

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 4th December, 1912.

	PAGE
Papers presented	4134
Question: Observatory Reserve	4134
Motion: Federation and State Industries	4134
Bills: Jetties Regulation Act Amendment, returned	4141
Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage, 1a.	4141
Norseman-Esperance Railway, 2a., Bill rejected	4141
Industrial Arbitration, Report of Conference Managers	4163
Workers' Compensation, Com....	4165

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: 1, Department of Agriculture and Industries—Annual report for year ended 30th June, 1912. 2, Public Service List, 1912. 3, Department of Agriculture and Industries—Profit and loss account of retail meat store and sales of the shipment of aborigines' station cattle.

QUESTION — OBSERVATORY RESERVE.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY asked the Colonial Secretary: Is it the intention of the Government to grant to the Federal Government any portion of the Observatory reserve for the purpose of erecting offices for their Meteorological Department?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: A request to this effect has been received from the Federal authorities and is now under consideration.

MOTION — FEDERATION AND STATE INDUSTRIES.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN (South-East): I beg to move—

That in the opinion of this House the industries of this State are being seriously and unnecessarily handicapped under the Federal compact, and that the need for remedy is urgent.

I would like to premise my remarks by an apology to the House for asking their attention to so very large a question at so late an hour in the session, but inasmuch as I intend my remarks to bear on an event that will occur before the House meets again, that is, the submission of the

referenda by the Federal Government, I had no choice but to submit the motion at the present time. Members will understand that if my speech seems a meagre treatment of so big a question, I have made it so with a view to economise time. The Federal Government are once more forcing through the Legislature a peculiar remedy for restraint of trade. They say that the Commonwealth is threatened by combines which are laying the foundations of dangerous monopolies, and they ask the States to hand over to them the control of domestic trade as well as the control of interstate and overseas commerce. If the States by any accident of folly consent to the request, the Federal Government will bring in an heroic remedy. What is that remedy? They will displace the monopolies by a monster Government monopoly, to be run by men of the genius and calibre of King O'Malley-cum-Chinn.

Hon. J. Cornell: Do not be personal.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: I admit straight away that Australia, in common with all other countries that have adopted a fiscal system of high protection, is in danger from combines. I do not think anybody can shut his eyes to that danger. I would like the House just to notice what is happening in America in this connection. The combine evil, or rather I should say, the combine problem, is a very real difficulty over there. For a decade past the leading statesmen of America have been at close grips with this evil. Roosevelt declared open war against it in his first Presidential campaign, and when he got into office he opened the war by legislation and litigation and he fought heroically indeed. But for all the effect he might just as well have amused himself in tilting at windmills. The dust he raised, the din and disturbance he created, left things just as they were before. In fact, the net result of Roosevelt and Taft's joint and separate action was the breaking of the Republican party who have held power for so long in America. At this juncture Dr. Woodrow Wilson comes out of the cold of the oft-defeated Democratic party. What does he propose? No tilting at windmills: Dr. Wilson says combines have grown up under the privileges of high protection.

The remedy is, lower the duties, let the free air of international competition play upon the combines and they will wither away. In Australia of course the danger is newer and much less developed, but the remedy can be no other; the remedy must be—lower the duties, let competition play upon the combine and budding monopoly, and the combine and the monopoly will wither and die. The ideal of the high protectionist is a beautiful one. He says, under the shelter of high protective duties the manufacturers will establish their industries, then when they establish them they will give the public the benefit of the economies and savings they have been able to effect because they have had a peaceful and non-competitive condition for their industries. The trouble is that the beautiful ideal is never realised. Human nature is just the same in the manufacturer as in the rest of us. Human nature takes all it can get. If a generous country puts on 20 per cent. duty, the manufacturer will raise his prices by at least 20 per cent., usually a little more. If a generous country gives 40 per cent., the manufacturer will raise his prices by 40 per cent. That is the real as against the ideal. I admit that there are great advantages in the system of high protection to the few. In Australia the few represent perhaps 5 to 10 per cent., perhaps not more than 5 per cent. of the whole population. Even in America where the system has worked its fullest work there are not more than 12 to 15 per cent. of the whole population benefiting by high protection.

Hon. J. Cornell: What percentage benefits in Great Britain under free-trade?

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: I admit, on the other hand, there are certain disadvantages under free-trade, incidental disadvantages, slight discounts from the overwhelming advantages of free-trade. These little disadvantages come chiefly in this way, that for a time the competition from older and more developed countries as a result of their age and cheaper living conditions, is hard upon the young industries in a young country. But that is a mere incidental disadvantage that only affects the few and not the great body of the people. Looking at the condition of our

own country and especially of our own State, what is the position to-day? The great bulk of our people are primary producers—agriculturists or miners. The people who would be benefited by high protection are not more than perhaps 5 per cent. of the whole population. To help this 5 per cent. all the rest of the people pay for the main requirements of their everyday life and work from 10 to 45 per cent. more than they ought. The miners, the agriculturists, the pastoralists on their main implements and tools of trade, on a great deal they eat, and on nearly everything they wear, pay from 10 to 45 per cent. more than they ought to have to pay.

Hon. T. H. Wilding: One hundred per cent. on machinery.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: How can the country stand it? But Western Australia is in a peculiar position. Western Australia suffers not only from the grave disadvantages of high protection, but on the other hand from the incidental disadvantages of free trade. The position of Western Australia is this: as I have said, on the main requirements of her primary producers there are the surcharges of from 10 to 45 per cent., but if Western Australia wants to start industries of her own she has on the other hand the competition of her free-trade neighbours. If Western Australia wants to begin her industries she is liable to be swamped in every line under the interstate free-trade prevailing throughout the Commonwealth. The oldest established manufactures of the Eastern States can come in and swamp us in any line in which we try to start a manufacture, so that Western Australia is crushed between what I may call the upper millstone of high protection and the nether millstone of interstate competition. I would like hon. members to look a little more closely into the actual position of the case. Buyers go to our farmers in the back country and offer them 2s. 10d. a bushel for their wheat. I submit that under the handicap of inflated prices for machinery and other implements of trade, and their clothing and items of

food, no farmer can grow wheat and sell it at 2s. 10d. a bushel. It will not pay him. Take the mining fields. I would like to believe that the mining fields have a fair chance to-day of doing well, but the miners—and when I say the miners, I do not only mean the men who are handling mining tools, but everyone interested in the fields—the miners under these enormous handicaps find to-day that perhaps not one-tenth of their propositions are paying, and when we remember that these are the two great foundations of our strength and progress in Western Australia, I say the position is grave and serious. The Federal Government say, “We are coming with a remedy for you in Western Australia, and in all the States. Hand over to us a little more power than you have given us and we will kill all the combines and monopolies that are troubling you by developing a monster Government monopoly to take its place.” I say straight away that the cure does not lie in swapping one combine for another; the cure lies in sweeping away all parasites that are living on the industries of the people, and the simple way to sweep them away is by lowering the protective duties and letting the free air of competition bring all engaged in these parasitical businesses to their senses. The remedy I urge is the lowering of the protective duties. I am not unreasonable enough to dream for a moment that these States are ready with one great forward leap to substitute free-trade for high protection. My old State, New South Wales, was the only free-trade forming the federation.

Hon. J. Cornell: She never was free-trade.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: New South Wales which owed her prosperity, her soundness, her permanent prosperity and soundness, at the time of the founding of Federation, to free-trade, willingly entered into that Federation, even at the cost of having to submit for a time to the policy of high protection; but her statesmen went into the Federation believing that before many years were passed the principles of free-trade would win their

way throughout the whole Commonwealth. I am not unreasonable enough to expect any sudden jump to free-trade, but I do say that the time has come when all who are interested in the welfare of these States—and I appeal especially to the people of the State of Western Australia—that the time has come when we should insist on taking not the course the Federal Government want us to take, but the simple scientific course that the democrats in America are about to take, the simple course of reducing the high duties. When I announced my motion I fully expected not only free-traders of the State, but the moderate protectionists, would support it, and I am glad to be able to say that I have not been disappointed. But what is much more gratifying to me is that I have had encouragement from some who heretofore have pinned their faith to high protection. One of these came to me and said, “I admit straight away that free-trade is an ideal system; if we could have all-round free-trade, if other nations would adopt it, it would be an ideal system; but I do not believe in one-sided free-trade. If I cannot have all-round free-trade I must reserve to myself the right to retaliate and exchange retaliation for reciprocation in negotiating with the various countries.” Another came and said, “I admit that free-trade is the ideal system, but not for a new country like Australia. New countries must nurse their infant industries until they are able to run alone.” I said to the second individual, “You surely must be aware, it is an historic fact, that the older the protective country grows the louder is the demand for increased protection.” That is a fact. The infant that cries for protection will cry for it with a man’s voice when it grows older. That is an historic fact. I just want, in reply to these two characteristic criticisms I have met—for they are characteristic of nearly all the arguments against free-trade—to read two or three short extracts. Lord Avebury in his lecture on free-trade refers to Germany and America,

and properly, as the most conspicuous examples of high protection, and this is his summing up of the position in Germany, and I am sure hon. members who have watched the progress of events in Germany and the growing demands, especially of the socialistic leaders there to-day, will admit that this is a fair description. Lord Avebury says—

Germany will inevitably find that her complicated system of bounties, and subsidies, and protection—helping one trade at the expense of a second, and then the second at the expense of the first, giving bounties to manufacturers at the expense of agriculturists, and protection to agriculturists at the expense of manufacturers, will lead her into more and more intricate embarrassment.

As a matter of fact the other day, in response to a demand from the socialistic leaders the Government had to relax its most treasured restriction on meat without waiting for legislative authority. Regarding America, Lord Avebury says—

We hear a great deal about the iron and steel industries of the United States—

These are claimed to be conspicuous successes in the United States.

but Mr. Atkinson (the great American economist) has calculated that the result of the duties on iron and steel in the United States was, that in ten years, 1880-1890, the railway companies, the ironfounders, machinists, and other consumers of iron paid for iron in excess of the prices paid by their competitors in Europe in ten years a sum greater than the capital value of all the iron and steel works, furnaces, and rolling mills existing in 1890 in the country. This sum stands for the cost of 'protection' to iron and steel for ten years of largest consumption to that date."

The same thing applies to every other industry in America that has grown up under high protection. The cost to the people has been out of all relation to the advantage to the few who run the protective industries. Now as to the argu-

ment of the fair traders to the right to retaliate, the fair traders say, "We would not mind if all other nations fell into line. We would go for free-trade but while they tax us we must tax them." They say that, thinking it is the foreigner who pays the tax. No better authority on this can be cited than Mr. Chamberlain himself, when he was in his intellectual prime, and before he began to run after will-o'-the-wisps.

Hon. J. Cornell: Chamberlain is a tariff reformer.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: Speaking of the protective tariff of Great Britain, Mr. Chamberlain said—

Everyone of these countries puts a duty on screws from abroad. We, as you are aware, were perfectly open. Anyone could send screws to us without paying duty at all. Now, then, what was the result? This was a case of hardship. According to the fair-traders we ought to have gone whining about the country asking for "protection" for this wretched manufacture of ours which was threatened by foreign competition. Now what was the effect? The effect was this, that at the time I am speaking of we sent screws into every country in the world, and no country in the world was able to send screws here. Who benefited by it? We did. My firm received a handsome income for years from American manufacturers "protected" as they were by the folly and stupidity of protectionist legislation.

I could go on by the hour quoting from authorities whom nobody here would ever think of controverting, but that is not my intention. In a few months' time the electors of this State will be called upon to answer six questions, and the whole six issues mean the weakening of the State and the magnifying of the Federation. The whole six run on this fallacy that high protection must be kept up, and because high protection means evil combines—I mean combines for evil purposes and monopolies on the part of combines—because protection must work that way, the Federal Government want to have the remedying of the evil, and

the remedy would be a hundredfold more disastrous for Australia than the disease. We should have a centralised system, that would amount to pure despotism, set up on the Eastern seaboard, and from that centre pretend to rule the people of Western Australia. Here is an amusing situation: the very men who went thousands of miles out of their way to advocate Home Rule for a distant country want to take Home Rule from us in Western Australia.

Hon. J. Cornell: They want to do nothing of the sort.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: I say it would be a suicidal thing for the electors of Western Australia to say "Yes, we will still groan under this system of high protection, and we will look to a Government away on the Eastern seaboard to come in with their remedy and substitute their monopoly for the risks that we now have of private monopolies." I appeal to the electors of Western Australia to see to it when these questions come along, and when the candidates come with them asking for their support, that their first care is freedom of enterprise for the people of this State. I appeal especially to the primary producers, the ever increasing body of men on the land, and the thousands of voters on the gold-fields, not one of whom could gain a farthing's advantage for their crushing sacrifices to the fetish of high protection.

Hon. J. E. Dodd (Honorary Minister): Do not those evils exist under free trade?

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: Certainly not. I appeal to these primary producers to think of their position. Their wheat, their gold, their wool, their timber, their fruit, must all go to the London market or the outside markets of the world where the protectionist system cannot help them. Even though we pay their 10 to 45 per cent. here we get no help whatever on our main industries. I appeal to those great primary producers to protect their own interests in July next; and I hold that it is not only a matter for the individual electors. The Parliament and the Government of the day had to approve of the Federal compact; they led us into the position we occupy. Now I know that the "proper" remedy is to

retrace our steps: they say "Let us get back to our old position of a separate State, even though it was a highly protected position in the fiscal sense." Needless to say, that remedy is doubly impracticable: there can be no retracing of steps, and even if we did retrace them, high protection would be very little better under separation than it is under Federation. The remedy lies in the hands of the electors who, I say, should be helped by Parliament and the Government of the day in throwing the weight of their influence on the side of freedom of enterprise. I trust that the electors of this country will not commit the suicidal act of voting away their own freedom. As a matter of fact, the very existence of the State is at issue, for if our status is reduced to that of a municipality how can we any longer call ourselves a sovereign State?

Hon. J. CORNELL (South): I congratulate the hon. member who has just sat down on one thing, and that is the introduction of a motion having for its purpose the sounding of the trumpet on the referendum proposals. The hon. member's remarks throughout could be construed in no other way. I regret to say that at last I have defined Mr. Cullen's position as a politician, and that I can come to no other conclusion than that he has gone one better than any other member of the "stinking fish" party in Australian politics. The "stinking fish" politician has said that nothing good can come out of Western Australia and its politics; the hon. member has gone one better by saying that nothing good can come out of Australia and its politics or out of Western Australia and its politics. It is characteristic of the hon. member that whenever he speaks on a motion in this Chamber its intention may be one thing, but the member's object is primarily an attack on the Labour party. He could not deal with this question without dealing with the personal element: that is characteristic always of the hon. member. The party that occupy the Treasury bench in the Federal Parliament represent the expressed opinion of the people, and as such they are entitled to a certain amount of respect.

The people of Australia have seen fit to place in the National Parliament a Labour majority in each House, and if that majority does not express the opinion of the people of Australia, it is a reflection on the people, and the aspersions cast on the party by the hon. member are not only aspersions on the members of the Federal Ministry and their supporters but on the people of Australia generally. I would advise the hon. member, if he is not satisfied with Australia and Western Australia, that Australia would be much better off if he left. Australia does not require pessimists; it requires optimists—people who will say a good word of Australia and of its citizens.

Hon. M. L. Moss: I dare say that is not personal.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: What is an optimist?

Hon. J. CORNELL: I have told the House what a "stinking fish" politician is. Mr. Cullen has stated that there is a proposal coming before the electors shortly; we are well aware of that proposal coming, but is it coming in an underhand manner? No, it is coming in a thoroughly constitutional manner. The constitution of Australia provides that it can be amended, how it can be amended, and by whom it can be amended, and all the party in power in the Federal Parliament are advocating is the amending of the constitution and the placing of constitutional machinery at the disposal of the people of Australia. The last word remains with the people, not the Parliament of Australia, and if the people say that the constitution should be amended, let it be amended. Who will be the sufferers if it turns out as the hon. member anticipates? Only the people of Australia. The hon. member has quoted the American Constitution he has referred to what Taft and Roosevelt tried to do, and said that they obscured themselves in dust in their endeavour. My little knowledge of American politics is that Taft and Roosevelt did not obscure themselves in dust, but that the electors in America did that for them. We have been told about the great battles that Roosevelt and Taft fought against the trusts in America,

and the hon. member said that the cause of trusts in America was high protection. But, are there not trusts in free-trade England? The hon. member forgot to say that there is no provision in the American Constitution for the amendment of it, and of recent years, in coping with these monopolies, the Supreme Court judges have been endeavouring as a court to amend the constitution by their interpretation of it.

Hon. M. L. Moss: You do not know much about the American Constitution if you say it cannot be amended.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I say there are no provisions in the American Constitution whereby it can be amended, and I will stand correction by the hon. member.

Hon. A. Sanderson: You are wrong.

Hon. J. CORNELL: If you can prove to me that I am wrong I will withdraw my remarks.

Hon. A. Sanderson: I am not going to take the trouble.

Hon. M. L. Moss: You are certainly wrong.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Two hon. members tell me I am wrong, and when I say I am willing to retract if the hon. members can refute my remarks, Mr. Sanderson says that he is not going to take the trouble. Now, when I say that an hon. member is wrong I will do him the courtesy of endeavouring to show him where he is wrong.

Hon. A. Sanderson: Go and look up *Bryce*.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I have looked it up. I say there is no provision in it for amendment.

Hon. M. L. Moss: It has been amended.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I will tell how it has been amended. It has been amended in certain directions by interpretation of the Supreme Court of America, and it is not added to the Constitution.

Hon. A. Sanderson: That is not so.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Well, bring the American Constitution and show it, and I will eat my words.

Hon. M. L. Moss: You are talking about something you do not know.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Many members talk about something they do not know.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: We do not want to know about the American Constitution. We want to get on with the business of the House.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The hon. member likes to have his say, and I always allow him to have his say, but when Mr. Cullen gets up and makes sweeping assertions and casts aspersions on the party with which I am identified, which has a majority of the people of Australia behind it, it is up to members to say something in favour of that party.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: So long as you are able to.

Hon. J. CORNELL: If I was the greatest genius God put breath into, I do not think the hon. member would give me even the benefit of the doubt that I was. Mr. Cullen says that if the people of Western Australia give the power asked for at the referenda, it will be handed over to geniuses like King O'Malley-*cum*-Chinn. I think the hon. member was playing it pretty low. He could have left it at "King O'Malley," without adding "*cum*-Chinn," and it remains to be seen whether Mr. King O'Malley is going to run Australia. I take it Mr. King O'Malley occupies a position reposed in him by the people of Australia, the same as the Colonial Secretary occupies his. His party were returned to govern the country, and they appointed Ministers, and Mr. King O'Malley is one of the King's Ministers, and, as such, is entitled to respect. The only remedy Mr. Cullen brings forward is the remedy of a lower tariff. He is in agreement with Mr. Woodrow Wilson. One of the functions of protection is to protect industries and raise industries. As far as free trade and protection are concerned, I am a fiscal atheist; I think neither is for the good of the working man nor the people generally. The hon. member says, "Lower the tariff." The revenue raised by protection in Australia is not much greater than is necessary for the carrying on of the government of Australia, and I ask Mr. Cullen—I believe he

has free-trade tendencies—if, in his appeal to the rural members, he is prepared to accept the doctrine of Henry George.

Hon. J. E. Dodd (Honorary Minister): That is right; nail the hon. member down.

Hon. J. CORNELL: If we reduce our revenue we must be protectionists and exclude all we can produce, and allow what we cannot produce to come in free; or we must be revenue-tariffers—and that is what I think the hon. member is—raising the whole of the revenue from the tariff, or we must be absolute free-traders. I ask hon. members if the Parliament of Australia are prepared to lower the tariff, to bring it down to a revenue tariff, and allow these agricultural machines and all these things to come in, would the hon. member advocate an increased land tax to cover up the reduction in revenue?

Hon. J. F. Cullen: There would not necessarily be a reduction in revenue at all.

Hon. J. CORNELL: No; the hon. member is a revenue-tariffier; he would tax the poor man; he would tax tea, I presume; he would raise revenue on cotton goods which are exempt under the Federal tariff. The hon. member gave a quotation from the Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, the father or founder of tariff reform in Great Britain. If Chamberlain had had his way, there would be higher duties prevailing in Great Britain to-day, but he did not have his way and the Tariff Reformers in Great Britain do not occupy the Treasury benches. Mr. Cullen has made reference to Germany and America. I have read statistics to prove that Germany is doing one thing that neither America with its high tariff, nor Great Britain with its low tariff is doing, and that is that, side by side with increasing the intelligence of the people, Germany is improving the physique of the people. Mr. Cullen's arguments can be summed up by making a parallel between the lowest tariff of any nation of Europe and that of America. What do we find prevailing in the two communities? Poverty and unemployment are just as rampant in Great Britain as in America; millions in Great Britain are on the verge of starvation. We find a

little bit of logic being introduced into Great Britain to-day by Lloyd George, who is a different stamp of Liberal from the Liberals we know in Australia. Mr. Lloyd George is not dealing with the tariff of Great Britain, but he is now making a burning question of the land question in Great Britain and the tax on the unearned increment on land. That is the type of Liberal in Great Britain. I hold that Lloyd George is tackling the question as it should be tackled. He does not believe in a low tariff; he does not believe in a high tariff; he is a freetrader, a greater freetrader than Mr. Cullen, and he believes in taxing the unearned increment of land. The panacea brought forward by Mr. Cullen is the same as that of Mr. Woodrow Wilson, to lower the duties and leave the land alone. If the hon. member is reasonable, he will advocate free trade and land reform, and not a revenue tariff that he says is good for the people of Australia. Mr. Cullen has said that human nature has never changed. I do not think my kind of human nature is the human nature of any hon. member of the Chamber, and to hear Mr. Cullen say that human nature has never changed, one would be led to believe that the whole of the individuals of the human family are identical, whereas the tastes and inclinations of the human family are as diverse as any other analogy we could make. Many characteristics in human nature are acquired, and I congratulate Mr. Cullen on the characteristic he has acquired, that is to say—Mr. Dodd says it is verbosity, but I do not say that, because hon. members might accuse me of it; but I will say that during my connection with this Chamber Mr. Cullen has acquired one or two characteristics.

The PRESIDENT: I think the hon. member had better speak to the motion; there is only five minutes more to speak to it.

Hon. J. CORNELL: In conclusion, I hope that, as time goes on, Mr. Cullen will acquire something good concerning Australia and Western Australia.

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

BILL—JETTIES REGULATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

BILL—WATER SUPPLY, SEWER- AGE, AND DRAINAGE.

Received from the Legislative Assembly and read a first time.

BILL—NORSEMAN-ESPERANCE RAILWAY.

Second Reading—Bill rejected.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER (Metropolitan-Suburban): I do not propose to detain hon. members long on this subject. I can say at the outset that I have endeavoured to approach it in a perfectly unbiassed way. I have endeavoured to obtain all the possible facts, and I listened very carefully to the speech of the Minister introducing the Bill, but for reasons I shall seek to give I cannot see my way, I regret to say, to support it any more than I could last session. I do not profess to be an expert in a great many of the matters in which this Bill is wrapped up, matters of expediency, or agriculture, or railway engineering, or anything of that sort, but I endeavoured to bring to bear on the consideration of this Bill what I hope is a common sense business view; and possibly that will be the case with a great many of us who do not pose as experts. I have also endeavoured to follow the advice of the Minister and approach the question from the national rather than the parochial standpoint. For the reason that I wish to approach it from the national standpoint I have endeavoured to find out what the State advisers think of the proposition, as shown in their report of last year. After all, to those of us who do not understand the technicalities contained in a Bill like this, it is absolutely necessary to find out what others who are responsible for advising the State in matters of this kind, think about it. Our ad-

visers, the Advisory Board, or at any rate two of them, a majority, would then only go so far as to recommend a railway to be built 60 miles inland from Esperance. The minority, consisting of Mr. Paterson, the manager of the Agricultural Bank, only went so far as to say that he advised that further tests of the land should be made with a view to seeing whether the building of the railway was justified. I understand from the Minister that further tests have been made, but by others who, although advisers in a sense, were not responsible advisers. I for one would have imagined that after the report of the Advisory Board the result of those tests, when made, would have been placed before that board, and that the board would have been asked for further advice, more especially Mr. Paterson. But the Advisory Board, so far as I can gather, have not been asked to make a further report. So far as I know, the results of these tests have not been placed before them. If this is so, I say I have not before me the opinion of the advisers of the State on this Bill. There is a significant omission from the Bill, or, rather, from the speech made by the Minister in moving the second reading. During that speech I endeavoured to draw the Minister's attention to the omission, but without avail, and it was not until the close of the speech that Mr. Cullen was able to secure the Minister's attention on the same point. Mr. Cullen then asked the Minister what I had endeavoured to ask him, namely, as to what were the estimated receipts of the undertaking. If that is not of the most vital importance to the House when considering a measure like this I cannot conceive what would be. The manager of an ordinary business house who placed before his directors a scheme involving the expenditure of a large amount of money and a good deal of risk, without showing on the other side of the statement what he expected to get out of the transaction, would be shown the door immediately; and I do not wonder at it. In reply to that interjection by Mr. Cullen, the Minister said he could not tell us what the estimated receipts were, but that

the railway was expected to carry 500 tons a week. We do not know whether that 500 tons will be 500 tons of wheat, of passengers, or of imported goods. There are but 50 settlers in the district, and even allowing for the possible trade between Esperance and the goldfields, I for one cannot see where 500 tons a week is going to come in. Nor were we told whether that 500 tons a week would be sufficient to pay working expenses, interest and sinking fund on this enormous transaction. We are left entirely in the dark. I suppose we shall be assured that a large proportion of this 500 tons would represent traffic between Esperance and the goldfields, which means, more directly stated, traffic between the goldfields and South Australia. That has been urged in many quarters as a reason why we should hesitate to spend money on the Esperance harbour. I am not going to say that we should not spend money on that harbour if the requirements of the State justify it; but there is another consideration which we are justified in looking at, and that is this: Are we, without grave consideration, going to build a harbour to enable one part of the State to detach its trade altogether from this part, and deal entirely with another State? That seems to me to be a question which we can reasonably ask ourselves, because that would not be to the benefit of the State, but merely to that particular portion of the State which might think it was getting its trade on more advantageous terms from another State. In answer to that it has been said that there is no chance whatever of the trade going to South Australia. In this respect I would like hon. members to hear the views of an Adelaide paper published on 16th March last. That paper contains the following:—

The building of a railway line between Esperance and Norseman would be a great benefit to South Australia from a commercial point of view, for the reason that it would bring Adelaide within 836 miles of the goldfields. If Esperance and Norseman were connected by rail, steamers could discharge their passengers and cargo there, and

the train could carry both direct to the goldfields.

That is what one newspaper at any rate in South Australia thinks of the possibilities to South Australia to arise from the building of this line. I mention that by way of answer to those who say there is no chance of the trade going to South Australia. Another point is the question of the amount of money to be spent on the Esperance harbour, in order, of course, to fully perfect this scheme of railway construction. With the short glance I have been able to give to Mr. Middleton's report that gentleman said—

Of course bound up with such a scheme as this railway is the necessity of the improvement of Esperance as a harbour.

He is quite right, too, in that respect. Who Mr. Middleton is, and what qualifications he has, I did not fully gather from the Minister, but I think I gathered this much, that Mr. Middleton has had some experience on the Fremantle harbour works. Otherwise his qualifications did not seem to me to be very great. At any rate he is not a responsible adviser of the State on a question like this, and surely here, again, where the expenditure of a large amount of money is involved, the Government should be able to show the House what their responsible officers say as to the money to be spent on the Esperance harbour. Mr. Middleton submits two schemes, one of which is to cost £44,000 and the other £55,000. But Mr. Middleton goes on and makes rather a significant reservation in that report. He says—

The quay would be approachable by vessels in ordinary weather, day or night, without the construction of a breakwater, but when the trade of the port warrants the necessity for a safe berth, approachable at all times, and in any weather, it will be necessary to throw out a projecting breakwater.

In the first scheme this is to cost £34,000 more, and in the second scheme £51,000 more. Surely the Government would not ask us to sanction a scheme at Esperance which would not give a safe berth in all weathers. That would not be making of Esperance a port sufficient to deal with

all the anticipated traffic of this railway in any circumstances. That is a point which I think the Minister should have informed us upon, because it makes a difference of £51,000.

The Colonial Secretary: The breakwater will mean £34,000.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER: In the one case, yes, but in the second it is £51,000. Again, I cannot gather whether Mr. Middleton expects sailing ships to go to the port. He seemed only to anticipate that steamers would go there. Surely provision should be made for sailing ships also, for it must be remembered that protection which would suit a steamer would scarcely be adequate for a sailing ship. Another point is the assistance given by the Government to the settlers already in the district. I say the action of the Government in assisting those settlers, firstly, I understand, by supplying manures and seed wheat, and secondly, and more particularly, by agreeing to buy their wheat from them—this action, I say, has considerably embarrassed Parliament in dealing with the Bill. Under ordinary circumstances, no doubt, seed wheat and manures would have been supplied, but I do not know that there is any other part of the State in which the Government have agreed to buy wheat. It is a very effective way of tying the hands of Parliament.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: They did not actually agree to buy a large quantity.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER: What their obligations were I do not know, but it has involved them in some thousands of pounds. They have practically told the settlers that they will guarantee that the Bill will go through, and to show their bona fides they have agreed to pledge the State to the extent of this money. Then again, we must remember the significant fact that this money has been lent by the Government when, as a matter of fact, the manager of the Agricultural Bank refused to advance it. The Government have lent the money against the advice of their responsible officers. I understand, I do not know whether I am correct or not, that Mr. Paterson refused to advance this money.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: But first of all he promised to grant the money.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER: However, he refused afterwards to do it.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: On the first promise several men went on the land down there.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER: But that does not warrant the Government in going behind their responsible officers.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Mr. Sutton, the Wheat Commissioner, advised them to make the advances.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER: Another point is this. Hon. members will recollect the outcry made when this House rejected the Bill last session. We were told that we were rejecting democratic legislation, and that it was another nail in the coffin of the Upper House. Shortly afterwards the Legislative Council elections occurred, and one would have thought that platforms all over the country would have rung with denunciations of the Upper House and that the electors would have responded by returning in overwhelming numbers those who had advocated the building of the railway.

Hon. F. Davis: How could they, with a restricted franchise?

Hon. D. G. GAWLER: We had Labour members in the House and those members made speeches in many parts of the country. I looked through all the speeches that hon. members made during those elections, except those speeches made by goldfields members. I have six of the speeches here, and having looked through them all, I can say that from first to last there is not a single mention of the Esperance railway.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Did you read Mr. Drew's speech?

Hon. D. G. GAWLER: Yes, I have it here, and it will not be found to contain any mention of that railway. He spoke at this election as a Minister.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan interjected.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER: That was not this election.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Yes, there was no contest in the first place.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER: He went round I think.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: What do you mean by "went round"?

Hon. D. G. GAWLER: I do not know if I am speaking of the same election as the Minister referred to, but whether I am or not, here is a full and complete report of the Minister's address to his constituents at Geraldton, and from first to last there is not a mention of the Esperance railway in it. For the Minister's information, as he has just come in, I would like to repeat that I have here his speech delivered at Geraldton headed, "The Colonial Secretary's candidature—Mr. Drew at Geraldton—Government's Land Policy—Reform of the Upper House"—Of course. And right throughout that speech there is no reference to the Esperance railway. If the Minister referred to it in any part of his constituency I do not know.

The Colonial Secretary: He did.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER: He referred to it evidently where he was not taken much notice of, because I think he will admit that in election speeches members try to embody their platform in the first speech and to get it as fully reported as possible. I have the speeches of members here, and there is not a single mention of the Esperance railway in any of them barring that of Sir Winthrop Hackett. Mr. Lynn was the only member, so far as I know, who referred to the Esperance railway, and he strongly opposed it, and he was returned.

Hon. J. E. Dodd (Honorary Minister): He just scraped in, in the only port that is opposed to Esperance.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER: Hon. members can draw what significance they like from that. I remember this, that in spite of the fuss made of the action of the Legislative Council last session, the people agreed, absolutely and overwhelmingly agreed, with them, and those who advocated the measure had not the courage to go on the platform and denounce the Upper House for not having passed it.

Hon. J. Cornell: I did.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER: Before sitting down, I am informed, although I have not had an opportunity of seeing this morning's newspaper, that Mr. Fraser's estimate of the wheat yield of Esperance

is 778 acres at six and a half bushels. If that is going to justify the building of a railway, all I can say is that it is foreign to all my ideas of what a wheat yield should be.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: The hon. member may add that it was an exceptionally bad year.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER: This is for the coming year, and this wheat is grown in the most important part of the Esperance district. If a large area of good land could be provided and the responsible advisors advised that the railway could be built there without loss to the State and the Government could say—"Here is the estimated expenditure, and here are the receipts, we hope to see a profit, not at once, but in a short time"—if the Government could say that—at present the financial outlook is not as glowing as it should be, and if we wish to obtain money we shall have to pay a large amount of interest for it, therefore our earnings will have to be more—if, I say, these objections were not present I would be prepared to vote for it, and if these objections could be overcome in the future, I shall still hope to be able to give favourable consideration to the measure at some future time, but at present I am not satisfied that the railway is justified.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN (South): There can be only one explanation to the speech we have just heard delivered by Mr. Gawler, for he has always been noted in this House for his straightforwardness and fairness, that is that he has not paid that attention to this question, that he has not gone through the reports and got the information that would have enabled him to arrive at a different conclusion as to the advisability of going on with this work. In fact, Mr. Gawler himself admitted so much very plainly in his speech, for he said nothing had occurred since the Bill was last before the Chamber to induce him to alter his mind on the subject. I do not know whether he is aware that Government officers have been in that district since the Bill was last before the House, and that they have spent six months in that district traversing every mile and every acre

of that country. These men were appointed after much consideration and investigation, and have supplied to the Government voluminous reports. The hon. member has evidently not studied those reports. He admitted that he had very scantily perused them, yet he comes here and says that there has been nothing further brought forward to justify the construction of the line. These reports are of an exhaustive nature. They are the reports of Government officers who have spent a long time in this district and who know more about it than anyone who has reported on the question. The reports deal with every aspect of the question, and the hon. member has not pointed to one word in the reports which is adverse to the construction of the line. I do not propose to deal with the experts' reports at this stage. I have been through the reports and there is nothing in those reports quoted which is adverse to the construction of the line. The hon. member has referred to the recent elections to the Legislative Council and the absence of any comment on the Esperance Railway. After the Bill came before the House on the occasion when it was defeated the Government announced that they would have a more thorough, a more complete examination of this country than they had previously had made. Officers were at the time of the Council elections investigating the country, and the friends of the Esperance railway were perfectly satisfied to wait for the fuller information, and therefore perhaps did not give as much prominence to the question as otherwise they would have done. Now these reports are before us and there is not a sentence in them, not a word which is not favourable to the railway. The Minister for Works, who is responsible for this Bill, stated that there has never been a railway Bill introduced to Parliament for which a stronger case can be made out than this.

Hon. D. G. Gawler: Why have you not a further report from the Advisory Board?

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: The hon. member asks why there is not a further re-

port from the Advisory Board. If the hon. member had studied the report of the Advisory Board he would have seen that these two experts are carrying out exactly the wishes of the minority report of the Advisory Board. Mr. Paterson wrote the minority report of the Advisory Board because he was not satisfied on two points. I have his report here, which, later on, I shall refer to, but I am departing from what I intended to say in connection with it to answer Mr. Gawler. There were two points in the minority report on which Mr. Paterson had doubts. He did not condemn the line, but he was not quite satisfied as to the quality of the soil or as to the holding capacity of the ground as a means of water conservation. It was in order to make a thorough investigation, for Mr. Paterson said he was not long enough in the district to form a just opinion on these questions, and it was in order to remove or confirm the doubts referred to by Mr. Paterson that these officers were sent out, and I say that no report could possibly have been prepared that more completely or more entirely removes these doubts than the reports laid on the Table by the Colonial Secretary. Therefore, I say without the slightest hesitation there has never been a railway Bill introduced into this Parliament for which a stronger case can be made out, and has been made out by the Minister for Works and the Colonial Secretary than the case for this particular railway. I might just refer in the briefest possible way to the length of time that this question of the Esperance railway has been before the country, and I think in referring to that length of time I can say this, that if the case for the Esperance railway had not been on a sound foundation it would have long since fallen to the ground, and have long since disappeared from the political questions of Western Australia. Strong as the case for that railway was in the past, yet it has never been so unanswerable as it is today. The Esperance railway was discussed as far back as 1887 in Parliament, and there were men in Parliament at that time who expressed doubts as to the value of the land, but there were some men who

spoke of the country as a very fertile district. However, it was a private railway that was then being discussed and nothing came of the matter, but when the goldfields broke out in 1892 for some time Esperance was competing with Fremantle as the port for the goldfields. Teams brought over a quantity of the requirements of the goldfields from Esperance, and the movement for the Esperance railway became very strong. The first deputation that waited on a public man in connection with this question was as far back as 1896, when a deputation from Esperance waited on Sir John Forrest. There is a good deal of doubt as to what the Premier said on that occasion, but I do not think anyone will dispute the fact that he made a speech that was not adverse to the line and there was one part of the report of it that is generally agreed upon as accurate. He said, "he did not think, as most people, that because Esperance was antagonistic to Perth and Fremantle this was any reason for doing the place an injustice. No such narrow views were entertained by him." On the strength of that a large number of people settled in Esperance as a port certain to get a railway, and it became a prosperous town. Despite all that was said, justice was never done to Esperance, and the people who invested their money and made their homes in Esperance were ultimately ruined, and had to leave the place one by one until now it has become almost a deserted village of about two hundred inhabitants.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Two hundred?

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: It might be down to one hundred now, but it may be a couple of hundred. The movement for the railway went on and in 1901 was taken up by numbers of bodies and so responsible an institution as the Chamber of Mines went into the matter thoroughly, took evidence, and brought in a report regarding the Esperance railway. That Chamber, representing as it did, 25 million pounds invested in Western Australia, decided that the construction of the Esperance railway would be beneficial to the whole State, that the line should be commenced without delay, and

that it would leave a profit, after paying all working expenses and interest on capital. They also took extensive evidence regarding the harbour at Esperance, and decided that the harbour was safe and commodious, and that an expenditure of £75,000 would be sufficient to provide ample jetty accommodation, lighthouses, light ships, and all moorings that might be necessary. That movement was followed later on by other efforts to secure the line. In 1902 a petition was presented to both Houses of Parliament from 39 public bodies on the fields praying for the line, and in the Legislative Council in December, 1902, on a motion of the Hon. J. D. Connolly, a motion was carried—

That in the opinion of this House it is desirable that a railway connecting Esperance Bay with the goldfields should be constructed as early as possible.

That motion was carried in this Chamber by 13 votes to nine, and it is interesting to know that some of the men who voted in that division are still members of this Chamber. I find that among the 13 voters in favour of the early construction of the Esperance railway at that time, five are still members of this House; they are the Hons. E. M. Clarke, J. D. Connolly, Sir Winthrop Hackett, A. G. Jenkins, and C. Sommers.

Hon. M. L. Moss: You are going back into ancient history.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: Probably the hon. member does not like this reference to the history of the line and the long and tedious struggle against the parochialism of certain localities in this State and of certain members of Parliament. As a result of that movement a survey of the railway from Coolgardie to Esperance was completed in 1903 at a cost of £4,000. I am sure that nowhere in this State can be found an instance of a survey having been agreed to so long ago and a large amount of money having been spent on the survey, and of the line not having been constructed to this day. Not only did the movement for the Esperance railway excite the universal sympathy of the whole of the mining community of

this State and also that of broad-minded people in other parts of the State, but it excited the sympathy of people outside of Western Australia. I have a report of a no less important body than the London Chamber of Commerce who took up the matter, and on the 12th February, 1903, passed a motion unanimously—

Hon. M. L. Moss: They knew nothing about it.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: Judging by the report they knew as much as the hon. member, only they took a broader and more statesmanlike view of the question. The motion passed by the London Chamber of Commerce was—

That a respectful representation be made to the Western Australian Government, through the medium of the Agent General, in favour of the construction at as early a date as possible, of a railway from Esperance Bay to the Kalgoorlie goldfields, as being the natural means of access of those goldfields to the sea.

Not only did it attract attention in London but it also attracted considerable attention in the Eastern States. We know that in the Federal Parliament, the late Right Hon. C. C. Kingston took the matter up and there were many important speeches which he delivered upon the question and upon the anti-Federal attitude adopted by Western Australia in connection with the railway. So outrageous became the position that even Sir John Forrest, who had always been an opponent of the railway, seemed to get some qualms of conscience, and I have a letter which was published in the *West Australian* and was written at the time Sir John Forrest was in London when action was taken in connection with the matter by the London Chamber of Commerce. Sir John Forrest made a most extraordinary suggestion. It shows the justice of the case for the line when that gentleman was driven to adopt this course. He suggested that the same rates should be charged on goods and for passengers between the Eastern Goldfields and Fremantle as if the railway had been completed to Esperance. He said the distance from Esperance to Coolgardie was 225 miles, or say by rail—

way 230 miles; thus all goods and passenger fares from Fremantle to Coolgardie and all places over 230 miles, should be charged as for 230 miles: this would get rid of the cry that the goldfields had to pay for 120 miles of extra carriage. This is a striking evidence of Sir John Forrest's recognition of the goldfields having been treated very unjustly for a great many years in the matter.

Hon. W. Patrick: That is not the whole of the letter?

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: The whole of the letter is in my possession and the hon. member may read it if he desires. That is the purport of the letter and the suggestion contained in the letter has never been carried out from that day to this. As a result of the hostile attitude to the southern portion of the State, even when it was proposed that a railway should be constructed to Norseman for the mining field of Norseman that railway for a long time was bitterly opposed because it was half-way between Coolgardie and Esperance. Everyone who is acquainted with the mining industry will agree that there were many fields that had not nearly as much promise as Norseman and were supplied with a railway long long before the Norseman railway was built. Finally, after many years of continued effort, in 1908, the Moore Government passed a Bill for the construction of the Norseman railway, and the result of that action of the Moore Government was that for some time there was a great feeling of gratitude on the goldfields towards them and they were generally spoken of as being broad-minded and public-spirited in the matter. For some time the Moore Government had a very large and influential body of supporters on the goldfields, and some of the Ministers were returned as members for goldfields constituencies. Although the district between Norseman and Esperance has been recognised for a very long time as of agricultural value, yet it is only of comparatively late years that its real value has come to be fully recognised. In the same way as there were large areas which those who were here in the early days thought would

probably be utilised for farming purposes, it is only within comparatively recent years that the attention of the people has been directed to any great extent towards farming, and agriculture has become fashionable. When that change came about the people of the goldfields acquainted with the value of the land, looked into the matter more fully and many of them went down and were quite satisfied that there was a portion of that land which was second to no land available for settlement in Western Australia. It was not only they who discovered that, but there had been Government officers in Esperance who had sent reports to the Government of the day pointing out to them the value of the land between Norseman and Esperance. I have extremely lengthy reports, one from the resident magistrate at Esperance dealing with the rainfall, the quality of the soil, and the great possibilities that were in front of that country for farming purposes—

Hon. C. A. Piesse: What is his name?

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: Dr. Harrison. That report was further supported by a gentleman who is a great authority on mallee country, Mr. J. W. White. Mr. White was a member of Parliament in South Australia and was the chairman of a Commission that was appointed to inquire into the value of the mallee lands in South Australia. This gentleman sent a very voluminous report regarding Esperance lands.

Hon. W. Patrick: What year was that?

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: The report was made regarding the Pinnaroo country in 1902. I know Mr. White very well and have often discussed the matter with him.

Hon. W. Patrick: I know him very well.

Hon. C. Sommers: Is he connected with the rabbit department of this State?

Hon. W. Patrick: That is the man.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I have been informed not only by Mr. White himself but by others that he occupied the position of chairman on the commission appointed by the South Australian Government.

Hon. W. Patrick: He was here years and years before 1902.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: He was a Government officer at that time and the report of Dr. Harrison and his report were sent to the Lands Department and no notice was taken of them. There is only one sentence in Dr. Harrison's report which I shall refer to, and it really summarises the whole position. He refers to the Esperance-Norseman country thus—

It is a fair-sized province lying idle and crying aloud for settlement. It is a great deal better than much of the land now being taken up along the Great Southern railway.

It was in 1905 that Dr. Harrison wrote that particular report.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

When the adjournment took place, Mr. Patrick interrupted me regarding a point that was not of very material importance, but as it affected the accuracy of my general statement, I desire to refer to it. I spoke of Mr. J. W. White of Esperance, who, as a Government official, had a great many years ago, in 1902, reported to the Government regarding the value of the Esperance land. Mr. Patrick by interjection implied that there must be some mistake, inasmuch as I stated that Mr. White was a member of the South Australian Parliament, and that he reported upon the mallee lands of South Australia. I think that either Mr. Patrick misunderstood me, or else he is incorrectly informed, as I have been at some pains to ascertain whether or not Mr. White was a member of the South Australian Parliament.

Hon. W. Patrick: He was a member; I did not say he was not, I helped him to get in.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I have looked up the records, and I find he was a member. Mr. Patrick wanted to know at what date the report to the particular body of which this gentleman was a member, regarding the mallee lands of South Australia was prepared. I said that the report Mr. White

submitted to the Government of Western Australia was dated 1902, so that it must have been some years before that. On looking up the records of the South Australian Parliament, I find that Mr. White was the member for Light, and the particular year of his election was 1893. He was for some years a member of Parliament. I told the hon. member that it was several years prior to the date of the report which he submitted to the Western Australian Government. I do not know the date of the Commission although I have endeavoured to ascertain it. There was a Parliamentary inquiry into the matter; but the particular volume relating to it, strange to say, is the very one that I cannot secure. That there was such a committee, of which Mr. White told me personally he was a member, and of which he was generally reputed to be a member, and that there was an inquiry, there is evidence in the records which are here, but the particular volume which would give the names of the members is missing. However, that is not very material, and I merely mention the matter because I always endeavour to be accurate in any statement I make, and as I made a statement earlier in the afternoon, and as Mr. Patrick seemed to challenge it, I wanted to make the matter clear.

Hon. W. Patrick: I simply wanted to know the date.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: Subsequent interjections made by Mr. Patrick implied that Mr. White was not a member of Parliament, and that there was no such inquiry. There is, as I have stated, evidence that there was such an inquiry. As a result of the renewed interest that was taken in the country between Norseman and Esperance for farming purposes, an endeavour was made to get a report on the value of those lands. Early in 1910, Mr. Wilson, who was then Acting Premier in the absence in England of Sir Newton Moore, visited Kalgoorlie. When he was in Kalgoorlie, a number of people interested in the development of this portion of the State, waited upon Mr. Wilson, and he promised that he would send the Agricultural Advisory Board

to visit this locality. I would like those interested in this question to remember that the Agricultural Advisory Board made two visits to this particular district. I am now referring to the first visit that was made by that Board. It was somewhat unfortunate that the then Minister for Lands (Mr. Mitchell) should have seen fit to accompany the Board on the occasion of their first visit to the Esperance-Norseman district. Before Mr. Mitchell saw these lands, he condemned them. At a public meeting held in Kalgoorlie, at which I was one of the audience, I heard him condemn those lands before he inspected them. The visit of the Advisory Board to the Esperance-Norseman district was of very brief duration. They occupied three days in covering 125 miles, and some portion of the district was driven over during darkness. Mr. Mitchell, when subsequently spoken to upon the matter, admitted that he had covered a portion of the country during night time, and those who know the country well say that it was the best portion of the land. Mr. Mitchell said he was able to judge from the timber in the country as to the quality of the land. I have been told by men who know more about agricultural lands than I do, that an idea can be formed as to the nature of the country and the soil from the timber upon it, but I think, even allowing for that, it must have been a very perfunctory examination. I can hardly conceive any person going to inspect land for the purpose of, say, purchasing it for himself, being satisfied by driving over it at night time and judging by the outline of the trees.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: Perhaps it was by moonlight.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I do not know that that makes much difference. I mention that to show that the report on that occasion was untrustworthy. After a considerable delay, the Board brought out a report which was of a very non-committal character. The gentlemen who constituted the Board on the occasion of the first visit to this land were Mr. W. Paterson (chairman), Mr. H. F. Johnston, Professor W. Lowrie, and Mr. John

Muir. In response to a telegram from the Minister these gentlemen issued a report which, as I have said, was non-committal. They said they travelled from Norseman to Esperance, following the main road, and that they passed through only about 20 miles of country which they considered suitable for farming. Then, further on, they declared that, until this area had been further examined and classified, and they had made an extended inspection, they were not prepared to express a more definite opinion respecting its agricultural possibilities. I think everybody, including the Government of the day and those who supported the railway, were of the opinion that the first report was inconclusive, and the members of the board themselves explained it was not satisfactory. After that report was issued on the 30th June, 1910, a further effort was made to get a proper and complete examination of this country to learn whether or not it was really as it was represented to be, by a large number of people, of considerable value for agricultural purposes. Six weeks after the issue of that report, a very large deputation waited upon the then Premier, Sir Newton Moore, who had returned from England. The deputation to Sir Newton Moore in connection with this railway waited on him on the 5th August, 1910, and there was never in Western Australia so large or so influential or representative a deputation to any Minister. The deputation consisted of 80 persons, each one of whom was there in a representative capacity. There were 18 members of Parliament, and eight municipalities, seven roads boards, and eight other public bodies were represented. Each of these public bodies had been invited to send representatives. They had discussed the matter before, and they had elected delegates to go to Perth to represent them on the deputation. I venture to say that there is no request which could have been made by any deputation from any other equally important part of the State as representative as that deputation was, and which would not have been complied with without delay, more especially in view of the fact that the deputation

represented an industry that had done so much for Western Australia. The reply that was made by Sir Newton Moore was fair and reasonable and it gave a great amount of satisfaction to the deputation and to the people of the Eastern Goldfields who were represented by that deputation, and all went away very pleased and satisfied because of the reply. I have Sir Newton Moore's reply in full as it was reported in the *West Australian*. Sir Newton Moore said that in all his experience he did not remember having received such a representative deputation. He then referred generally to the history of the Esperance railway from the time the first deputation waited on Sir John Forrest in 1896 and he wound up by saying that the report from which I have quoted, of the four members of the Advisory Board who first visited the district, was not one which could be accepted as conclusive. The board could not have been expected in three days to cover 125 miles and give a complete report regarding the value of the lands of that part of the State. He then went on to say he was not prejudiced against the Esperance railway in any degree; the Government had always given evidence that it was their desire to treat all parts of the State fairly, irrespective of locality. Sir Newton Moore further stated that the matter would receive every consideration, and that the Advisory Board would be asked to make an examination and report so that the Government might be in a position to give a definite opinion. Mr. Gawler stated that the Advisory Board should have been asked to give a further report upon this question. Evidently Mr. Gawler did not know that this report he was referring to was the second report of the Advisory Board. Mr. Gawler now wanted a third report. However, Sir Newton Moore promised that the Advisory Board would be again sent to the district, that they would be asked to spend a longer time in it, and to give a more definite and complete report than the report issued in the first instance. Sir Newton Moore made that promise on the 15th August, and said that he thought it would be possible to have the report in a month

or two, but it was not available until the 17th March, 1911. There have been many references to this report of the Advisory Board, and I claim that even the minority report of Mr. Paterson was not unfavourable. He expressed certain doubts because he had not been sufficiently long in the locality to enable him to know all about it, but in no sense could his report be regarded as unfavourable. The majority report on the other hand must be regarded as highly favourable. I may explain that the constitution of the board was slightly altered on the second occasion, inasmuch as, instead of four members acting as in the first instance, Professor Lowrie had left the State before the second visit, and was not a member of the board on that occasion. The board on the second visit therefore consisted of Mr. Paterson, Mr. Johnston, and Mr. Muir. In the majority report signed by Mr. Johnston and Mr. Muir there are some sentences which have an important bearing on the question, and although they have been quoted often before they ought to be quoted again, because it is evident from the last speech we heard on this question that there is still a considerable lack of knowledge on the part of certain members. The principal portion of the report I wish to draw attention to is this—

From the 30 mile stage, and thence on to 75 miles from Esperance, the proposed line would run continuously through the mallee belt. This belt of country comprises approximately an area 45 miles north and south by 65 miles east and west, or nearly 3,000 square miles, making a total area of 1,872,000 acres, two-thirds of which the land classifiers, Messrs. May and Hewby, estimate to be good for wheat growing, viz., 1,248,000 acres.

Roughly, the area of land estimated by the majority report as good for wheat growing in this district is $1\frac{1}{4}$ million acres. The report goes on to say—

We may state that this large extent of wheat-growing country, some $1\frac{1}{4}$ million acres, is the greatest area of wheat land as far as we know, at present in the State in possession of the

Crown, with so good a rainfall. . . We would draw your attention to the fact that as an Agricultural Railways Advisory Board we have confined our remarks solely to the agricultural prospects of the proposed railway.

They did not deal with the other aspects of the question, such as the increased traffic that would arise by virtue of the line being a connecting link between the gold-fields and their natural holiday resort, sanatorium, and port. The minority report of Mr. Paterson, which hon. members who are opposed to this line base a great many of their objections upon, is not at all of so condemnatory a nature as it is represented to be, Mr. Paterson says—

I am not wholly in accord with the report which recommends the construction of a railway 60 miles in length towards Norseman to exploit what is termed the mallee belt.

He gives us his reasons—

I must satisfy myself that the land to be operated on to warrant a railway must be reliable wheat growing country, as on a wheat basis only are railways justified in dry areas.

He goes on to say that the land is very porous. The reports of Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Middleton that have been since issued deal especially with Mr. Paterson's report in this particular. These gentlemen spent six months in that locality. They both have high reputations and have been highly recommended, and they adequately answered every single point on which Mr. Paterson expressed any doubt. Mr. Paterson said there are no gullies and watercourses. That point also is dealt with fully by Messrs. O'Brien and Middleton, and it is shown that this fact is rather evidence in favour of the country than otherwise. Then Mr. Paterson went on to say that he wants to have—

demonstrated at the earliest possible moment the true possibilities of this great area, both as to its wheat production under proper conditions of farming, and also as to its water supply.

Both these points have been fully demonstrated since, and are dealt with in

the reports of Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Middleton, and no one who reads either of those reports can have the slightest doubts on these two points in future. Mr. Paterson recommended that certain experiments should be made in that particular area in connection with farming, and that recommendation has been carried out; the only difference is that whilst Mr. Paterson wanted the Government to carry out the experiments the settlers themselves are doing it. Mr. Surveyor Watkins reported on that area at that particular time. He was there surveying the land that had been applied for, and he gave very conclusive testimony as to the value of the country. He stated—

The clay underlying the loam has been tested to a depth of from 9 feet to 15 feet, and found to be retentive, good holding ground for water conservation.

That has been even much more satisfactorily tested later, as was explained by the Colonial Secretary. Mr. Watkins continued—

The total area inspected from the 28-mile to 65-mile, and easterly and westerly from 40 to 50 miles, would be about one million acres. Of this area nine hundred and eighty thousand acres is suitable for cereals, and with approved methods of cultivation should give a yield of twenty bushels per acre. About 20,000 acres would consist of salt lakes, flats, sampire and tussock flats, sandy ridges, and plains, which would not yield a similar return, but parts would probably be cultivated and used for grazing purposes. This large area of splendid agricultural country of uniform quality, with good loam and clay subsoil, is eminently suited for cereals. It has a reliable rainfall, an exceptionally favourable climate, is in close proximity to the surveyed line of the railway, within easy distance from a good harbour, with shipping facilities and capable of supporting a large and prosperous community and establishing a profitable and large export trade.

The report of the Advisory Board also gave particulars regarding the rainfall,

and I must refer to the rainfall for this district because last night Mr. Moss by interjection showed that he did not know much regarding this point. He referred to the rainfall as being 10 inches, but the report of the Advisory Board gives the rainfall and the number of years over which the records extend. In Esperance the record is of the rainfall for the last 27 years, at 30-mile for 11 years, at Lake View 8 years, and Norseman 14 years. When I interjected to Mr. Moss that the rainfall was 17 inches in parts of the wheat belt, the hon. member showed the extent of his knowledge and the little trouble to which he had gone to find out the rights and wrongs of the question when he replied that I was talking nonsense. I was only quoting from the records. The average annual rainfall at Esperance for 27 years was 25.59 inches, at 30-Mile for 11 years 17.67 inches, at Lake View, which is 92 miles north of Esperance, 11.63 inches for eight years; and even Norseman, which is not claimed to be within the wheat belt, has a rainfall that is equal to that of many places where they are growing wheat to-day, namely 10.34 inches. When an examination is made of the average number of months of the year when the rainfall is most desirable for crops, the records are found to be equally satisfactory. The average from April to November for Esperance is 22.32 inches, 30-Mile 14.74 inches, Lake View 8.90 inches, and Norseman 7.93 inches. Those figures were quoted last night by the Colonial Secretary, but after the interjections that were made, I think it is necessary to quote them again. It seems necessary to repeat these things over and over again, and whether or not there are certain members who do not want to know the facts, certain it is that they are constantly displaying a woeful amount of ignorance as to the condition of things in that part of the country. The late Government went no further in connection with the Esperance railway than to instruct the Advisory Board to report. Then the general elections intervened, and a majority of the members at present on the Government side made no secret of the fact that if they were

returned they would bring in the Esperance railway. We all know the result. The then Opposition were returned to power by an overwhelming majority. I do not claim that it was the Esperance railway which was responsible for that, but it had a tremendous influence so far as the Eastern goldfields were concerned, and the results of the elections show that the bulk of the Legislative Assembly electors, at any rate, cannot be opposed to this particular line. They at any rate show a broad-minded and national spirit, and they seem desirous of doing what they can to fill the vacant spaces of Western Australia that can be filled by a prosperous and farming community if only the Government of the day will take a sufficiently broad view of the question. Last year the Government introduced the Norseman-Esperance Railway Bill into the Assembly and it was carried by the large majority of 28 votes to 17, but when it came to this Chamber it was rejected by five. This year when the Bill was brought forward in another place it again received the very large majority of two to one, and when pairs are counted it shows that 28 members were in favour of it as against 15 against, and now when it comes forward to us the case for it is stronger than ever, because in the meantime the Government, as I explained earlier in my speech, have sent two gentlemen into the area to report on the particular questions on which Mr. Paterson had doubts. One of the points on which Mr. Paterson expressed considerable doubt was as to the water supply and the holding capacity of the ground. The reports now before us show that the settlers have sunk ten dams in that particular area and of these ten dams nine are holding. There is only one which is not holding, and Mr. Middleton explains that the reason is that it was due to a mistake on the part of the settler in putting the dam in the wrong place. Mr. O'Brien, as members are aware, is head of the Mines Water Supply branch, and his report is a very satisfactory answer to the report of Mr. Paterson. One of the objections of Mr. Paterson is where he talks of the land as very porous and says that there are

no gullies or watercourses. Mr. O'Brien in the course of his report, says—

Various reports and statements have been published to the effect that the mallee country is porous, that no watercourses exist and that great difficulties would be met in providing settlers with water, and so on.

These are almost identically the words Mr. Paterson used. His report was evidently in the possession of Mr. O'Brien, and Mr. O'Brien regards it as important to report on the doubts set up by Mr. Paterson. Mr. O'Brien's report continues—

A few words on the above will show how a half truth given out in all innocence may leave a bad impression. The mallee "surface soils," and to some extent the subsoils, are porous, and it is fortunate for the State that they are. The soils on the mallee belt can easily absorb all the rain which falls and hold it for a considerable time before the sun's heat pulls it out. The sandy loams which prevail over the surface assist the retention of moisture in the soil below, and require less cultivation in fallow than heavier and stiffer clay soils. Condensing the above, we have—surface soils and subsoils absorb rain, and lose it again by evaporation, less the quantity used by scrub and trees. Taking this in conjunction with the character of the rain (slow soaking falls)—

This is in reference to the remark of Mr. Paterson's as to there being no gullies or watercourses. Mr. O'Brien says—

Taking this in conjunction with the character of the rain (slow soaking falls) and the easy grade of the country—the absence of watercourses is explained. After an examination extending over six months—

This gentleman was six months in the district; Mr. Paterson was not more than a couple of weeks. The report proceeds—

After an examination extending over six months, and carried out in a systematic way. I see no serious difficulties in providing a reliable, economical, and clean water supply, all over the area of 1½ million acres, including railway requirements.

I think even Mr. Paterson himself would be amply satisfied with that report. I believe he would recognise that it has removed the doubts he expressed in the Advisory Board's report he submitted after a short visit to the locality.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: Would it not have been a good thing to refer it to Mr. Paterson?

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: Mr. Paterson probably had too many other things to attend to. Possibly if the hon. member had been Minister it might have occurred to him, but the Ministers to-day have a great deal to attend to. But the report is there, and the doubts expressed are there, and Ministers have sent officers down to inquire further into the questions raised, and surely that ought to be enough. But would the hon. gentleman ever be satisfied?

Hon. J. F. Cullen: Oh, yes.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: There are some members in the House who will never be satisfied regarding this railway. It seems to me that the message the Legislative Council are going to send to the people of the Esperance-Norseman district, and to the people of the goldfields, is that in no circumstances, no matter what reports are obtained regarding the value of the country, no matter how valuable it may be from an agricultural standpoint, and no matter how many settlers are ready to go there and spend their money, never will they construct that line, because they fear it may injure the vested interests of a few wealthy people in Perth and Fremantle. I am happy to think that the people of Western Australia have shown by the recent elections that no such narrow views are held by them and that they regard this question in a broad, statesmanlike, and national view, and that they are determined, so far as they are concerned, that justice will be done to this district. I am sorry that two members for Fremantle are not here just now. Probably they will come into the Chamber later on and say that they have not heard one word in favour of the construction of this railway, and show by their speeches, as Mr. Gawler showed, that they have not even taken the trouble to read the reports the Government went to such pains and

expense to have prepared for them. Some reference has been made to the action of the Government in endeavouring to help some of the settlers who pluckily went on to that land, and who are battling and endeavouring to make homes for themselves and their families in that area under very adverse circumstances; it was said that the Government ought not to assist them in the way that has been done. I have a copy of a letter which was sent by Mr. Paterson, Managing Trustee of the Agricultural Bank, a letter distinctly promising assistance to the settlers of that country; it was read at a meeting that was very largely attended, and it was instrumental in inducing a number of men to go down there. It read as follows—

Advances will be made by this bank on land suitable for agricultural purposes in the Esperance-Norseman district.

Mr. Paterson added—

Will you please observe, however, that advances will only be made on areas that are considered large enough for successful farming.

For some reason or another—it was stated in another place that it was at the instigation of the late Minister for Lands; I do not know whether it was so, but it was stated in another place, by the Premier, I think—Mr. Paterson withdrew that offer; but in the meantime several settlers went down there, and it is to the eternal credit of the present Government that they have done what little they can to try to help them over their difficulties. They were all hard-working men on the goldfields, and they had not a great deal of money, but what little money they had, despite the attitude of Parliament, they had sufficient confidence in the land that they were prepared to go down and invest it, and it is quite right that the Government should extend to them the same facilities as are extended to settlers in other parts of the State. The Government also sent down Mr. Sutton, the Commissioner of the Wheat Belt, and an officer from the Agricultural Department, Mr. White, to make investigations as to the methods concerning the assistance that ought to be given to these particular

settlers. Last night there were some interjections because a report from Mr. Sutton on the quality of the land was not available, but no such report was asked for, and no such report can be produced, because it is not available. They, however, recommended that advances should be made, and that at any rate gave some evidence as to what they thought of this particular country. We have other innumerable evidence that can be produced on the same point. The seasons for the last two years have not been as bright as they ought to be, but still the settlers are going on battling. They are cultivating their land in the most primitive way; in only one instance has the ground been fallowed; yet, despite the unsatisfactory seasons, the worst known for fifteen years, the results are not discouraging. We see that even those who were most bitterly opposed to the railway a short time ago have been compelled to admit that there is a very large area of wheat-growing country in that locality. Mr. Mitchell, who condemned the country before he saw it and then, when he saw it, damned it with faint praise, now says it is an 8-bushel proposition; and when Mr. Mitchell grudgingly admits so much, we can feel certain the land must be more valuable than that. Then we have gentlemen like Mr. Arnold Piesse and the leader of the Opposition, Mr. Wilson; they do not any longer deny the value of the land, but what is their proposal? They say this country ought to be served by a railway; but what is the railway that they advocate? It is not a north and south railway. They are advocating an east and west railway; and the motive that inspired them in advocating that railway can be very easily understood. Any sort of a railway at all so long as it does not go in a certain direction is good enough for these gentlemen. But when they have absolutely not a single argument left, when every official and unofficial report published concerning the district and the testimony of every individual who has visited the country is against them, what do they say? "We will not build the north and south railway, asked for so long, but we will build it

east and west," for motives best known to themselves. There have been a number of other reports. Several of them were read by the Colonial Secretary, but there is one point in Mr. Middleton's report I should mention. That report is so bulky that, unfortunately, it cannot all be read to the House, but it is desirable that every member should read it. However, there is one point about his report that is worthy of special note. I have heard it said that if the land be so good why do not the settlers go there, though they may be 50 or 90 miles from a railway. I have heard members say they knew of instances of land being developed at very considerable distances from a railway. Mr. Middleton, at the outset in his report, gives good reasons why this land has not been developed without a railway. He says—

Apart from the matter of water conservation, my examination has convinced me that this country is not suitable for successful agricultural development without reasonable railway facilities. In other parts of the wheat belt in this State patches of good rich agricultural land alternate with stretches of generally poor sand-plain, and a settler at starting may, without the use of fertiliser, obtain a generous yield of wheat or hay, from a patch of strong land which will enable him to wait, though perhaps impatiently, the advent of the railway.

The fact is this land is consistent throughout. It is not patchy. It is all of the same character. He continues—

The conditions within the area under examination are totally different: for generally speaking, neither the areas of good, strong agricultural land, nor the stretches of poor sand-plain, are met with, but land of a fair average quality, strikingly consistent throughout the mallee belt. While, therefore I consider that one million acres or more of this mallee country is equal in value, for the growth of cereals, to the same area anywhere else in the State, the necessity for the early application of fertiliser and the

probable absence of the strikingly high "first yields" generally obtained in the rich country of other parts of the State referred to above, will render the low freights that obtain for railway carriage, both of fertiliser and of the resultant crops, essential at a very early stage to the successful development of the country.

That is a pretty satisfactory answer to those who wonder why this country has not been opened up in the past without railway facilities. Mr. O'Brien also refers to the character of the soil. With Mr. Middleton he traversed an area some 18 miles long by 15 miles wide. He said—

The mallee land, gently undulating throughout consists of red loam, light sandy loam, patches of grey loam, with subsoils of good close loam varying to loamy clay, and in parts clay. The grey appearance the surface presents along the coach road has caused many people to believe the country is a miserable sandy waste.

The grey colour is caused by rain and wind acting on the loams or clay, and depositing on the surface a fine layer of sand, mostly disintegrated limestone. This sand is soft, not hard and sharp, and it appears to be contained in surface and subsoils throughout the mallee belt.

Proof of the above may be seen on the spoil banks of the Government tanks constructed last year along the coach road by this department. A film of grey sand has already been weathered out of stiff clay, which was excavated from a depth of 12 feet.

Mr. Middleton also goes on to give a number of figures which were quoted last night by the Colonial Secretary, in which Mr. Middleton shows how infinitely greater the value of the country would be made with a railway than the capital cost of the railway. He shows that the Government cannot possibly lose, but must gain considerably by the construction of the line, and he expresses the opinion that it would pay working expenses and interest. I cannot conceive what further could be done by any Government to convince

any House of Parliament as to the necessity for this railway. If the members be not convinced concerning these reports they will never be convinced by any evidence which could be brought before them.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: Convinced by Mr. Middleton's report?

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: Yes. The hon. member has just come in. He has not heard anything concerning Mr. Middleton's report. He has not read Mr. Middleton's report. It is an evidence of the way in which he and other members of the House approach the subject. Some members who are bitter opponents of the line carefully stayed away during the debate on the subject last night, and others who remained showed by their interjections that they did not follow the Colonial Secretary. Mr. Gawler condemned the railway wholesale without having properly studied these reports. This is the way this subject is approached. I say no Government could do more, no reports could be produced for any railway stronger than the reports brought forward for this line. It is, I think, that the members do not want to read these reports; they are unconsciously biassed against this tract of country. I have numerous authorities here in addition to those already quoted. I have from fifty to a hundred authoritative opinions upon this question. I have also discussed this matter with numbers of men who understand mallee country. I have discussed it probably with two hundred different men on as many different occasions. Many of them went to that country strongly prejudiced against it, but the only man I ever heard express an unfavourable opinion concerning that country was the man who condemned it before he saw it, namely, Mr. Mitchell. Now that gentleman grudgingly admits that it is an eight bushel proposition.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: Mr. Paterson knows it.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: The hon. member is again showing how little he knows about the question. He evidently has not read Mr. Paterson's report or he would know that Mr. Paterson did not condemn

it, but simply expressed doubts about it. The hon. member was not here when I read Mr. Paterson's report and pointed out Mr. Paterson's expressed doubts as to the quality of the soil, its holding capacity, and the means of conserving water. He was not here when I read Mr. O'Brien's and Mr. Middleton's reports by way of showing how satisfactorily those doubts were answered.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER: What does Mr. Paterson say now?

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I do not know, but probably Mr. Paterson would be quite satisfied with the reports of Mr. Middleton and Mr. O'Brien. I fail to see how he could be other than satisfied. However, that gentleman probably has not read either of those reports. The hon. members who interject in this way were not here a little while ago. It is just in accord with the way in which this question is approached. They do not try to be informed about it, but approach it with prejudiced minds, pretending to represent people like the people of Fremantle. I refuse to insult the people of Fremantle by saying that the hon. members who sit here for Fremantle or some of those who sit for Perth represent the people of the metropolitan districts on this question. There are two members who genuinely and really represent Fremantle, two members who voted in favour of this railway, namely, Mr. Angwin and Mr. Bolton. They are the true representatives of Fremantle, inasmuch as they appeal, not to a limited franchise, but to the adult suffrage, to the whole of the people. They voted in favour of this railway and I decline to insult the people of Fremantle by saying that they are so parochial, so narrow-minded, so contemptible, or wanting in national spirit as to be opposed to this railway. I have spoken to some of the traders of Fremantle; I could mention their names, but I do not feel justified in doing so here; I will give them to any hon. member who desires to have them. These traders of Fremantle told me that they were ashamed of the paltry attitude adopted by certain members supposed to represent Fremantle on this question, and said that those members

speaking, not for the people of the place, but for a few holders of vested interests. I am referring to those members who voted against the Esperance railway.

Hon. M. L. Moss: You know nothing about the feeling at Fremantle.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: Perhaps I know a good deal more about it than the hon. member, to whom I predicted the result of the last general elections, and who jeered very much when I did so, but who, I think, is now perfectly satisfied that I was right and he was wrong. If a referendum of the people of Western Australia was to be taken on the Esperance railway question it would be carried by three to one, because the people are not paltry, are not contemptible. I know them. They always take a generous view of things, and are desirous of doing justice to every part of the State, and of seeing that all its resources are developed. I have quoted so far entirely from official reports. I have here a list of opinions collected from people who have knowledge of mallee country, and everyone of these opinions is favourable to the project. I will just quote from a few of them. There is the Government Surveyor, Mr. Crawford, who said—

It is some of the best cereal land in the West.

The Government Geologist, Mr. Woodward, in 1893 said—

The country is of a calcareous loamy nature, being covered with mallee thickets, and would make excellent wheat land if cleared. There must be about fifteen inches of rain.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch: Does he not estimate the yield?

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: No, that was done by Mr. Mitchell, who condemned the land before he saw it. Mr. T. C. Henchman, late Government land guide, said—

Experienced farmers from the mallee country in South Australia and Victoria at once recognise that the land is good and capable, without incurring any heavy expenditure, in producing splendid crops.

Mr. Hugh Johnstone, a Wickiepin farmer, said—

As an agricultural railway alone the Esperance-Norseman railway will open up more first-class agricultural land than any other railway of equal length which could be projected in Western Australia.

Mr. Charles Thomas, after thirty years' agricultural experience in other States, said—

After spending three weeks inspecting the district I feel confident that, if the Government decide to open up the country by rail, one of the biggest settlements in Western Australia will be established.

Mr. A. E. Shepherd, who has had years of experience in farming in the Riverina, New South Wales, said—

The district is undoubtedly a first-class cereal-growing district. For wheat production the climate and soil are ideal.

Similarly favourable views have been expressed by Mr. J. J. Walsh, Mr. Thomas Lewis, Mr. A. M. Richardson, Mr. Sievier, Mr. J. Fyfe, Mr. F. J. Roberts—

Hon. M. L. Moss: Did you get them out of the directory?

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: The hon. member has not been through the district and yet he expresses opinions.

Hon. M. L. Moss: I merely asked if you got the names out of the directory.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: Mr. Arthur Spring, who had had five years' experience in Victorian mallee and some time in South Australian mallee country, said—

I consider the mallee land in the Esperance district quite equal and in many places better than the mallee lands in Victoria and South Australia. There was splendid clay 14 and 15 feet deep for tanks. Few Governments have it in their power to open so large and rich an agricultural district capable of supporting many thousands of farmers for so trifling an expenditure.

Mr. G. H. Brearley, a wheat farmer from Kanioa, said—

I was more than pleased with the country and anticipate it will become in the near future an important agricultural area.

Mr. P. J. Webb, a farmer of Pingelly, said—

It is the largest area of consistently good farming land I have seen in this State.

Mr. R. Kinane, a farmer of Yorktown, South Australia, said—

I have no doubt the mallee land between Esperance and Norseman would produce the same splendid results that are now being obtained at Pinnaroo.

Mr. W. E. Dempster, who is well known to most members, has also expressed his opinion with regard to that particular country. The opinions that might be quoted are simply innumerable. I think this is the first agricultural railway I have ever known to be opposed in this House. I have been in this Chamber for a great many years, and whenever agricultural railways were brought forward, goldfields members have readily and gladly voted for them. When a railway was asked for a particular district, although we knew these railways meant a loss to the country—the agricultural railways have incurred losses—yet not a word of objection has ever come from any goldfields member concerning any policy of railway construction for agricultural purposes.

Hon. W. Patrick: It is not correct that there has been a loss.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: If the hon. member reads the Railway reports he will see there has been a direct loss. I believe there will be a direct gain in the future, but if the hon. member looks up the reports for any year he will see sectional reports regarding each new agricultural railway, and I know that lately every single one has shown a loss. The goldfields members never objected to these railways because it could not be proved that they would pay straight away, and this is the first agricultural line I have ever heard opposed in Parliament. This is the only railway, with one exception, that has been suggested for my district; the one exception was the Bullfinch railway.

Hon. J. Cornell: That was a big job; it did not take long to consider it.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: It was introduced by the late Government. With the exception of that railway this is the only one which has been suggested in my dis-

trict, and yet it has been consistently opposed by those members who have had the support of goldfields members over and over again. If the House is not satisfied with these reports I can only conclude that they are determined they will not vote for the railway no matter what happens. In refusing to construct this railway they are blocking the development of the State. If this Bill passes this House, there will be a land rush to that district such as Western Australia has never known. That district will speedily become thickly settled with a farming community and it will be a great source of financial strength to Western Australia generally; and I say members who are opposing the line are blocking the advancement of the State and blocking it in the interests of a few individuals who think they will be injured simply because they have vested interests in certain parts of the State. They are foolish individuals influenced by prejudice because we cannot advance the interests of the Esperance-Norseman district or of any other part of the State without advancing the interests of Perth and Fremantle and all the State.

Hon. M. L. Moss: You know you have a bad case.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I ask that the hon. member should withdraw that statement. He said I had a bad case and he was not present to hear my remarks. I would ask whether a remark of that kind is fair: it shows prejudice.

The PRESIDENT: It is not in order.

Hon. M. L. Moss: What is not in order?

The PRESIDENT: To make any interjection.

Hon. M. L. Moss: I only said at the end of his speech that he had a bad case.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: And you were not present to hear it.

Hon. J. CORNELL (South): I cannot allow the opportunity to pass without saying a word or two.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: You cannot say more than he said.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I am going to say what I have to say.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: It is only repetition.

Hon. J. CORNELL : It may be but I have a reputation.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom : You are quite right.

Hon. W. Patrick : Hear, hear.

Hon. J. CORNELL : I would not have risen so early except that this is perhaps the only opportunity I shall have of speaking on the question. I cannot help being struck with the amount of logic that has been brought forward by the other side who are opposing this line, logic in the shape of silence. There is no doubt in my mind as to the fate of this Bill. Those who are opposed to it are proceeding to administer execution a little more speedily than on the last occasion. I must congratulate Mr. Kirwan on the speech and on the matter which he brought forward. I further support him in clinging to and fighting a forlorn hope. Consistently for 15 years Mr. Kirwan has advocated the construction of this line both with voice and pen whenever the opportunity offered. It has been said that love clings. I desire to state that prejudice clings. If there is one thing that has characterised this debate it has been the earnestness and sincerity of Mr. Kirwan in advocating the construction of the line and the persistency with which prejudices cling to members who oppose it.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom : That is only because they do not think as you do.

Hon. J. CORNELL : I do not think any railway has been advocated so consistently or placed so prominently before the public since the foundation of Australia. There has not been one line which I know of to which so much publicity has been given and which has been fought for so hard. Members who pose as statesmen standing for the country's advancement have made this question, or been coerced into making this question, practically the issue of an election. This is one of the factors which will defeat this Bill because members say they have consistently promised the electors that they will oppose the Bill. It would be useless for me to go into the matter which has been so ably dealt with by the Colonial Secretary and supplement-

ed by Mr. Kirwan. They have put forward facts that are irrefutable, and the only efforts put forward by opponents of the measure have been put forward in the lightest and most airy manner. I have never heard Mr. Gawler deal with a matter in this House nor have I heard other members by interjection refer to a matter in such a light and airy way.

Hon. M. L. Moss : We had a dose of it last session.

Hon. J. CORNELL : I have not.

Hon. M. L. Moss : You can have your go now.

Hon. J. CORNELL : So I will. Reference has been made to what Mr. Paterson said several years ago.

Hon. M. L. Moss : Mr. Paterson will not lend any money on the land.

Hon. J. CORNELL : He has not been there since. Other responsible officers of the Department of Agriculture have been asked, and members are now bringing forward what Mr. Paterson said several years ago as an argument, despite the fact that the evidence of the Department of Agriculture is all in favour of the line. A spirit of parochialism has been displayed, and I do not think there has been a question before the House or before the public of Western Australia which has caused so much parochialism. I venture to say that as far as this measure is concerned there are members in this Chamber who do not see further than the Darling Ranges or the Fremantle pier. Is that a statesmanlike attitude? Members by their attitude are endeavouring to bring about a policy of centralisation.

Hon. W. Patrick : We do not all represent Perth and Fremantle.

Hon. J. CORNELL : The hon. member was closely associated.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom : I represent Kimberley.

Hon. M. L. Moss : I represent the whole State.

Hon. J. CORNELL : I would not be so egotistical as Sir Edward Wittenoom, but I would say that I endeavour to represent the South Province.

Hon. C. Sommers: Do you know when Mr. Paterson was down there last?

Hon. J. CORNELL: I am not aware of his having been down on an official visit since the memorable time when he travelled through part of the district at night time.

Hon. C. Sommers: Do you know his report is dated 17th March, 1911?

Hon. J. CORNELL: That is over 20 months ago. There are reports on this Table.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch: There have been 6½-bushel yields since then.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I am greatly surprised at Mr. Colebatch bringing forward an argument of that description. I will grant him that, but let me remind him what has happened in the Eastern States in some of the finest wheat-growing land in the world, and where, too, they have an 18-inch rainfall. We have only to go back a few years to the drought period to learn that for three consecutive years there was no yield whatever.

Hon. W. Patrick: Where was that?

Hon. J. CORNELL: In New South Wales, the place where my people live to-day.

Hon. M. L. Moss: Where is that?

Hon. J. CORNELL: Riverina.

The PRESIDENT: If the hon. member will address the Chair there will not be so many interruptions.

Hon. J. CORNELL: In the place where my people live to-day for four consecutive years they did not get a load of hay, while after that for seven years they never got less than a 24-bushel yield. Because this year there happened to be a drought in Esperance, hon. members would use that as an illustration to damn the line and damn the district. Hon. members might be logical and say that some of the districts they represent suffered from the effects of drought last year and produced very little crop and in some places none at all. I recognise that I might beat the air all night without having the effect of altering one vote. I think when the numbers go up we shall have about 10. Mr. Moss says I am a bit of a philosopher, but a man

needs to be one these times. I congratulate Sir Winthrop Hackett on the manner in which he voted on the last occasion, and I am pre-supposing that he will vote the same way on this occasion. I think that the hon. gentleman has intelligence and is not imbued with that parochial spirit which prevents him from looking further than Perth.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch: You will not have him long if this average keeps dropping each year.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I am well aware that we will not keep Sir Winthrop Hackett very long. His will be the fate we shall all have to meet, but let me say that I think Sir Winthrop has many days before him yet, and not as a politician, but as a statesman, and I feel confident the older he gets and the longer he lives he will remain as a living example to some hon. members that age has not warped his intellect in the way it has the intellect of others. In conclusion let me say that the result of the last general election conclusively proved that the people in Western Australia as a whole are in favour of this line.

Hon. M. L. Moss: No.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I think that a greater percentage of the people of this State, as Mr. Kirwan said, are in favour of the construction of this railway, and I regret to have to come to the conclusion that the only body of men who are not convinced of the necessity and urgency and practicability of this line are the members of the Legislative Council. I think, further, that there is only one thing that will remove that prejudice from this Chamber, and that is the pale rider on the white horse.

Hon. J. E. DODD (Honorary Minister): I desire to say a few words upon this Bill being a member representing that province in which Esperance is situated. Like Mr. Cornell I desire to offer my hearty congratulations to our senior colleague, Mr. Kirwan, upon the case he has put up, and I am sure that those who believe that the railway should be constructed from Norseman to Esperance are under a great debt of gratitude to Mr.

Kirwan for the way he has placed this subject before the country, and for the manner in which he has spoken to-night. If hon. members had listened to Mr. Kirwan and listened without prejudice I am sure that they must have been convinced that the arguments he brought forward are sufficiently important to justify the country in building this line. I do not intend to quote any figures or reports, because I know they would have no effect in the way of altering the attitude of hon. members in regard to the Bill. I am afraid no arguments that I can bring forward would be sufficient to break down the prejudice that seems to exist against this part of the country. It is all the more strange for this reason, that here we have what is practically a new province. We have fertile land that has been proved, and almost enough land to make a kingdom, yet we find that the prejudice is so great against extending railway facilities to that part of the State that we cannot overcome it. It is hard for anyone who is trying to be patriotic to a State such as this and to Australia as a whole, to understand why this prejudice should exist. A good deal has been said about the average yield of the wheat grown there. I cannot go into that because I have not looked into the matter, but I know that in different parts of Australia and in South Australia, which I am more familiar with, and which some other hon. members also know a good deal about, the average for some years was not greater than eight or nine bushels to the acre, and yet at the present time those same areas are yielding immense quantities of wheat, and some of the most fertile tracts of land in Australia are there. I am sure there is nothing to prevent this part of the State being the same. I would urge that some consideration be given to the line on the score that this is a poor man's country and that it is close to a big mining centre, where a large number of men are continually being driven out of employment by many circumstances, and who are looking for other avenues of employment. If this portion of the State was only thrown open a large number of these men would grasp the oppor-

tunity of settling at Esperance and doing something for themselves instead of languishing on the mines as at present. Not only would that be of benefit to the people and to the country, but younger men would be induced to go into the mines and take the places of the older ones who would leave. It might be easier to pick up younger miners than it would be to get young and experienced farmers. I might refer to the fact that at the last election one-half of the members who were returned were returned as supporters of this Bill. Four of them were out and out supporters of the line, and Mr. Connor, who was returned unopposed, was pledged to support it. He, too, was a member of that big deputation to which Mr. Kirwan referred.

Hon. D. G. Gawler: They never made a point of it during the election.

Hon. J. E. DODD (Honorary Minister): Of course we cannot say that the election was fought upon that issue, but we say that one half of the members returned at the last election were in favour of the Esperance railway. That goes to show that there was no feeling on the part of the electors against the railway. One of the greatest arguments was that to which Mr. Kirwan has drawn attention, namely, that two members at Fremantle, who were elected on the adult franchise, were elected as favouring the construction of this railway.

Hon. M. L. Moss: They never pronounced an opinion at any public meeting.

Hon. J. E. DODD (Honorary Minister): Mr. Angwin had reports with him to show what was being done in connection with this railway, but whether or not these were brought forward I cannot say.

Hon. M. L. Moss: Not a word was said.

Hon. J. E. DODD (Honorary Minister): As a rule the reports of election meetings in the newspapers are seriously condensed and it may be for that reason no mention appeared.

Hon. D. G. Gawler: Mr. Lynn was the only one who mentioned it and he strongly opposed it.

Hon. J. E. DODD (Honorary Minister): Attention has been drawn to Mr. Lynn, but Mr. Healy, who was supporting the Government against Mr. Lynn, came fairly close to getting that seat.

Hon. D. G. Gawler: They were all close.

Hon. J. E. DODD (Honorary Minister): At any rate it showed, even amongst the Upper House electors that there was a large percentage who were prepared to give a fair deal to the country and vote for the Esperance railway. With regard to the mallee lands, I know what has been done in the other States where mallee is greatly in evidence. I have seen it in the dry areas, and I know what it is in South Australia, and as I have already said at the present time those places are among some of the most fertile in Australia. We hear a lot about settling the people on the land, yet here this vast tract of country must remain unpopulated simply because prejudice exists in the metropolis. I believe there are many here who have not that prejudice, and I think all credit is due to Sir Winthrop Hackett for his advocacy of the line. I do not know that it is any use saying anything more. I hope members will give this question very serious consideration and do justice, even at this last moment, to those who are seeking not only to help the goldfields and Esperance, but also to help the people of Western Australia.

Hon. F. DAVIS: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion negatived.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	11
Noes	..	..	..	14
				—
Majority against	..	..	..	3
				—

AYES.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh	Hon. J. W. Kirwan
Hon. J. D. Connolly	Hon. C. McKenzie
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. R. D. McKenzie
Hon. J. E. Dodd	Hon. B. C. O'Brien
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. F. Davis
Hon. Sir J. W. Hackett	(Teller).

NOES.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. W. Patrick
Hon. J. F. Cullen	Hon. C. A. Plesse
Hon. D. G. Gawler	Hon. C. Sommers
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. T. H. Wilding
Hon. A. G. Jenkins	Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom
Hon. W. Kingsmill	Hon. A. Sanderson
Hon. R. J. Lynn	(Teller).
Hon. M. L. Moss	

Question thus negatived; Bill rejected.

BILL—INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION.

Report of Conference of Managers.

Debate resumed from the previous day on the motion of Hon. J. E. Dodd, that the report of the Conference Managers be adopted.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL (Metropolitan): Perhaps I may be pardoned for speaking at this stage of the proceedings on this Bill, because possibly I may not have an opportunity later on. I want first of all to say that in my opinion the thanks of this House are due to our managers who have fairly and ably represented us at the conference, and to say that so far as I am personally concerned I am perfectly satisfied with the conclusions at which they have arrived. Indeed, in regard to those conclusions, I must say that had I personally had the drafting of the measure under consideration many of those conclusions would have been come to by me, more especially with regard to the attitude which these gentlemen who represented this Council as managers have taken up with regard to rural workers and domestic servants. During the very long debates on this Bill both in Council and in Committee scarcely enough importance was placed on the fact that these two classes of workers represented two essentially different classes; that the Arbitration Bill is framed more particularly to affect those workers out of whose labour profit is designed to be made by their employers. It seems to me that this is a very vital difference as regards the class of labour employed. With regard to rural workers there is no doubt that they are employed with the idea of the employer making a profit out of the work they have to perform. On the other hand,

with regard to domestic servants, such a question does not arise, and I take it that the object of any industrial legislation must be to see that the greed of man does not lead employers to unduly oppress those whom they employ. For this reason I cannot but approve heartily of the conclusion that the managers have come to in this connection. Again, a point which appeared to me to be somewhat weak with regard to the conclusions arrived at by the managers was in connection with an industrial agreement becoming a common rule; but on examination I am satisfied that the proviso which the managers of both Houses have agreed to is a sufficient safeguard in that connection. There is only one thing in connection with these proceedings that I am a bit inclined to be dubious about, and that is the procedure which is proposed to be adopted in now dealing with this Bill. So far as I can find, the authorities on Parliamentary procedure which I have had time to consult are strangely silent upon the course to be followed after a conference has arrived at a decision. I hope, however, that the course which to my mind is the obvious one to be followed will be adopted, namely, that the Bill will be re-printed with the amendments agreed upon by the managers embodied therein, and then, presuming of course that a sense of loyalty to their managers will guide both branches of the Legislature, the Bill will be passed pro forma through all its stages in each House. It is impossible to follow the desire of the Message received from another place that we should suggest further amendments, because we have no further stage at which those amendments can be suggested. I hope the common-sense course will be adopted, that the Bill will be prepared afresh according to the recommendations and agreements of the managers, and will then be passed pro forma without debate and with as little delay as possible through both Houses. In conclusion, I desire to express my gratification that those hon. gentlemen inside and outside of this Chamber, who have somewhat previously expressed the opinion that

this Chamber was not prepared to deal fairly and satisfactorily with this measure, have had this most crushing rebuttal laid at their feet, and that by the action of the managers of this House in conjunction with the managers of another place it has been conclusively proved that this Legislative Council is willing to act fairly and equitably as between the various classes in this State. I think that no more abundant proof of that can be furnished than the report which has been submitted to this House by the managers appointed to consider the provisions of this Bill. I have much pleasure in supporting the adoption of the report.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN (South-East): I have only a few words to say, because I think the least said about a compromise the better, for one word leads to a rejoinder, and so on. With regard to the suggestion of Mr. Kingsmill, I think the better course would be for this House to fall in with the expressed wish of the Legislative Assembly. The Assembly has returned the Bill with the request that this House, if it approves of the report of the managers, will embody it in the measure. I think that would be the simpler course.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: How can we do that?

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: I see no difficulty in the Message being taken into Committee to-morrow in accordance with the order of last night, that it should be considered in Committee. With regard to the compromise, I agree with Mr. Kingsmill that we ought to congratulate our managers on the immense amount of work they got through. The only part I am not satisfied with, I want to explain to my constituency, is with regard to the agricultural and pastoral workers, but in loyalty to our managers and in expression of the desire that the vexed question should be settled, I am willing to give way on that. I would like to say that inasmuch as the amendment made by this House has been called illogical—I think anomalous would be the more correct word—with regard to these two sets of workers, I am satisfied

that the attitude of other hon members is the same as my own. We have no objection to all such workers having the fullest benefit of any legislation, but what we do feel is that a central court to which agriculturists and pastoralists might be haled, not as the outcome of any general feeling amongst their employees but in obedience to a mere agitation worked up from outside, would not afford a time-saving and economical method of settling any dispute that might arise. I am satisfied that sooner or later all rural cases will have to go to some system of wages boards locally sitting to decide the question. However, for the sake of doing all that can be done towards industrial peace I am willing to accept the compromise made by our managers.

Hon. J. E. DODD (in reply): I just desire to say that in regard to placing the Bill before the House, the Government will strive as far as possible to put the measure before both Houses in a constitutional manner, and I am sure we will be only too pleased to receive the assistance of the officers of the House in that endeavour. I think it is now the desire of all parties to see this Bill carried in accordance with the report of the managers, and I sincerely hope that no constitutional difficulty will present itself to make it impossible for that report to be carried into operation.

Question put and passed; the report adopted.

BILL—WORKERS' COMPENSATION.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 28th November; Hon. W. Kingsmill in the Chair, Hon. J. E. Dodd (Honorary Minister) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 11—agreed to.

Clause 12—Application of Act to industrial diseases:

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: The clause should be struck out. He wished to test the feeling of the Committee as to whether it was desired that industrial diseases should be dealt with in the manner proposed by the Bill or in the manner suggested by the Royal Commission that took evidence on this question some time ago and pointed out the

enormous difficulties which would arise from any scheme such as that set out in the Bill. Apparently the scheme outlined by the Royal Commission was abandoned because it provided for contributions from the workers themselves.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The distinction between accidents and diseases was very wide. He was prepared to go to a liberal extent with regard to accidents; but with regard to diseases, it would be placing an unfair and new burden on the employer altogether unjustifiable. It was well to test the opinion of the Committee on the point right away. There was a wide division between accidents and diseases to which more or less the whole of humanity were liable.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER: There was no provision for industrial diseases in the Acts of New South Wales, Queensland, or Tasmania. The select committee that inquired into this Bill some two years ago reported that provision for compensation for diseases was unworkable, and that the employer could not protect himself except by a rate of insurance that could only be paid by wealthy employers. They also pointed out the difficulty of tracing the employer with whom the worker contracted the disease, though they recognised that it was caused by dust and was quite distinct from tuberculosis.

Hon. J. E. DODD: It was just as well to decide whether industrial diseases were to remain in the Bill. He hoped the clause would not be struck out, because we were endeavouring to make the Bill apply to occupational diseases which were just as much a result of the industry as accidents to workers. If it was equitable to pay compensation for an external injury it was just as right to pay compensation for an internal accident in the shape of a disease caused through the inhalation of dust.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: How can you prove where the disease was contracted?

Hon. J. E. DODD: That matter would very soon settle itself. This was no new principle. The provision in regard to industrial diseases existed in the English Act since 1906 and in the New Zealand Act. Though, he admitted, miners' lung

diseases did not find a place in those Acts, lead poisoning, anthrax, and mercurial poisoning were dealt with in the English Act and the New Zealand Act, and were covered by legislation just passed by a Liberal Government in South Australia. It seemed strange that, so soon after an overwhelming announcement in favour of the party who sought to make these diseases rank as accidents, the Council should seek to strike out the provision. The report of the select committee referred to by Mr. Gawler was no guide. A committee appointed by the Legislative Assembly at the present moment to deal with the same subject would give a very different report. The party presenting the report referred to was almost annihilated on going to the country.

Hon. D. G. Gawler: Two Labour men signed the report.

Hon. J. E. DODD: That was simply to get uniformity and to try to bring about some little relief. An industry which paid 23 million pounds in dividends in 17 or 18 years and never spent a penny in the mitigation of the sufferings from miners' complaint, should in some way contribute to those rendered helpless by reason of working in the mines. In South Africa the mine owners spent £50,000 on erecting a sanatorium, and £5,000 per annum towards its upkeep. In England Lever Brothers at Port Sunlight up till 1904 spent £350,000 on a garden city on behalf of their employees, and on building hospitals and convalescent homes and other institutions for that purpose, and the Cadbury Company at Bourneville to 1904 spent £108,000 in the same direction. Now that our mines were getting deep and the men were suffering more than they did in the early days, something ought to be done in order to mitigate their sufferings. Certainly the mining industry was a declining industry and there were difficulties in the way of a large number of mining companies keeping going and meeting their liabilities, but no company should carry on at the expense of the health and lives of the workers without in some way endeavouring to mitigate the sufferings of their employees.

Only in one or two minor instances had the companies done anything for the workers, as for instance by establishing a workers' club, the deeds of which, it seemed, were held by the mines; but in reference to the sufferings brought about by industrial disease not one penny had been spent from the huge dividends. The Committee ought to consider very seriously before they wiped out the provision from the Bill, a provision which had found its way into the English, the New Zealand, and the South Australian Acts.

Hon. J. CORNELL: It was to be hoped the Committee would not strike out the provision. The English Act strictly provided for a disease which was peculiar to the mines in England, and in Germany, under the system of compulsory contributing insurance, a similar provision was made. There was no gain-saying the fact that medical evidence conclusively proved that these diseases were on the increase in Western Australia as the mines went deeper. The proposed legislation was an attempt to make just provision for a man who became disabled or lost his life through a disease peculiar to the mining industry. The miner whose lungs were destroyed by reason of his occupation had just as much right to compensation as had a man who lost an arm or a leg in a mining accident. The mining industry was dwindling, but when the industry was at the height of its prosperity in the State nothing whatever had been done to alleviate the sufferings of the stricken workers by those who controlled the mines and participated in the dividends. As one who had worked in the mines on the Golden Mile for a considerable number of years, he knew exactly what had been done for the workers by those responsible for the conduct of the mines. All that had ever been extended to the workmen was a measure of compensation which was obligatory according to law. The workers on the mines were required to pay into a medical fund if they were not contributors to a lodge; and the lodges found it necessary not only to provide medical and surgical attendance for their members, but hospital accommodation as well. To an extent this was in the interests of the men, but

it was also in the best interests of the mine owners, who were thus released from the necessity of providing medical and surgical relief and hospital accommodation. Despite the fact that 22 millions had been paid in dividends by the gold mining industry, nothing whatever had been done for the welfare of the men employed in the industry; that was to say, nothing as compared with what had been done in the industry in other places. Even the very Workers' Club referred to by the Honorary Minister was held by the mines as security for the £2,000 advanced for its establishment. Apart from that and the drinking fountain provided by Mr. Doolette in Victoria Square, nothing had been done by the mining companies to alleviate the bad conditions which, of necessity, prevailed in connection with deep mining. This question had been prominently before the people of the State. Mr. Ardagh and himself had made it a principal plank of their platform, and they had been returned by the people. Also, almost every member of the Labour party had made it a burning question. The people held that some provision should be made against these diseases, and that the burden should be placed on the industry. It was to be hoped the Committee would not strike out the provision. If the Committee did strike it out the action would be used as a lever against the continuance of the Legislative Council. He for one would not hesitate to use it as such, for the emphatic voice of the people had been heard on the subject, and this Chamber, with its restricted franchise, had no right to oppose the will of the people.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: The principle contained in the Bill had his sympathy to a certain extent, and he agreed with Mr. Dodd when that hon. gentleman said "Why should not an employer be just as much liable if a worker in his employ contracted a disease, as if that worker broke an arm or a leg in his employ?" Moreover he believed in the principle contained in the clause to a certain extent. But the clause went too far. If it were in a modified form no doubt the Committee would accept it, but if it were agreed to as printed it

would make mining impossible in Western Australia.

Hon. J. Cornell: Why has it not done so in Great Britain?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Because the conditions there were different. In England the miner was born into the mine and remained there all his life, and therefore it was very easy to discover where he had contracted a disease. There was a great deal of mining disease prevalent in the State, but much of it, more especially lead poisoning, had never been contracted in the State, and therefore it would be quite unfair to saddle the mining industry of Western Australia with the burden of it. There were many cases of lead poisoning in Western Australia, but probably one of them had been contracted in the State. As far as the gold mining companies of Western Australia were concerned he agreed with Mr. Dodd and Mr. Cornell that they did not deserve very much sympathy in the way of protection from legislation of this kind. He knew of no country which had been more unfortunate than Western Australia in this respect. They had drawn 22 millions of dividends and what had they given the country in return? They had not been generous or just; they had done nothing at all. It would not have been very much for the companies to have provided for disabled miners in the way suggested. This clause would not hit the people who had treated Western Australia unjustly. The 22 millions had gone. The shareholders of to-day were not the shareholders of those days and we would be penalising the people who had nothing to do with the past. The mines were poorer, new mines were starting and they could not bear a burden of this kind. Apart from that we had to consider the impracticability of the clause. He would support the principle but the clause was too sweeping. The schedule of diseases could be extended to embrace toothache, measles, or in fact anything. The clause apparently had merely been thrown in and evidently it was never seriously intended that it should be passed. If it was moderate, or on the lines of compulsory con-

tribution, there would be a good argument for it.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: For his part he objected to the suggestion that because he wanted to strike out the clause as he was opposed to provision being made for miners who suffered from disease. He had seen too much of disease among miners to be lacking in sympathy for them. Last year a Royal Commission was appointed consisting of Doctors Jack and Mitchell and Messrs. R. A. Varden, R. Hastie, and John Daw, and they presented a unanimous report. The report dealt practically with two methods, one was costly and almost impracticable and the other was safe and easy. Yet the Government for some reason unknown to him had adopted the method which the commission said was costly and impracticable. What would be the first result of passing the clause? It would mean that the mining companies would draft out of their employment the men who, because of weak health, would be considered likely to contract disease and they would be left to shift for themselves. They would receive no compensation and no assistance to find other employment. The commission foresaw that and devised periodical inspection with a view to the men whose health unfitted them for occupation in the mines being drafted out, but not thrown on to the streets. In New Zealand an attempt was made to deal with the matter in the same way as was proposed by the Government. The Government Insurance Department took over the risks and put up the rate by £1 per cent. Then in 1909 a special Bill was introduced to repeal that section of the Act. It could not be for any other reason than that it was unworkable. The commission recommended the appointment of a board and outlined a comprehensive scheme which would work no hardship on anyone and which would make provision for all. Instead of adopting that the Government put forward this proposal which would press harder on the men than any one else. He could not see why supporters of the cause of the miners did not favour the recom-

mendation of the Royal Commission in preference to the Bill.

Hon. F. DAVIS: Mine owners were not in the habit of employing men who were weak or diseased. The competition was sufficient to warrant that no such men would be employed. There was little need for fear that the measure would affect any number of men in the direction suggested. There was too great a tendency to follow precedent, and, because this clause was not in another Act the inference was that it should not be adopted here. If we followed that idea to its logical conclusion we should never adopt any original legislation. The clause was reasonable, because there was no practical difference between an accident and a disease contracted in an industry. One was a quick occurrence and the other was a slow occurrence, and the result to the man was the same, namely, incapacitation. Therefore it was consistent that there should be no difference in the remedy.

Hon. M. L. MOSS: The men engaged in this class of occupation who contracted these diseases were as much entitled to the sympathy of Parliament as the men who broke a limb in carrying on a hazardous occupation. The suggestion he made during the second reading debate was the best solution of the difficulty. That was to pass the clause and make it operative for one or two years, so that whatever Government were in power they would either drop the provision or re-enact it, if it had not proved to be detrimental to the industry. Twenty million pounds had been distributed in dividends among shareholders, and it was scandalous to think how little they had done to support the men who contracted disease and who were injured in their service. Some countries would have made it compulsory for the directors to reside in the State, and if the directors had been local residents they would have been more amenable to public opinion, and it would have been brought more closely home to them what the miner had to contend with when working at great depths. The miner was entitled to a great deal of consideration, and if that consideration could be given to him without inflicting serious hardship on the

industry it was a duty that Parliament owed to those employed in the industry. He was willing to vote for the clause subject to the amendments on the Notice Paper, which would bring the clause into line with similar legislation in England. If the Minister was prepared to accept the suggestion that the clause should remain operative for two years, he would vote with him. If the Minister declined he would vote with Mr. Colebatch.

Hon. J. E. DODD: Mr. Colebatch had said he could not see why the Government should not adopt the proposal of the Royal Commission which sat last year. He had not one word to say against the commission, but the Government were in good company inasmuch as a commission was appointed in 1904 to go into the question of the ventilation and sanitation of mines. That commission made certain recommendations and they were not considered by the Government, although the same Government were in power. If the present Government had sinned in not adopting the report they had sinned in good company inasmuch as the Government which had appointed that commission had not carried out the commission's recommendations. In regard to the insurance rates the mining companies could easily break down any desire on the part of the insurance companies to inflate the rates, they were wealthy enough to pay the insurance themselves.

Hon. R. D. McKenzie: What about the small mines?

Hon. J. E. DODD: With reference to New Zealand a good deal had been said about the fact that the insurance companies had increased their rates. He (Hon. J. E. Dodd) gave evidence before the commission in Kalgoorlie in 1911, and these were some extracts from his evidence—

1017. By Mr. Hastie: And after carrying the thing on for about a year, during which time there were no claims, they repealed the Act?—Yes; the trouble was in reference to the examination of the men before they went underground. That trouble was quite reasonable, inasmuch as no provision whatever was made for such men as might

be debarred from the mine. Had such provision been made, the men would have taken a very different stand. Then, again, the increased rate was fixed without any figures to base it on. There was nothing to show what the rate should be in order to cover the risk. They had no figures to go upon, and no case was brought under the Act during its operation. This, to my mind, clearly shows that the increased rate was not justified.

1019. However, they viewed it as 20 per cent. more risky when the disease was put in. Perhaps, when time enough had elapsed, those claims would have come in by the dozen?—Of course the disease was in existence then; the Act was to take in cases of existing disease.

By Mr. Mitchell: But you would not suggest that no miners in New Zealand died of miners' phthisis while that Act was in operation?—I am inclined to think there is less miners' phthisis there than here, but I am perfectly sure that if a miner had died of phthisis while the Act was in force his relatives would have claimed under it.

That conclusively showed that within 12 months there was no case of miner's phthisis in New Zealand. By that he was trying to show that the increased rates in New Zealand were not justified.

Hon. D. G. Gawler: Do you know why they repealed it in New Zealand?

Hon. J. E. DODD: There was a strike in New Zealand because the mining companies desired to have a medical inspection and the miners opposed it. What we declared was that the men who were working on the mines at the present time should not have to submit themselves to medical examination. That was the attitude which had been adopted everywhere. In Johannesburg they did not object to new men coming in being examined, but they did object to those who were already there being compelled to undergo an examination. The report of the miners' commission in the Transvaal in 1911 said practically the same thing.

Hon. M. L. Moss: Is miner's phthisis very prevalent at the present time?

Hon. J. E. DODD: Tuberculosis was not as prevalent as might be thought. There were 27 cases when Dr. Cumpston was appointed commissioner. There was no desire to mislead the House, but at the present time there were 33 per cent. of the miners suffering from fibrosis of the lungs, but that did not always generate into tuberculosis. Many of this 33 per cent. were still working and were likely to work for years.

Hon. M. L. MOSS: Is it a progressive disease?

Hon. J. E. DODD: Yes; it was dust on the bronchial tubes.

Hon. M. L. MOSS: Does a man who is affected get worse and worse?

Hon. J. E. DODD: Yes, and it was quite possible that it might generate into tuberculosis. Miners had always taken up the attitude that they would not have a medical examination.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER: Why should the old ones object?

Hon. J. E. DODD: There was no doubt that if a medical examination took place among those who were employed on the mines a good many would be discharged.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER: If any of them were suffering from the disease this measure would be retrospective.

Hon. J. E. DODD: It was not too certain whether it would be retrospective. If it did there would not be so much need for objection.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER: It will apply.

Hon. J. E. DODD: There was another point and it was that if a medical examination of all new men took place the disease would be stamped out in course of time.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: The difficulties feared could not be met in the way Mr. Moss proposed. The real difficulty about the case was that it set up an incalculable risk to be insured by the employer. No employer should face that risk with the insurance companies unless there was an all-round medical examination. That examination would cost to-day anything from £5,000 to £10,000.

Hon. J. E. DODD: That is wrong.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: It was doubtful whether £10,000 would cover it, and who was going to find that money? This Bill

would cover anything from 20,000 to 30,000 miners, and how were they to be medically examined at less than half a guinea each. The method of providing for such men was not in a Workers' Compensation Bill, but in an Industrial Insurance Bill, and the Minister would be wise to let this clause go by the board and bring down his promised system of industrial insurance.

Hon. J. E. DODD: I have never promised anything of the kind.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: State insurance.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: It was the same thing.

Hon. J. E. DODD: I said quite the reverse, that it would take a long time for me to give my adherence to a scheme of that kind.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: Some Minister pronounced authoritatively on the subject.

Hon. M. L. MOSS: The Attorney General.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: The Attorney General then said the Government intended to bring in a system of State industrial insurance. When the time came he would object to it going beyond industrial insurance because there was no need for the Government to provide for people who could provide for themselves. What was intended by this clause the Committee were discussing would be fitly provided for in an industrial insurance Bill. In the Workers' Compensation Bill it would lead to endless trouble. Was the Bill to be retrospective? Were there to be medical examinations revealing hundreds of cases of sickness included in the category of this clause?

Hon. M. L. MOSS moved an amendment—

That after the word "furnished" in line 7 of paragraph 1 of the proviso in Subclause 1, the following words be inserted:—"or is not sufficient to enable that employer to take proceedings under the next following proviso."

Those words were in the Imperial Act and their omission from the clause was serious, because the proviso as printed in the Bill provided that the worker or his dependants, if so required, should furnish

his last employer with such information as to the names and addresses of all the other employers who had employed him during the previous 12 months, as he or they might possess, and if the information was not furnished the employer "upon proving that the disease was not contracted whilst the worker was in his employment shall not be liable to pay compensation." Under the Imperial Act not only had that information to be furnished, but the information had to be sufficient to enable the employer to take proceedings under the next following proviso, so as to recover compensation from the previous employers. The amendment would bring the clause into line with the English law.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. M. L. MOSS moved a further amendment—

That Subclause 6 be struck out.

Hon. members had already spoken about restricting the power of the Governor to add to the number of diseases to be brought under the scope of the Act, and this was the subclause which gave that power.

Hon. J. E. DODD: This subclause was found in the English Act and also in the South Australian Act. If it had been reasonable to insert a provision from the English Act which had been omitted from the clause, as had been done in the preceding amendment, it was equally reasonable to retain this subclause, which was contained in both the English and South Australian Acts.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: It is not unreasonable to allow Parliament to say whether you shall add any other industrial diseases.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The reference to the English Act was not a fair argument, because the conditions in regard to industrial diseases in the two countries were entirely different. In regard to accidents, the conditions were the same in both countries, but that could not be said of industrial diseases. The Fourth Schedule included anthrax, which was really an accident and would not occur in the ordinary course of employment. Phosphorous poisoning was also included, but a Bill

previously passed this session had dealt with phosphorous. If the Minister would confine the attention of the Committee to the question of miners' disease, without reference to the English Act, the argument could be narrowed down. The Minister would admit that the question of compensation for industrial disease had been treated most sympathetically by all members.

Hon. J. E. DODD: I do not dispute that.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: If the discussion was confined to miners' disease, and anthrax was left out of the Bill, all reference to the English and New Zealand Acts would be obviated.

Hon. J. E. DODD: One was not prepared to saddle the mining industry with disabilities that other industries were not bearing.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.25 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 4th December, 1912.

	PAGE
Question: Police Constable's Bravery	4171
Leave of absence	4172
Papers presented	4172
Papers: Esperance District Reports	4172
Bills: Government Trading Concerns, 1R. ..	4172
Agricultural Bank Act Amendment, Report stage	4172
Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage, 3R. ..	4172
Jetties Regulation Act Amendment, 3R. ..	4172
Melville Water and Freshwater Bay Road, Report stage	4172
Wyalkatchem-Mt. Marshall Railway, 2R., Com.	4172
Roads Act Amendment, 2R., Com.	4183
Hotham-Crossinon Railway Extension, 2R., Com.	4199
Road Closure, 2R.	4205
Land and Income Tax, 2R.	4207

The SPEAKER took the Chair at 3.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION—POLICE CONSTABLE'S BRAVERY.

Mr. McDONALD asked the Premier: 1, Has any recognition been made by the Police Department of the conspicuous bravery shown by Constable Delfs during the recent shooting affray at Denham,