they are, and I am afraid when the timber is exhausted the railway will show a big loss. The fruit growing and agricultural industries will not be sufficiently developed to come to the rescue of the line for some time. One travelling along that district will find that, notwithstanding the fact that the railway runs through it, this magnificent agricultural land, as it has been described, is of so productive a char-

cter, that one sees everywhere empty condensed milk tins. This shows there is not much dairying in the district. The Chinamen of Perth are still sending vegetables along that line.

Mr. Jacoby: The tins are not left here by the settlers; there is any quantity of milk.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I have been there often and have enjoyed the hospitality of the settlers, and condensed milk was used in nearly every instance. Possibly the people thought to give me something special. To deal with the statements made by the Treasurer regarding the immigration policy of the Government, I may say he has advanced as a reason for the construction of the line, that immigrants are coming to the State, and that the new area to be opened up by the railway will provide them with venues of employment and that they will be given an opportunity to settle the district. At the present time we are not paying sufficient attention to developing the resources along existing railways, and we are not seeing that proper steps are taken to make the holders of such states develop them or put them to better use than is the case at present. In the district of Northam, there are estates, as in other parts, which should be developed to a greater extent than they now are. I recognise that the bulwark of the future prosperity of the State is the proper utilisation and development of the land. I am now giving my reasons for going in a different direction from some members who support the Bill. I was sorry to hear the remarks of the Treasurer as to the possibilities before immigrants in this district. We find that in the Sussex district which is represented by that gentleman, there are immigrants settled on land which I consider nothing more than a sandy waste, five or six miles from Busselton. To my idea they will only remain there so long as the Agricultural Bank sticks to them. They have been unwise in making that choice of a district and the department in putting people on country like that have been foolish, especially considering the fact that a few miles further on in the

Karridale country, there are large areas now held by the timber concession, unutilised, with no timber on them, with the blackboys growing down to the edge of the sea, that in the future will be the Warrnambool of this State. If a little more attention were paid to the work of acquiring these large areas now running to waste, we would be pursuing a better policy than by sending immigrants, and even some of our own people, to areas where they have not a chance of making a decent existence as agriculturists. If any of our own people require land in this or in any other district they should receive preference over any immigrant, no matter where he comes from. Our people can readily adapt themselves to circumstances, and are better able than new-comers to overcome those pioneering difficulties which meet every settler on the soil. I support the second reading of the Bill, because of the possibilities of the district, not in the immediate present, but in the future. At the terminus of this line we have soil equal to any in the State, in fact much superior to most of it, and I support the Bill for that reason. As stress has been laid on the question of the cheap cost of construction, I desire to suggest that an experiment should be made with regard to the supply of sleepers for the line. I hope sleepers will be procured from the hewers at something like a reasonable rate. In looking into the actions of the Government in the past so far as sleeper-cutting in this State is concerned, I find it must be condemned as nothing but sweating. The rate paid for the sleepers has been a sweating one. I hope provision will be made, when this Bill is going through Committee, that in connection with the building of railways in this country, when sleepers are within a chain of the railway route, such provision will be made in the direction of obtaining them, as will enable us to say when the railway has been constructed that the State has acted as a model employer, and has set an example for private companies to follow. Other matters have been touched upon in the course of the de-

bate, but I do not intend to take up any more time. I support the second reading, and I hope that in future when other Bills of a similar nature are presented, we shall have more information, and that it will be put before members without the shadow of a doubt that the construction of the line is fully justified. I am voting for this line, although perhaps I have said a few things against it, but owing to my knowledge of the district, and because I feel sure it will be a paying proposition, I have decided in favour of the proposal. I have come to the conclusion that if at any future time another railway is required, no special efforts will be needed to induce the Government to construct it. There will be no need for the member for the district through which the line is to pass to take any trouble to collect facts in support of the railway proposition; nevertheless I hope that whoever it is, he will provide more facts and figures than have been presented in connection with this measure. The one question I want an answer upon is, as to the area of the forests. As to the karri, it is unlimited, but what is the area of the jarrah which is such a source of profit now and will continue for years to come. I am afraid that the extent of the jarrah forests exists only in the imagination of some of the members who support this proposal.

Mr. HOPKINS (Beverley): I do not know that it is exactly fair that when a member represents his district and endeavours to put up the best case he possibly can, because he does not happen to be blest with the oratorical powers of my friends opposite—I say it is not fair that he should be attacked for what after all should have been done, and I think was ably done last night by the Premier in introducing the Bill. I am sorry I was not here when the Premier moved the second reading of the Bill, at the same time I am giving it my support because I not only know the country but because I have faith in that country and my views coincide with those of the member for Swan who stated that it was excellent fruit coun-

try and would eventually carry a big population.

Mr. Scaddan: What about Hamel?

Mr. HOPKINS: No doubt later in the session I will have an opportunity of speaking about Hamel. With the advent of poulation these areas will become popular and the fruit industry will be one of the industries which will be of very great importance. Personally I agree that in the wild rush to build agricultural railways for the prospective settler, very often too little regard is paid for the man who is already on the land. I can give some instances where in my opinion railways would be more warranted than this line; but that would not justify me in opposing the Wilgarrup line, a line which to my knowledge has many merits behind it. I would like to have an assurance from the Government in regard to the clause dealing with deviation. When the Collie-Narrogin railway was surveyed—I am at a loss to know who was responsible—the townsite was so located by the engineers that it suited a private resident who had previously been given a farm of 160 acres, so admirably, that when it came to the State selling the land, this party got in before the Government. That proceeding was so disgraceful that it should have brought about the dismissal of the engineers responsible, because who can say, the Darkan railway station might have been shifted and would practically have been of no consequence. The same thing has happened at Wickiepin, and the State on each occasion has been robbed of hundreds and perhaps of thousands of pounds. I can take my memory back to Sir John Forrest's time when Parliament, after spending £25,000 on building the railway to connect Kalgoorlie with Boulder, immediately followed that up by granting a concession to an English company to run a tramline in opposition to the railway, thus robbing the State of £9,000 annually. The total expenditure on that railway line ran into a huge sum, and it was not only the fact of losing £9,000 but it is the fact that this has gone on for all time, and that line, apart from the firewood traffic, is now practically

worthless. Speaking on the Address-in-Reply I expressed the conviction then that what the State wanted was to get authorisation for about three millions sterling for the purpose of having a definite railway policy for a period of three years, the life of the Parliament, and building necessary agricultural railways, classifying and subdividing the whole of the land along these railways, and then advertising that country as open for selection, in the Eastern States. If a schedule of those blocks were then advertised in the *Bulletin* and *Australasian*, together with a schedule of the prices and an intimation that the Agricultural Bank would lend money on each block, is it not reasonable to assume that in States like Victoria and New South Wales, where we find 50 or 60 or even 70 applicants for one block—and everyone with the exception of one must go away disappointed—we could induce some of those people to come here, and to my way of thinking everyone of those settlers would be superior to the English people who are brought here to-day. I am glad that members opposite say “hear, hear,” because the existing immigration policy was introduced by the Labour party and I expressed the firm conviction at the time that they were the first to introduce a policy of that kind, and it is one that they are not desirous of championing to-day.

Mr. Bath: We brought our immigrants from the Eastern States.

Mr. HOPKINS: I do not know that you did. The bulk of the people who came from the Eastern States were people who were assisted. They were the wives and children of men who were in the State and that policy received a greater impetus during the time that Sir Walter James was Premier than at any other time. At any rate in a weak moment I was interviewed by an officer of the Labour Bureau recently, and I was invited to find employment and assist the bureau to find employment for some of the English immigrants. I did not engage them at 5s. a week, I paid them at the standard rate, but I found them to be people quite unsuited for the work. The same thing must apply to all

these immigrants. They may be adapted for factory work and similar employment, but the surplus population that we require must be the grown up sons of Australian farmers, who are the class of people we want to open up the dry areas that are available for selection in this country. It is all very well for people to point to what the British race has done here and in the Eastern States. My ancestors came from the old world and I have the same respect for an Englishman as any other member in the House. But the Australian who is born and educated in the Australian bush is best suited to do a man's work in the bush. He can do as much in one week as an English immigrant who knows nothing of the work can do in three months. It is absolutely absurd to speak of bringing English immigrants here and asking them to subdue virgin country. Yet I have known an instance of an English couple who came here a few years ago, and who to-day are in a fine position in the State. They proved themselves highly capable and are to-day on a big farm in this country. I mention that to show that Englishmen will be able to assimilate themselves to our conditions. In dealing with the question of unused land along the railways, I do not see that we can do anything in regard to it in a Bill of this nature, but we can by a slight alteration to the land tax find ways and means of dealing with these people who have large areas of land unoccupied in close proximity to a railway or elsewhere throughout the South-Western portion of the State. I am not hopeful of doing too much during this session, but at any rate if we are able to indicate to the Government—who after all are the executive of this House—the desire of members, I have not the slightest doubt that before the House meets again—and no doubt when it meets again we will have a longer session and will be able to give more time to these matters—there will be some reasonable modification of the incidence of the land tax which I think will be favourable to all parties. I think there are many people who should pay a heavier levy than they pay

to-day. That is no justification for seizing on the man who has exhausted every nerve and is doing his best to establish a home probably in an inhospitable tract of country. But to those men, the pioneers, I would see that every sympathy is extended, and that is why I have given such opposition to the land tax. I would like the Government to pay special attention to the question of townsites, and in dealing with them they will be able to get more revenue than under the methods carried out at Wickpin and Darkan. These are things that it devolves on members to expose. It is only by giving ventilation to such grievances that we can have them rectified. In connection with this railway I am pleased to give it my hearty support, and I hope we will see it carried and that this line along with other necessary railways for which the country is languishing will be taken in hand with all the expedition possible. It is not to be expected that these railways will pay when first put down; but the State should be prepared to act the part of a beneficent landlord and provide facilities. If this is not done there is little prospect of other people doing it for us.

Mr. JOHNSON (Guildford): I desire to express the opinion that I have not received sufficient information to justify me in voting against this second reading, but I also want to point out I do not think I have received enough that will justify me in voting for it. It is one of those propositions presented to us in exactly the same form as the other agricultural railway Bills. We have the Minister stating that this is just the proposition that the country should undertake, that it will open up land which is the best in the State; and it is remarkable that in every instance these railways are going to open up a dairying locality. I want again to emphasise the point that I have always raised and I am glad to see that we have a member on the Government side of the House who has realised its importance, that we should protect the country by having a board of competent experts to report on works of this description. It has been said, and during the last

general elections too, that the Government claim they deserve well of the country for the introduction of these agricultural spur lines. I have previously pointed out that this Government did not initiate the present policy of agricultural railways, that the present Colonial Treasurer was not the man who outlined the system of constructing these railways. The method of construction was introduced long before the present Ministry came into office. The whole scheme was done long before the Moore or the Rason Ministries came into power. But the previous Government, on going into this question, decided to keep these propositions altogether free from political influence. They would not place the House in the position in which we are placed to-night when we have to depend upon the member for the district, who is an interested party, to furnish us with information as to the value of the proposition. It is not fair to ask that the hon. member should do this. Some may be inclined to say that we must discount the words of the hon. member; but in doing this we are running the risk of inflicting an injustice on the district. There is only one way of protecting the State in this question, and that is to appoint a board of experts free from political influence to report upon these propositions. We have this railway proposition before us to-night. I am not prepared to say it is not a fair proposition; and being of that opinion I intend to vote for the Bill. Still it is possible that there are other areas more deserving of railways; and we do not know for ourselves the various claims of the different portions of the State. Consequently, to my way of thinking we should place this State in the hands of competent men empowered to go through it and pick out those areas which should be the first to be developed by agricultural railways. I would like to point out that I am not prepared to accept the statements of the member for the district, or of the Minister: neither am I prepared to accept the report received from the departmental officers. And for this reason: I had occasion to

interest myself to a very great extent in ascertaining the value of a certain railway proposition presented to this House; and after a careful inspection, and having some little knowledge of the agricultural lands of this State, I came to the conclusion that the Government were making a mistake in constructing that particular line where they have since constructed it. I am referring to the Narrogin-Wickepin railway. I had statements from the Minister and I knew that they were gross exaggerations of the position. So too were the reports of the departmental officers. Having lived in the district for a little time I knew from my own inspection and from riding round the locality day after day—I knew perfectly well that the House was being misled by these reports. How then can I be expected to follow the Minister on a question of this sort in respect to a locality I know nothing about? Yet if I vote against it I may be doing an injustice to a deserving portion of the State; to a portion indeed which, it may be, deserved consideration before the Wickepin district. On the other hand if I vote for the Bill I may be voting for something not justified, and therefore be doing an injury to the finances of the State. Now I would like to say a word as to the method of construction. I do not think the Minister for Works intended to convey the meaning that I gathered from his reply to the member for Balkatta, when he said that he would be very sorry to accept the recommendations of the Public Works officers in connection with the construction of spur railways.

The Minister for Works: No; I did not say that.

Mr. JOHNSON: I think what the Minister meant was that he would be very sorry to accept the suggestions of the working railways department; a different thing altogether.

The Minister for Works: That is right.

Mr. JOHNSON: Ever since the Public Works Department have been constructing these railways they have had to fight the working railways department. Take the Kalgoorlie-Menzies railway,

which was constructed on the elaborate lines laid down by the working railways department. The Public Works Department put up a big fight but were overruled, and we have there to-day stations absolutely not required. Some of them are standing in districts practically depopulated while others are falling to pieces for want of attention. But the Public Works Department should not be subjected to any discredit on that account. In connection with these agricultural railways the sole credit for the light and cheap construction must be given absolutely to the Engineer-in-Chief, Mr. Thompson, with his lieutenant, Mr. Dartnall. Unquestionably these two men are second to none in Australia in respect to railway construction. Mr. Thompson is one of the best authorities on railway construction in Australia and consequently I am pleased to hear that the Minister had no desire to reflect on the Public Works Department. In my opinion he expressed a very sound opinion when he said it would be a bad day if we were to allow the Railway Department to interfere with the design and equipment of these spur lines. The question of immigration is foreign to the question before the House, but it has been introduced here to-night and I wish to endorse the remarks of the member for Beverley who said that we should first give consideration to our own people and endeavour to get them settled on the land. There are a number in our midst who are anxious to get on the land, and who day by day go to the Lands Department with the object of placing their families on an agricultural block. After exhausting our own people we should I think immediately turn to the Eastern States; and the only effective way of doing that will be absolutely to close down the assistance rendered to the immigrants from overseas. We are not getting the class of immigrants we want. I have no desire to reflect on the immigrants who are coming here. In their particular way of calling they are suitable enough men and I do not object to them on that score; but we want agricultural labourers and land selectors, and we are not getting them. It is true, as

the member for North Perth says, that they go to the Labour Bureau and get work at 5s. a week. I know of one illustration: an immigrant was engaged to go on a farm in the South-West at 5s. per week, and an Australian who was already there getting 30s. a week, was put off to make room for the new-comer.

Mr. Angwin: Are you sure of that?

Mr. JOHNSON: Yes; I have it from the man himself. He told me that if we liked to look round and make inquiries we would find numerous instances of these immigrants being engaged through the Labour Bureau, supposedly as apprentices to agricultural work, at 5s. per week. That is coming into competition with our own men, too many of whom we have unemployed to-day. While we have Australians, and especially our own people of Western Australia, unemployed it is I contend unfair to bring immigrants in to get on the land.

The Minister for Mines: Do you not think the Labour Bureau would tell these people the ruling rate of wages? They are expected to do so.

Mr. JOHNSON: They should do it but the unfortunate part of it is that they do not. That is one of the reasons I had for moving for an enquiry into the methods of that department.

The Minister for Mines: Do you say you know of full-grown men getting 5s. a week in an engagement through the Labour Bureau?

Mr. JOHNSON: Yes. At all events I have been informed that it is so. In connection with my motion for enquiry into the administration of the bureau that was one of the matters I desired to investigate; and having been given the opportunity I intend to do so, just to find out what special consideration is given to these immigrants, and how many of them are engaged by certain men whose names I have been given, and to ascertain what wages they receive. But apart from the Labour Bureau I can show that these people get special consideration. We have only to remember that we have in our midst an organisation brought into existence to assist these immigrants. We have had a sort of society formed to welcome them on

their introduction to Western Australia and to assist in securing employment for them. We have our Australian men and women appealing to people by circular asking them to assist financially in this work of encouraging immigrants. Yet, side by side with these immigrants our own people are practically starving, and the members of this philanthropic society will not raise their hands to assist them. We have the organisation coming to the Government making special requests on behalf of these immigrants while ignoring our own unemployed. Consequently can you wonder that there is a great discontent in this State against the immigration policy of the Government? If this policy be pursued much further there will be a decided action taken by the people to demonstrate that they will not tolerate the introduction of ordinary labour into an already over-stocked market. As I have said, the immigration policy of the Government is not a matter altogether relevant to this Bill, but it has been introduced and I wanted merely to express my opinion. When the estimates come round there will be a great deal more said upon the point. I am voting for this Bill, and voting for it blindly. I have not sufficient information to justify me either in voting for or against it. However, being anxious to see the country settled I am prepared to take the risk on this occasion. But I do again make an appeal to the Government to institute some better method of deciding where and when these railways are to be constructed, to furnish better information and to avoid making members depend on the remarks of the member for the district who is, after all, an interested party.

The Minister for Works: Did you not hear the Treasurer?

Mr. JOHNSON: I did. He made the same speech on each of these Bills.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Daglish in the Chair; the Treasurer in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1, 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Deviation:

Mr. BATH: The member for Mount Margaret was correct in saying that so far as previous lines were concerned, it had not proved advantageous to have this deviation provision. If trustworthy officers had marked out, after inquiry, a route with regard to the railway as being the best from all points of view, why the necessity to deviate five miles? The same power was given in regard to the Katanning-Kojonup Railway.

The Minister for Works: There was a bigger deviation in that case.

Mr. BATH: There was a deviation in connection with that railway against the recommendation of the officers of the Public Works Department.

The Treasurer: No.

Mr. BATH: The member for Perth could bear this out. The files that had been placed on the Table in connection with the matter bore out the contention that there was a deviation contrary to the advice of the officers of the department, a deviation that was asked for and worked for by members of Parliament. Something similar had occurred in connection with the Wagin-Dumbleyung Railway, a deviation having been made against the opinions of the majority of the settlers along the route supposed to be fixed by the Bill when it passed the House. We should be able to rely on the advice given by our officers, and the best route suggested in their recommendation should be embodied in the Bill, and the clause for deviation eliminated.

The Treasurer: The suggestion could be carried out if it were plain, straightforward country, though even then it would be subject to some danger, because in railway construction one could never tell when difficulties would be met with and need to be overcome. There was rough country to the South of Bridgetown. For instance, the railway would start by crossing the river, and there was always the possibility after the survey was made and every preparation was made to build a bridge, that it would be necessary to go perhaps a couple of miles away from that spot to

get a proper crossing, or a better foundation for the bridge, and also to get clear country beyond the river in which to extend to the South. So it would be unwise to eliminate the five-mile margin specified in the clause. With regard to the Wagin-Dumbleyung Railway, the Bill was passed on merely a projected route; it had not been surveyed; the actual route had to be surveyed subsequent to the passing of the Bill. He had gone over the country prior to the permanent survey being made, and had met some of the settlers there, who advocated different routes. Some had advocated that the line should go in the higher country to the North, and some who lived near the lake had advocated that the route should go further to the South; ultimately the line had been put in a position to suit the greater number of settlers and the greatest quantity of land. There would always be a battle of routes. In the case of this railway to Wilgarrup there was a permanent survey, and unless there were difficulties, such as extreme grades, or others to which he had already referred, he thought it unlikely there would be any deviation from the survey; but there must be sufficient margin to allow the engineer to deviate should it be necessary.

Mr. Bath: Was the Katanning-Kojonup railway only a suggested route?

The Treasurer: Yes. There had been a misunderstanding, the surveyor having taken instructions to examine the route as instructions to make a permanent survey, and having gone 15 miles before finding that he was on the wrong track. However, one could assert that although the line eventually went further to the South than was absolutely necessary, the route the surveyor was first engaged upon would have been most detrimental to the district, because it was escaping large areas of settled country. We should not only look to those who were going on the land, we should endeavour to serve those already settled.

Mr. TAYLOR: What reason had the surveyor given for making a mistake?

Mr. Butcher: He got lost.

Mr. TAYLOR had intended to move an amendment to provide that the margin should not be more than one or two miles, but he did not know whether it would not be a wiser course to vote against the clause altogether.

The Minister for Works: That would be a very dangerous course because then the line would have to follow the absolute route fixed on the map.

Mr. TAYLOR: We should have a permanent survey before railway Bills were brought forward, and if our engineers could not supply that information, somebody should be put in the position who could do so. There was no reasonable excuse for saying that the engineers might do this or might do that. The Treasurer had pointed out that they might have to go a mile up or down a river to get a suitable bottom in which to drive the piles for a bridge, but the engineers should be able to decide upon the site previously. In a line of 22¼ miles a deviation of five miles was far too great. It made provision for allowing certain political pressure to be brought to bear to deviate the line. There was no disguising the fact. When the Bill was passed and the people knew the line could be deviated five miles on either side, there would be every inducement to put their heads together. A prominent mine manager had said he preferred to employ Italians because they did not put their heads together like the British workmen did. In putting their heads together the miners had no monopoly. These people to be served by the line would put their heads together after the Bill was passed.

The Minister for Mines: Why should they not do so before?

Mr. TAYLOR: Experience taught us that in the Katanning-Kojonup case heads were put together after the Bill was passed.

The Treasurer: But before the survey.

Mr. TAYLOR: There was a traverse survey when the Bill was passed. The wave of the hand, and the luxurious manner in which the Treasurer sat back in his seat were not sufficient, and did not satisfy hon. members. A competent surveyor traversing 22¼ miles of coun-

try, and choosing the best possible route, would not need so great a deviation. But the fault was not with the engineer, the fault lay somewhere else, and to remove the difficulty of anything cropping up that would not be creditable in the construction of this railway, it would be wise to amend the clause by altering the deviation to one mile. A deviation of five miles, or perhaps more, might be necessary in a railway line 140 or 160 miles long, but such a margin was not necessary in a line 22¼ miles long. A man on horseback in three days could select a track, and pick out the best grades and consider the suitability of the country for land settlement and would not need to be a surveyor or an engineer.

Mr. Gordon: The man would need to be a George Taylor.

Mr. TAYLOR: If the member for Canning got 22¼ miles from the main camp, it would take all the surveyors, engineers and black-trackers in the country to find him. The hon. member, being lost, would not follow the usual course of lost persons and keep wheeling to the left; the hon. member would zigzag, even if lost. If the line were to run 22¼ miles in a certain direction, from one point to another, people whom the line would serve would urge the necessity for it to go in a certain direction, and if it were deviated some four or five miles, those living to the extreme right of the line, and who believed they would be within five miles of the railway, would find they were nine and a half miles off, and therefore just as badly in need of railway communication as they were before the construction of the line. It was unreasonable to place a provision of this sort in the measure, because it might well be that those settlers who had the greatest political power would be suited, to the disadvantage of those living on the other side of the line. The Premier had stated that the line would serve 350 people, of whom 150 might be reckoned as adults. Considering the present financial position of the State, it surely was unwise to spend £35,000 for the benefit of such a small number of settlers. The deviation of five miles should be struck

out and one of a much shorter distance inserted in its place. Possibly the present survey might not be a permanent one, and therefore more scope for alteration had to be allowed, but if that were so it would be better to let the Bill stand over until the permanent survey was made. He moved an amendment—

That the word "five" in line 3 be struck out and "two" inserted in lieu.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Surely the hon. member did not think that if a deviation of five miles was allowed, the provision would be abused.

Mr. Taylor: There is a chance.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: An ounce or two of practice was better than a good deal of theory, and he could point to instances to show the desirability of a fair deviation being allowed. In connection with the Wagin-Dumbleyung line the original route proposed was along a lake, but it ultimately turned out that owing to the floods in winter a deviation would have to be made in order to let the line run on a higher level.

Mr. Scaddan: That line had not been surveyed but just run over.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It had been surveyed, although in the summer, and subsequent investigations showed that owing to the floods another route higher up must be taken. Another instance was provided in the case of a line which had been surveyed, but with regard to which a Bill had not yet been brought to the House; that was the line from Boyup to Kojonup. From the point of view of serving the settlers it was not altogether certain that the best route was adopted in the first instance, consequently further inquiries were being made and there was a possibility that in one direction a deviation of a few miles would be made. The House surely believed that the officers of the Department and the Government would be fair in dealing with this question, and it would not be placing too much trust in their hands to grant a deviation of five miles.

Mr. Scaddan: What about the present Kojonup line?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There had been a considerable amount of discussion as to that line, but having been over it and inspected it he personally believed it was the best possible route. There was no strong objection to accepting the amendment but there was a possibility that by restricting the deviation to two miles on either side of the line the department would be placed in an awkward position and ultimately it might mean an increase in the cost of construction. Personally he did not think it would have that effect, but it was for the Committee to say if it were wise to restrict the distance.

Mr. WALKER: It was impossible in building a railway to cut a straight line from one point to another and perhaps it would be wise to give the Government a greater deviation than two miles. He would suggest that the distance be altered from five miles, as in the Bill, to three.

The Treasurer: Yes, we will accept that.

Amendment (that the word "five" be struck out) put and passed.

Mr. WALKER moved an amendment—

That the word "three" be inserted.

Amendment (Mr. Walker's) put and passed; the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 4—Power to Governor to compulsorily purchase land within fifteen miles of railway:

Mr. BATH: The power provided in the clause was an excellent one and he did not intend to move for its omission, but it was a pity that in similar measures to the one under discussion the power had not been exercised.

The Treasurer: Has it been necessary to exercise it?

Mr. BATH: It could have been exercised with great advantage along the Collie-Narrogin line.

The Treasurer: Notice was given to one man, but it was found that he was improving his land.

Mr. BATH: Railways were constructed with a view to develop the country, and with the hope that the lines would pay interest and sinking fund in the future; but if in the exercise of the

powers conferred by the clause, additional areas could be obtained and cut up for closer settlement, thereby providing for a larger number of settlers, that power should be exercised. Probably it would be wise to exercise the power in connection with this railway as well, for there were some very large holdings containing the best land along the route. There should be an assurance given by the Government that they would exercise the power they possessed.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 5, 6, 7—agreed to.

New Clause—Compensation not to be paid:

Mr. ANGWIN moved that the following be added to stand as Clause 8:—

No compensation shall be paid to any owner or occupier of land except town-site land taken by the Governor for the purpose of constructing the railway, and no compensation shall be paid for severancy. Compensation shall be paid for any building or other improvements that may be existing on such lands.

The clause was somewhat similar to that which was included in the Newcastle to Bolgart railway, with the exception that it provided that compensation should not be paid for land exceeding in distance two miles from the township. On looking through the plan he found that half of this railway would run through an area which was owned by three persons, consequently there would be a great improvement of this large area. The same thing had been provided in other railway Bills which had been carried by the House, and there was no reason why it should not be included in this measure also. It was said that settlers were so anxious to get railways that they were willing to give the land, yet it was found that claims for compensation were invariably made.

The TREASURER: If his memory served him correctly the clause inserted in the Newcastle-Bolgart Act was a special one, in view of an agreement by the land owners that they would give the land necessary for the construction of the railway. In the Bill under review, such a clause should not be inserted, be-

cause the circumstances were different. For instance, if they had to go through a man's orchard or agricultural plot it would be wrong to deny him compensation.

Mr. Scaddan: That is provided for in the clause.

The TREASURER: The owner had to be given the value of the land if his orchard was taken away from him. He would have to oppose the clause, because it would not be equitable.

Mr. ANGWIN: The holders of land would receive ample compensation by having the railway constructed through their properties.

The Minister for Railways: We have power to take a certain area of land.

Mr. ANGWIN: That was so, but it was only exercised in the case of those people who were not able to fight their claims in the law courts. In the case of large land owners, compensation was paid in every instance. In the Bolgart case, it was recognised that the line was to be constructed through large holdings, and hon. members agreed that it would be only fair that these owners should contribute something towards the cost of that railway. In this new clause it was provided that improvements and buildings damaged should be paid for. When it was seen that half the land was owned by three persons, it was only fair that these owners should be made to contribute the land through which the railway would pass.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the hon. member would carry his memory back to the construction of the line from Jandakot to Armadale he would find that there were cases there of settlers who if they had not been paid compensation would have been most unjustly treated. He called the hon. member's attention to the fact that this Wilgarrup line would run along low-lying country, and as near to the streams as possible, and in many cases the department would be cutting off valuable frontages, and perhaps they would have to move certain farm buildings. The amendment moved by the hon. member for East Fremantle would prohibit the authorities doing anything of the sort. In connec-

tion with the Donnybrook-Preston line and the property owned by Mr. Johnson, the department had a difficulty in getting past it, owing to a stream which flooded it, and they deviated right through the front of Mr. Johnson's property and removed from there certain farm buildings. Of course the department paid for that. There was the power to take one-twentieth free of cost to the Crown, of unimproved land and even to some extent improved land. He could not give the figures off hand. If he had known that the amendment was to be moved, he would have had them prepared. Hon. members would be astounded at the small amount the department paid for compensation in connection with the construction of these lines. If the hon. member persisted in the amendment and the House carried it, it would certainly inflict a hardship and an injustice on some of the settlers along the route of the railway. His sympathies were with the State getting a fair deal, but at the same time Parliament should be just.

Mr. TAYLOR: The hon. member for the district through which this railway was going, stated on the second reading that there were nearly all new settlers who would be served by the line. If the member for the district was not able to make a correct statement of the position, who was? The member for the district must have been advised thoroughly by the people there, and supplied with all the facts and arguments which would enable him to show the House that the railway was justified. He would not admit of any injustice being done to any person, but he did not think there was any chance of injustice being done in the present case. The member for the district had told them that they were nearly all new settlers who would be served by the railway, yet the map which was before members showed that after Bridgetown was passed, the railway would go through large holdings. Perhaps the member for East Fremantle would include orchards as well as buildings in his new clause.

Mr. ANGWIN: No objections would be offered if some hon. member cared to

add to the clause the words "orchards and improvements."

New clause put and negatived.

New clause—Conditions of employment:

Mr. JOHNSON moved that the following be added to stand as Clause 8:

Any contract to be entered into for the construction of the railway shall contain provisions, (a) prescribing a minimum rate of wages to be paid by the contractor to the several classes of persons employed by him on the works; (b) prohibiting the sub-letting of the work, or any portion thereof; or any sub-contract for execution of the work, or any portion thereof; or any contract for any piece work whatever of any portion of the work.

He had grown tired of the conditions under which these contractors worked their men. In the construction of these agricultural railways contracts were taken cheaply and the contractors endeavoured to make a profit by driving the men in their employ. It was time the House did something to protect these men against the system. Again, conditions had become so bad that a number of men would not work for these contractors, with the result that the contracts were frequently behind time. It would be interesting to know from the Minister for Works if ever the penalties provided for such cases were inflicted. He doubted if these penalties were ever imposed. The only way to protect the men working for these contractors was by means of such a clause as that submitted. There was of course a clause in each contract, setting out that the contractor should pay the men the minimum rate of wage ruling in the district; but unfortunately there was only one railway under construction in each district and so the contractor was enabled to make his own minimum.

The TREASURER: It was to be hoped hon. members would not agree to the clause. He had been surprised to hear the hon. member who was a contractor himself slating other contractors as he had done. As a matter of fact the men liked piecework immensely. The very first thing they asked for on these rail-

way contracts was piecework. They preferred to work in gangs and make as much money as they possibly could. What right then had hon. members to interfere with them? There were proper provisions in the contract, and the hon. member's argument was wrong when he had said that because there was only one railway under construction in each district the contractor could set his own standard. There were navvies working in almost every district where railways existed, and the amounts paid to these men constituted the standard rate for the district. In the very district under consideration navvies were working on both sides of the proposed line. There were already any number of safeguards in the contract form. He had never heard a complaint of this kind in connection with any one of the railway contracts. Whether the railways were being constructed by contract or by the department the men to the best of his belief were getting fair wages.

Mr. Hayward: Would the member for Guildford prohibit sleeper-hewers working by piecework?

Mr. Johnson: I would make them do it by day work if I could.

Mr. TAYLOR: There could be no real objection urged against the proposed clause. It was desired merely to make it perfectly clear that the men were properly safeguarded. Unfortunately it was not the men themselves who decided what their hire should be. When the Government were constructing public works out of loan funds—funds for which every man and woman in the State would have to pay—it was necessary that the Government should protect the people. The emphatic manner in which the Treasurer urged the rejection of the clause was quite sufficient to show that the employees were not sufficiently protected under existing conditions. Members should not be led away by the language of the Treasurer, when he said that we should judge the integrity of contractors by the member for Guildford. No man could be better capable of drafting a clause to protect the workers than the hon. member. When

Minister for Works, that hon. member had stipulated in one or two contracts where day wages should be paid.

The Minister for Works: Did he stipulate the rates?

Mr. TAYLOR could not say, but the subletting terms had been struck out.

The Minister for Works: Exactly the same terms are being used to-day.

Mr. TAYLOR: It was the policy of the Labour Government to construct works departmentally, and the railways constructed under the present Administration did not compare with the work carried out under the Labour Administration in the matter of expedition or workmanship.

The Minister for Works: The Colliedarkan section is just as good as the Narrogin section.

Mr. TAYLOR: When the workers obtained work they should be able to carry it out in a proper manner, and should not be harassed as they were now. The construction of the Norseman Railway was a standing disgrace. Hundreds of men sought work there, competition was keen, and the best were hired at the lowest possible rate of wage, and put on the work at such a price that the most expert of them at pick and shovel work could not make more than 8s. a day, and those not so physically strong could hardly earn a living. We should see that those who built these lines were protected when the Bills were under the consideration of members.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	16
Noes	..	..	..	20
				—
Majority against	..	..	..	4

AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Bath	Mr. Swan
Mr. Bolton	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Collier	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Gill	Mr. Walker
Mr. Goutley	Mr. Ware
Mr. Holman	Mr. Troy
Mr. Hudson	
Mr. O'Loughlin	(Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Brown	Mr. Keenan
Mr. Butcher	Mr. Male
Mr. Carson	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Davies	Mr. S. F. Moore
Mr. Draper	Mr. Nanson
Mr. Gordon	Mr. Osborn
Mr. Gregory	Mr. Price
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Hayward	Mr. Layman
Mr. Hopkins	(Teller).
Mr. Jacoby	

New clause thus negatived.

New clause—Departmental construction:

Mr. TAYLOR moved that the following be added to stand as Clause 8—

In the construction of the line all the work in connection therewith shall be undertaken and executed departmentally.

There could be no reasonable opposition to the proposed new clause, taking into consideration the successful work done by the department in the past in railway construction. There was the line for instance from Menzies to Leonora, a distance of about 80 miles, and that from Cue to Nannine a distance of about 50 miles. In both these cases it had been proved conclusively that the sections were the very best on the respective trunk lines. Not only were they the best but they had been constructed at less cost than the portions of the lines built by contract and they also cost less for maintenance. One had only to ride over these sections to realise how much better the work was done than the portions built by contract. This clearly proved that when the work was done properly in the first instance, large expenditure in maintenance subsequently was obviated. Also, the first agricultural lines had been built by the department and it had been proved that they were the best in the State, in addition to being the cheapest.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The division on the previous proposed new clause introduced by the member for Guildford (Mr. Johnson) showed clearly the sense of the House in connection with the matter. Practically the same issue was decided then as was sought to be decided now. It was wholly a question of expediency as to

whether the work should be carried out by contract or departmentally, and the actions of the Government in the past showed clearly that they were not tied down to either system. Many works in the State had been carried out by each system. The question of day work against contract had been debated many times in this House, but it would certainly be wrong for members to dictate to the Government how a special work of this sort should be carried out. It was simply a question of policy and expediency. The Government would contest a motion of this sort to the utmost.

Mr. ANGWIN: Members only exercised their right when they told the Government how a certain work should be carried out, and it was impossible to understand how the Minister could argue that it was wrong for members to instruct Ministers in a matter of this description. Members were particularly justified in acting in this way when they knew they were representing the wishes of the country. It had been recognised that contract work in the State had been nothing like so well done as that carried out by day labour. Not only that, but the departmental work had cost much less than that carried out by contract. Take the Houses of Parliament for an example. If the work of erecting this building had been carried out by day labour the men would have been ashamed of what they had done. In the past some railway lines had been built by day labour and others by contract, but it was found that in every case the better results followed the system of departmental work. Such being the case the excellent precedent should be followed in this and all other instances of a similar character, and in this case we should instruct the Government how the work was to be done.

Mr. BATH: It would be preposterous if the opinion of the Minister were regarded as the accepted opinion of the Government, and members were not to have any say in shaping the policy of the Government in this or other matters. If that were so, then we might just as well dissolve Parliament. There was no desire to drift or degenerate in

that fashion in Western Australia, and he would object to any suggestion as the proper attitude for Parliament to take. There had been the opportunity of contrasting the respective systems in Western Australia. The first line constructed was built by day labour, and there had been an undoubted expression of opinion in favour of its greater permanence, better workmanship and construction than the railways carried out by contract. That better work not only applied to the railways, but to public buildings, and other works which had been constructed by day labour. Generally, the superiority of the workmanship should be sufficient to commend the motion of the hon. member for Mount Margaret to the House, apart from any question as to the desirability of members of the Assembly taking care to see that at least decent wages were paid to the employees on the construction of railways. The first section of the Coolgardie to Norseman line was a scandal, and that was being perpetuated on other lines that were being constructed by contract. Calling on the taxpayers as we did for the money with which to construct these railways we should have the decency to see that the workers were paid a decent wage, and in this connection he was sorry that he could not pay any tribute to the sense of those hon. members who voted against the new clause which was just previously moved by the member for Guildford. He would prefer from the point of view of the advantage to the State that the motion before the Committee should be carried, because by departmental construction we could exercise that care that was desirable in regard to the payment of wages, and we would have that superiority of workmanship which would make these railways a credit to the State, even though the construction by day labour might entail a slight increase in cost, but which would involve subsequently less expenditure in maintenance. References were made to the cheapness of the construction of the Eastern Goldfields railway, but it was also known that the line had to be relaid soon after it was taken over and relaid at almost

double the contract price. That was not then counted in the cost of construction, but was mentioned always as maintenance and repairs, and thus we lost sight of the actual cost to the taxpayers. He hoped hon. members would consider this question, and assure the same protection to the workers employed on this as was done on other railway lines. We provided protection in the construction of a railway from Port Hedland to Marble Bar, and if provision was made then, it should be made now.

Mr. Johnson: It was rejected in the Marble Bar railway, but the Government promised that the clause would appear in the specifications.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: The condition was in all contracts that the contractor should pay the standard rate of wages. What he would like the Committee to grasp was that at present the practice was that the Works Department entered the field as a tenderer for work of this character, and in many cases they had succeeded in putting in a figure which warranted the construction of the line departmentally. But if they had a free hand members knew perfectly well that instead of the engineers of the department actively assessing the cost and leaving out all these matters that could be left out by a careful contractor, they would indulge in that precaution to obviate expenditure of a larger amount of public funds. One could imagine the position engineers would be in if they knew that they had no opposition to face.

Mr. Scaddan: That is a reflection upon the officers of the department.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL: It was a charge against all humanity. When it was put on its mettle it did its best. If we prescribed that only the department was to carry out these works, there would be no incentive to put in an estimate which would really represent the true value of the work. Would any member say that that was desirable?

Mr. Walker: The officers would have an incentive to maintain their reputations.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The hon. member was the last to give credit for reputation.

Mr. Walker: I know I am giving you credit for a reputation.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The Committee should not enter upon a course which would lead to a most undesirable result.

Mr. WALKER: The Attorney General apparently found it impossible to get away from his special pleading. Had anybody ever before listened to a Minister of the Crown so condemning his own officers, the Government employees, as to say that unless all the world were invited to correct them and keep them in their place they could not be trusted for a single moment; that they would rob the State and get it into all manner of difficulties and that the only way to keep them in order was to have upon them the check of public competition. Unless he had wanted to gain a point the Attorney General could never have used such an argument.

The Minister for Mines: What did you say last night about this building?

Mr. WALKER: The building referred to had been carried out by contract; indeed he understood that the very design was a contract one.

The Minister for Mines: No; it was a departmental plan.

Mr. WALKER: It could not be regarded as a good one. However that was a question of ability whereas the Attorney General had expressed doubts as to the honesty of the departmental officers. In effect the Minister had said that they were not to be trusted unless they were put into competition with the outside world. On the other hand he (Mr. Walker) had every faith in the officers of the department and believed that if they undertook the work of building the railway they would put their very best into it. It was no new experiment in Australia, this departmental construction. It had been tried in New South Wales for years and the testimony there was that departmental work was cheaper and better than contract work. Again, the experiment had been tried in South Australia.

Mr. Johnson: We have done it here to a greater extent than it has been done in any other Australian State.

Mr. WALKER: As hon. members knew, it had been proved even in Western Australia and moreover had not been found wanting. What then became of the Attorney General's argument? The Minister had merely manifested his skill at evading a question by a somersault of words. It was the duty of hon. members to vote for departmental work and to protect the public officers from such slander as had been placed upon them by the Attorney General.

Mr. JOHNSON: Like other hon. members, he in the interests of economy and efficiency was prepared to support this new clause. His opinion of the officers of the State was that they were thoroughly loyal, and he knew that they had demonstrated their ability to construct railways and other public works. During the regime of the Labour Government practically all large works had been done departmentally. At that time the greatest opponent of the economical practice was the present Treasurer. He had attacked the Government for doing work departmentally, but on becoming Minister for Works he had been forced to admit that the policy was a sound one, and indeed he had even followed in the steps of the previous Administration.

The Treasurer: You are wrong.

Mr. JOHNSON: A definite statement had been made by the Minister that the work was done better and cheaper departmentally than it could be done by contract.

The Treasurer: In some instances.

Mr. JOHNSON: The Minister had to admit that not only was the work done better but that some thousands of pounds had been saved on each tender. The Labour Government had constructed the Jandakot railway and the Collie-Narrogin railway departmentally; and time after time he (Mr. Johnson) had challenged the Treasurer to move for an inquiry into the construction of these two works. Certainly the Jandakot railway had been an expensive undertaking, but

it was naturally an expensive line running as it did through sandstone country. If the Treasurer were to hold an inquiry into that work it would be amply demonstrated that it had been done more cheaply than would have been the case had it been carried out by contract labour. Then there had been the raising of the Fremantle wharves, a work which it had been estimated would cost £17,000 by contract. Mr. Rason had almost moved a vote of censure upon the Government in consequence of their decision to carry out the work departmentally; yet by so carrying out the work some £7,000 had been saved. And while the work was in progress the contractors' association had posted men to watch the departmental officers with a view to, if possible, securing evidence that would prove the Minister to have been in the wrong in doing the work departmentally. Again, there was the asylum at Claremont. That had been carried out departmentally.

Mr. Bath: Only the first part of it.

Mr. JOHNSON: As a matter of fact the first part of it had been carried out by contract, but the second part of it was executed departmentally. If inquiry was courted as to the relative merits of contract and departmental work on the lunatic asylum, the workmen would say that when the work was done departmentally it was the best work done in the State, but now shoddy work was being put in. It was impossible for a clerk of works to properly supervise contract work. There was no incentive to do shoddy work when the work was being done departmentally, and nothing was scamped. Consequently, when we got better work done, and done more cheaply, it was essential to provide some such clause in a Bill of this nature, especially when we had passed the experimental stage in departmental work. In the railway workshops thousands of pounds had been saved through constructing brakevans departmentally, yet Ministers continued to let contracts to a private firm for making corridor cars. That would be right if we had money to squander, but we had not the money to squander now, and the only way to stop

it was to adopt such a clause as he proposed.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	16
Noes	..	..	..	19

Majority against .. 3

AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Bath	Mr. Swan
Mr. Bolton	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Collier	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Gill	Mr. Walker
Mr. Gourley	Mr. Ware
Mr. Holman	Mr. Troy
Mr. Hudson	(Teller).
Mr. O'Loghlen	

NOES.

Mr. Butcher	Mr. Layman
Mr. Carson	Mr. Male
Mr. Davies	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Draper	Mr. S. F. Moore
Mr. Gregory	Mr. Nanson
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. Osborn
Mr. Hayward	Mr. Price
Mr. Hopkins	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Jacoby	Mr. Gordon
Mr. Keenan	(Teller).

New clause thus negatived.

Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

House adjourned at 11.19 p.m.

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