

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 31st July, 1912.

	PAGE.
Questions: Electric Switch, Assembly Chamber	770
Powellised sleepers for Trans-Australian Railway	770
Bills: Inebriates, 1A.	770
Supply (Temporary Advances), £150,254	
Returned	818
Motions: Railway routes, Quairading-Nunajin and Wickepin-Merredin, Plans of alterations, Reports of Engineers, Report of Minister to Cabinet	771
Perth Town Hall site	772
Leprosy in the North-West	778
Railway projects West of Great Southern Railway	784
Railway deviation, Wongan Hills-Mullewa and Wickepin-Merredin, Select Com.	787
Papers: Land Board Allocations	771
Public servants removal, E. Hamel	784
Returns: Trades and Workers' Halls	786
Arbitration cases, valuation	786
Seed potatoes, particulars	786

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

QUESTION—ELECTRIC SWITCH, ASSEMBLY CHAMBER.

Mr. LANDER (without notice) asked the Speaker: Is it possible to have this (indicating) electric switch in the Chamber shifted? It leaves only nine inches of gangway through which to pass. Some of us will be proceeding against you, Mr. Speaker, under the Workers' Compensation Act.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think the hon. member might appreciate the trouble taken to make him comfortable. The hon. member is not too badly off. I am afraid I cannot help him in the matter.

The Premier: The man who put it there ought to get the "sack," whoever he is.

QUESTION—POWELLISED SLEEPERS FOR TRANS-AUSTRALIAN RAILWAY.

Hon. FRANK WILSON (without notice) asked the Premier: 1, Has his attention been drawn to the questions asked in the House of Representatives by Sir John Forrest yesterday in regard to karri sleepers, No. 6 of which read as follows:—"Has any arrangement or understanding been entered into with the Government of Western Australia as to supplying powellised karri for sleepers for the

trans-Australian railway?" The reply given by the Minister in the House of Representatives was "no." 2, If, in the circumstances, the Premier could give the House any information as to what action he purposed taking in consequence of this reply?

The PREMIER replied: My attention had not been drawn to this question until the hon. member read it out. I desire to explain to the House that the Prime Minister wired to me last week stating that the Government were forwarding the necessary papers to enter into a contract for the supply of 1½ million of karri sleepers. The question as to whether or not they should be powellised is for future consideration.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Then the reply given by the Minister must be wrong.

The PREMIER: No, the answer was correct. The question was in regard to whether or not any arrangements had been entered into to supply powellised sleepers. They are now dealing with the question of whether or not the sleepers should be powellised.

The Minister for Works: They may do the powellising themselves.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: In the circumstances this does not appear to have been a proper reply to give, because certainly there is some understanding in regard to the sleepers.

The Premier: Yes, but not in regard to powellised sleepers.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The question reads, "Has any arrangement or understanding been entered into with the Government of Western Australia to supply powellised karri for sleepers?" I understood you had a contract.

The PREMIER: Yes, for the supply of karri sleepers alone; the question of whether the State or the Commonwealth will powellise them is for future consideration.

BILL—INEBRIATES.

Introduced by the Attorney General and read a first time.

MOTIONS (3)—RAILWAY ROUTES, QUAIRADING-NUNAJIN AND WICKEPIN-MERREDIN.

Mr. MONGER (York): I move—

Plans of alterations.

That there be placed on the Table of the House plans of the Quairading-Nunajin line of railway and the Wickepin-Merredin line of railway as recommended by the Advisory Board, and also plans showing the alterations since decided upon.

He said: Seeing in front of me that very large plan on the wall, I fail to see how it could very well be placed on the Table of the House. However, as the object of my motion is already practically given effect to, I desire to amend my motion to read that the plans be placed on the walls of the Chamber instead of on the Table.

Mr. SPEAKER: If the hon. member will leave his motion in its original form his intention will be given effect to just the same.

Mr. MONGER: Well, I shall content myself with formally moving the motion.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. D. Johnson): I second the motion.

Question put and passed.

Reports of Engineers.

Mr. MONGER (York): I move—

That there be laid upon the Table of the House the reports of engineers and advisors which caused alterations of routes as recommended by the Advisory Board as regards the Quairading-Nunajin and the Wickepin-Merredin lines of railway.

Hon. FRANK WILSON (Sussex): I second the motion.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. D. Johnson): I have no objection to laying on the Table the engineers' reports in connection with the Quairading-Nunajin line, but the deviation of the Wickepin-Merredin line is already the subject of investigation by a select committee in another place, and, according to to-day's Notice Paper, it is proposed later on to move for a similar committee in this Chamber. Under the

circumstances I think we could well leave this question of alteration of route to the committee or committees to investigate, and for that reason I do not think the hon. member should press for the papers, seeing that they will be placed before the committee or committees in due course, even if the committee of another place have not already got the papers in their possession. If the hon. member will amend his motion, limiting it to the Quairading-Nunajin deviation, I will be pleased to furnish the papers.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must get someone else to move the amendment.

Mr. THOMAS (Bunbury): I move—

That the words "and the Wickepin-Merredin" be struck out.

Amendment passed.

Question as amended put and passed.

Report of Minister to Cabinet.

Mr. MONGER (York): I move—

That there be laid upon the Table of the House the report as furnished by the Minister for Works to Cabinet, which caused so serious an alteration from the Advisory Board's recommendation in regard to the Wickepin-Merredin railway.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. D. Johnson): I must ask the hon. member not to press the motion, for the reasons advanced in connection with the previous one. The whole of these papers will go before the select committees, and consequently the matter will be fully investigated. In the circumstances I do not think the papers should be tabled, because I am of opinion that the existing select committee has already called for them.

Mr. MONGER: With the permission of the House, I desire to withdraw the motion.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

PAPERS—LAND BOARD ALLOCATIONS.

Mr. MONGER (York) moved—

That there be laid upon the Table of the House the full file, including the

evidence taken before the Land Board, in regard to C.P. 29005/55 and C.P. 13454/55, and Homestead Farms 16408/74 and 7023/74.

He said: My intention was to formally move this motion, but if it be the desire of the Attorney General and members sitting opposite that I shall go into my reasons for asking for this information, I am quite prepared to do so. I may tell the House that the lands to which I am referring in this motion are owned by the Minister for Works and the Minister for Lands, and at one time the Premier was connected with one of the holdings. I am not asking for the land transactions of small fry to be dealt with, but during the recent elections there were many references made to these holdings, and I think that the House and the people are entitled to the fullest information in regard to any Minister's land transactions. I do not wish to make any personal remarks. If the Government are willing to place on the Table the information I am asking for—and surely there can be no reason for objection—that is all I want. I therefore move the motion standing in my name.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. D. Johnson): I second the motion.

The Premier: I will support it.

Question put and passed.

MOTION—PERTH TOWN HALL SITE.

Mr. LANDER (East Perth) moved—

That in the opinion of this House it is not desirable to consider the purchase of the present town hall site until after a referendum of the ratepayers has been taken in reference to the selection of a new site for a town hall.

He said: In moving this motion I have every confidence that the members of the House will support it. Most of the members are aware that this question has been under discussion by the city council for fourteen to sixteen years, and no finality has yet been reached. I think that close on £2,000 has been spent on plans and

specifications, and other expenses in connection with designs for a new town hall. The latest attitude of the city council is to my mind a regular boycott. About January the Premier wrote to the city council, and offered to make a deal with reference to a valuable site on the northern side of the railway, and he got a polite note back from the city council that they did not intend to consider any site north of the railway line. An attitude such as that, hon. members must realise, is nothing but a boycott. Throughout the whole of these transactions there seems to have been too much consideration of personal interests as against public interests. On every occasion personal interests have been out before the public interest. The last lot of plans were passed and paid for, but I venture to say, without fear of contradiction, that neither of the adopted plans conformed to the specifications laid down. I mentioned that fact in the council, but received no support, and I walked out of the council at the time when they awarded the money to the successful competitors. When we know that this sort of thing is going on, it is our duty to ask the Government to hold their hands in reference to this purchase. The Government have offered to transfer to the city council a valuable block of land in addition to a certain monetary consideration, and I say that if this were done on a business basis it would put the council in a better position than it is to-day, and bring in a revenue of £2,000 a year. I see no necessity for erecting a new town hall at the present moment. A new town hall would cost the ratepayers fully sixpence in the pound, and I say there is no necessity to build this hall for a few years if the council take over the site which the Government have offered. I hope the House will pass this motion, and tell the city council that they will have to consider public interest before private interest.

Mr. ALLEN (West Perth): It is not my intention to take up much time in dealing with this matter. The member for East Perth has moved to the effect that the purchase of the present town hall site should not be considered until after

a referendum of the ratepayers has been taken in reference to the selection of a new site, and in the next breath he informs us that he thinks the question of building a town hall could be left in abeyance for many years to come.

Mr. Lander: That is a new town hall.

Mr. ALLEN: I think that if the Government have definitely decided to build on that land known as the old police court site—and I admit that is advisable to build a block of administrative offices—they should have also the site occupied by the present town hall. If the police court site is resumed or again taken possession of by the Government the present town hall site would be too small for a new building, and it would be unwise to even ask the ratepayers to express an opinion as to whether the council should build on such a small site as that. I would remind the member for East Perth that even when a referendum is taken of the ratepayers that does not finally settle the matter; the city council would still have to go to the property-owners to get the money with which to build a new town hall. In view of the statement made by the Attorney General the other night that the local governing bodies have no rights except those given by Parliament, and as Parliament proposes to take away from the city council valuable reversionary rights, I think it would be well if the Government took this matter into their own hands, and built a town hall for the citizens; they could call it a State hall if they liked. I can assure the Government there would not be any objection on the part of the citizens of Perth.

The Premier: What about the Trades Hall; would that do?

Mr. ALLEN: We do not want the Trades Hall, and I hope that the town hall will not be put close to the Trades Hall. The local governing bodies have no rights or powers according to the Attorney General, and I, therefore, throw out that suggestion to the Government. A town hall is always a white elephant, and it would mean a considerable expense to build it on a site on the other side of the railway. I want to remind the member for East Perth again that a referen-

dum of the ratepayers would not settle the matter; it would still have to go before the property owners, and I would prefer to have a cash offer made by the Premier for the present site. I do seriously suggest for the Government's consideration that they should build a town hall for the City.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan): Whilst being thoroughly in sympathy with the member for East Perth, I think the House will see the wisdom of not carrying this motion. We have no right to dictate to the city council how they are to proceed in selecting a site for the town hall.

Mr. Lander: Yes, you have, if you consider the interests of the public.

The PREMIER: It would mean that if we were to follow that to its logical conclusion, and were satisfied that personal interests were being considered to the detriment of public interests, we would have to supersede the city council.

Mr. Lander: That would not do much harm.

The PREMIER: I hold with the member for East Perth the view that the people of Perth should be consulted before a huge sum of money is spent in the erection of a town hall, but we, as a Parliament, have no right to dictate to the city council that they should do so.

Mr. Lander: We are supreme.

The PREMIER: Though we are supreme, there are times when it is not wise to show our supremacy. The question, however, is one that affects the Government and Parliament, because we have discovered that the public offices, as at present provided, are totally inadequate to house our public servants, and to-day we are paying a huge sum every year by way of rent for offices rented and leased from private owners; in fact, if the sum were capitalised we could build public offices at an outlay of something over £80,000, pay four per cent. for our money, and still be on the right side. That is not a very satisfactory state of affairs, and the Government are not prepared to allow it to continue. We have already taken steps to provide new offices on the old police court site and the present Savings Bank site, which surround the present

town hall. I want to correct the member for West Perth in his statement that the Government have resumed or re-taken the old police court site. The site never went out of our possession, and that being so we could not take it back.

Mr. Allen: But you were holding the title with the idea of amending it.

The PREMIER: The Government were holding the title while the council considered our offer, but we could not hold it indefinitely, and the council having failed to accept our offer, we decided to erect Government offices on the old police court site, with the result that the present town hall site is wholly unsuitable to hold the town hall of a city like Perth. Hence we are considering the advisability of making a cash offer to the city council for the present town hall site so that we can then erect public buildings, taking in the whole of that corner. At the present time I am placed in the position that quite a number of Treasury officers are on sick leave, and during the last twelve months, two officers, and in the two years three officers, have died, and two or three others are suffering from the same disease. It has become so serious that I have asked the Health Department to immediately fumigate the building, and I have asked the Works Department to make provision in the new building for housing the Treasury officers. I have no desire to ask our officers to work in the future under the conditions prevailing to-day in the Treasury. It is to this department we have to look to preserve the interests of the taxpayers of the State, yet there is no department so badly situated in regard to offices and conveniences. Therefore we must look round and find other offices more suitable. I believe we can provide public offices on that corner for the Agricultural Bank, the Taxation Department, the Treasury, and the Savings Bank. They will be beautifully situated and on a totally different basis from the present offices. At present nearly every officer has a little room to himself, and the result is there is no supervision, unless a highly-paid officer is continually walking round to the different rooms supervising the others.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Premier is not in order.

The PREMIER: The town hall site hinges upon the question of public offices.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is not the motion.

The PREMIER: I was pointing out that we are put into the position of making an offer for the town hall site, because we are putting public buildings on a site which they consider theirs.

Mr. SPEAKER: As long as the Premier does not stray too far from the motion he may proceed.

The PREMIER: I have no intention of agreeing to the motion. I wish to explain to the House why it is unnecessary such a motion should be submitted, and I think it is due to members that they should have the information I can give them.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member may proceed.

The PREMIER: We have to look round to provide public offices, and the Government are strongly of opinion that the present block on which most of our public offices are situated should be wholly used for the purpose of public offices, and that it is a totally inadequate site for a town hall unless the council have additional land; but under the circumstances I have explained, the pressing need for further offices in which to house our public servants, the Government could not permit the council to use any further land than they have at present. That brings us to the point that we must be fair to the Perth City Council. If they are desirous of erecting a town hall, and if they permit us to take the present site, we wish to give them fair consideration if they meet us fairly in the matter.

Mr. Lander: It is your duty to treat the ratepayers fairly.

The PREMIER: We are not entitled to dictate to the Perth City Council. These are matters on which the ratepayers can dictate to the council at the next election.

Mr. Lander: So we will, next November.

The PREMIER: The hon. member can rest assured that nothing of a definite

nature will transpire between this and then.

Mr. Lander: Oh, yes, they may pay a deposit on certain land.

The PREMIER: We have not given them the money; we have not arrived at a settlement of the amount. On the other hand, passing this motion may hold the matter up for years. The ratepayers may not desire a referendum, and we would have to refuse to pay the money over until the resolution was eventually rescinded, that is if we are to comply with the wishes of Parliament. I think it can be very well left to the ratepayers to decide the issue themselves. If they desire a referendum I think they are entitled to have one, but they have all the powers necessary for the purpose of getting it. In these circumstances I hope the House will not agree to the motion. It is true we are negotiating for the purchase of the present site in order to erect public offices on it, but it will be suitable for housing officers who are at present housed in private offices in different parts of the City.

Hon. FRANK WILSON (Sussex): It is quite true that this vexed question of the Perth town hall has occupied the attention of Governments of the State and City councillors for a number of years past—fifteen years I think the hon. member said in moving the motion—at the same time, if this motion is carried, it will interfere with any action the council may suggest taking in connection with the provision of a new town hall. I agree with the Premier that it is not the province of this Parliament to dictate to the municipal council as to how they should proceed with their business. If they come to the conclusion that a new town hall is desirable, it is for them to decide that question with the ratepayers—whether by referendum or by any other means at their disposal it matters not to us as a Parliament. But the great point we have to consider is whether the Government require this building for public purposes. I think there can be no doubt whatever as to the answer. For years past it has been recognised that the Government officers have been indifferently housed. First

of all, we had to give up the General Post Office to the Federal authorities. Of course it was used as a post office previously, but as years went by and we required further accommodation, the General Post Office became very valuable indeed to the State Government for the purpose of housing our own officials. We hope the General Post Office will soon fall into the hands of the State if the Federal authorities carry out their projected plan of erecting a new General Post Office on the site already resumed between Murray-street and Wellington-street. I hope they will hurry on with that work. They have resumed the property at enormous cost.

Mr. Taylor: From the £2,000,000 surplus.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: They have plenty of surplus, and it is just as well we should get the General Post Office erected out of that; it will be some little return to Western Australia that has contributed so much to the Commonwealth surplus revenue. The question resolves itself into this, as to whether the Government are properly concerned as to the future operations of the City council or whether they are not more properly concerned as to the future housing of their own departments. I maintain that the concern of Parliament is to seeing that the Government have proper accommodation for their departments. The Premier and his colleagues have rightly come to the conclusion that the previous Government came to several years ago, that it is necessary, in the interests of the State, that the whole block facing Barrack-street, St. George's-terrace, Hay-street, and Cathedral-avenue should revert to the Government. If we have rightly concluded that this is the proper course to pursue, the Premier is to be commended for standing up to that resolution and saying, "We intend to have that site in our own hands, and are prepared to deal fairly with the City council for the acquisition of the town hall site." The old police court buildings have already been taken by the Government. The Premier announces the Government intend to build on the old police court site and on the

Savings Bank site. The Savings Bank, of course, belongs to the State, although I believe that the City council on one occasion put forward some claim to that site; or, at any rate, they claimed they had some right to extend the town hall over the existing Savings Bank, and I believe the claim could not be substantiated; but, with regard to the old police court site in Barrack-street, undoubtedly the council have a much better and stronger claim.

The Premier: They had.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: There is no doubt they have a much stronger claim. They had an understanding with the James Government that the site would come into their hands, provided they spent a certain sum of money on it within a certain time in the erection of a new town hall.

Mr. Allen: There was no time limit.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Yes, there was a time limit, and the time has expired. The Premier is right. The time expired to a certain extent because we utilised the building for public purposes. We held it for police court purposes.

The Premier: No, they negotiated with another Government, and a Bill was introduced to Parliament, which was thrown out, for another site altogether. That was since then.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The site was granted to them by the James Administration on condition that they spent a certain sum of money on a town hall in a certain time.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): And the council turned it down.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I do not know that they did. At any rate the time expired. They were arguing as to whether there was sufficient area with the old police court site, and the result was that they did not do anything with it, and the time elapsed. The title has never been transferred to the council, and now the Premier tells us he is going to build there and also on the Savings Bank site. I would ask the Premier to see that the designs are a portion of a complete scheme.

The Premier: That is right.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: So that, when we do get the town hall site, as we must get it, for Government purposes eventually, it will be one complete scheme of Government architecture around that corner, and in keeping with the buildings already in Cathedral-avenue, and in keeping with the additions necessary in connection with the existing public offices facing Barrack-street and St. George's terrace.

The Premier: That portion will have to be rebuilt.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I think so. We may be perfectly sure that it is desirable the State should have that property and that the council must not stand in the way. I hope the Premier will make a cash offer for the site. Let him submit it to arbitration if he likes; at any rate let him get the thing settled. The Government must have the site. As to what the council will do with the money when they get it, I do not think it absolutely concerns this Parliament. The council are responsible to the ratepayers for their actions, and the member for East Perth, as an old councillor, must know that he would have been the first one to find fault with Parliament if it were suggested to interfere with the council's actions. To insinuate here that because he thinks there is some personal interest involved and that a cheque will pass quickly in connection with some proposed new site for a town hall, is an argument we cannot entertain for a moment in this Parliament.

Mr. Lander: You know the site has been in the eye for about sixteen years.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Which site?

Mr. Lander: The Bungalow site; it has always been the bugbear against the town hall being erected.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I have heard that site mentioned on many occasions, but the council could not get an offer of the site for many years. I know the site I wanted to hand over to the council, that was the Irwin-street site. I offered it with £22,000 in cash. I still think it would be a very suitable site for the purpose, with the town hall facing St. George's terrace and the municipal offices in Barrack-street.

The Premier: There is no more suitable site in Australia for a town hall than the drill hall site.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: That is a matter of opinion. "The Cloisters," in St. George's-terrace, was another site brought under my notice at one time, and we took steps to suggest that the site might be handed over to the municipal council for the purpose of a town hall. Then they missed the 'bus on that occasion and the result was that the property was parted with. A skating rink has been built on one portion of it and the other portion, I think, has also changed hands. Still, that is not the question we are bothering ourselves about this afternoon. Many sites have been offered. The site of the resumed land near the Beaufort-street bridge was talked about, and, if it had not been required for railway purposes, it might have proved a useful site. In regard to the drill hall site being the most useful, I dare say it is in so far as its close proximity to the Trades Hall is concerned, this place being right opposite, and the erection of a town hall there would have the effect of the municipal authorities being kept within the pale, if not the influence, of the Trades Hall. I may say at once that I have no predilection in favour of one site or another. That is a matter for the council and the ratepayers to decide, and, if they in their wisdom, think it is desirable to have a referendum on the question, let them have it. The Premier's concern to-day is not as to the future decision of the council but as to the proper housing of his departments, and in this respect I am supporting him. It had long been the policy of the Liberal Administration to have the whole administrative block from Barrack-street to Cathedral-avenue, and I hope the Premier will see that he gets control of the town hall, and that if he cannot get it by other means, he will get it by resumption.

The Premier: Do not press that point too much, you will make me suspicious.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: If the hon. member does not think it wise to do that I shall have the opportunity later on of attacking him for his negligence. We

want, of course, to satisfy the representatives of the ratepayers, and, therefore, negotiations must take place. Up to the present moment, however, those negotiations have failed and it is for the Government to act.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): The negotiations showed that the council were not reasonable.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: They were not reasonable. It is necessary, however, to exhaust every means of negotiation before taking drastic measures in matters of this kind. You cannot take a man by the throat and say that in the public interests you must have his property. You must first negotiate and try and make some reasonable arrangement.

The Premier: You did not do that when you resumed the land for railway purposes.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Yes, we did.

The Premier: No, you did not, and we have not yet fixed up with some of the people.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier is not at all generous to me; there is not a spark of generosity in his nature. Here I am for the second time in 24 hours supporting him—last night I was with the Premier in trying to give a fair deal to that dear old country Ireland, and this afternoon I am supporting him in connection with this matter, and he immediately begins to cast a doubt upon my honesty of purpose.

The Premier: I am pointing out that you do not negotiate when compulsorily resuming land; we decide to resume the land and then negotiate.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: We always negotiated in order to have something to go upon so far as values were concerned.

The Premier: We did in connection with those East Perth blocks.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Unfortunately, I have no interest in those blocks now. At one time I did sell them, but for many years past I have had no interest in them. A reasonable price was paid for that land; some people think that too much was paid, but I am not of that opinion. We followed the custom which had always been adopted in the past;

whenever we required land we fixed the value by private deal, if that private deal was reasonable, and then resumed what was required. We cannot lay down a hard and fast rule with regard to these negotiations, and I believe the officers of the department should have control of these matters in every instance. They endeavour to do their best to secure a fair deal for the State and that is all that the Premier can expect from them, and all that I can expect from them. I hope the House will not agree to this motion. It is a flimsy excuse that there is some personal interest in connection with some site. If the hon. member thinks the council or the mayor will immediately put down a cheque, that will hardly be sufficient to influence us into taking action which must be construed into an undue interference with the functions of the municipal council.

Mr. LANDER (in reply): I am surprised at the attitude which has been taken up by the Premier and the leader of the Opposition. I thought both these gentlemen had more backbone. The ratepayers, through their representatives in the north ward, have asked that a referendum should be taken on this question of the town hall site, and the city council promised that it would be taken.

Mr. Allen: That is where the personal interest is, in the north ward.

Mr. LANDER: What did some of the councillors do? Their action should be sufficient to justify the Government stepping in. Immediately the councillors who were concerned about the public interest were absent, a vote was taken in the council rejecting the referendum. Do you call that straight-going? Should not the Premier say we will set our foot against such a thing? It is certainly time that the Government did step in.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Is the hon. member in order in reflecting upon the city council in this way?

Mr. SPEAKER: There are certain persons against whom members are not entitled to cast reflections, but the members of the city council are not included among them.

Mr. LANDER: If we turn up the records of the city council of three weeks ago we will find that a majority tried to rescind the resolution dealing with the negotiations for the site on the north side of the railway line, and also to rescind the resolution regarding the referendum.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Why did they not do it?

Mr. LANDER: You know well why.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must address the Chair.

Mr. LANDER: This kind of thing is of common occurrence in the council. There are certain councillors who take advantage of the absence of their opponents. In this particular instance, though there was a majority in the council, it was necessary to have a two-thirds majority, and because that two-thirds was not present the proposal was lost. When the Premier and the leader of the Opposition find this sort of thing going on it is their duty to step in and protect the ratepayers' interests against what I call nothing but municipal jobbery.

Question put and negatived.

MOTION—LEPROSY IN THE NORTH-WEST.

Mr. GARDINER (Roebourne) moved—

That in view of the report submitted by Dr. Moloney to the Commissioner of Health, to the effect that leprosy is endemic in the district including Mar-die, Cherrita, and Karrartha stations, and, in view of further statements that fresh cases of the disease have recently occurred, this House is of opinion that all natives on the above-mentioned stations should be segregated as contacts of the disease.

He said: In rising to submit the motion standing in my name I do so with the utmost confidence as to the manner in which it will be received by this Chamber, inasmuch as when I briefly outline the origin and history of this dreaded disease, and also point out the gross negligence which has been displayed by the Health authorities in coping with this question, members will realise how necessary it is that some drastic and immediate action

should be taken in order to prevent the spread of the dreadful complaint. Some three years ago a peculiar symptom manifested itself amongst certain tribes of natives in close proximity to the town of Roebourne. This complaint puzzled those with whom the natives came into contact, and the result was that the sufferers were sent to the resident medical officer at Roebourne, who promptly diagnosed the disease as leprosy in its true form. The people of Roebourne were naturally somewhat alarmed at this state of affairs, and the result was that instructions were issued that the natives should be segregated on a portion of the mainland adjacent to Cossack. A warder was appointed to take charge of them and, so far as I am aware, the health authorities allowed the men to stay there a considerable time until it was ascertained that other natives who were apparently clean were admitted to the reserve, and they in turn were mingling with their own particular tribes in the Cossack district. At this stage, 12 months later, it was decided that the natives should be removed from the mainland and placed on an island which was set aside as a lazarette. This island, according to the report of the doctor, who was sent specifically to report on the disease, was absolutely destitute of wood and water, and the natives were compelled to live there under the tender mercy of an Asiatic of a most dubious character, who was appointed to take charge of them. This state of affairs continued for a further period until the health authorities believed they had done all in their power to stamp out the disease. Then the people of Roebourne manifested some concern at the condition of affairs and the authorities decided to appoint a professional expert to travel through the north-western portions of the State and report as to the prevalence of the disease or otherwise. Dr. Moloney, in whom I have the utmost confidence, and who has had years of experience in lazarettes in other parts of the world, was selected for the task. He commenced his peregrinations at Gaseoyne and proceeded to many of the stations. Apparently in this part of

the district the natives were clean, but he arrived at the station where the disease first manifested itself, and with the permission of the House I will read extracts from the doctor's report, which are stronger evidence than any I can bring before members. Dr. Moloney says—

After leaving Yarraloola Station I visited Mardie station on the Fortescue River, arriving at the station on the 11th October. This station proved to be of particular interest in connection with the object of the expedition inasmuch as it was from this place that the first three cases of leprosy occurring among the North-West aborigines came. These cases were diagnosed by me in Roebourne over two years ago as cases of true leprosy. These three cases, two of which have since died of the disease, were residents on this station (Mardie) all their lives.

Going on to refer to a case of suspected leprosy alleged to have been at large near the Fortescue river, the doctor explained that, at his suggestion, this native was apprehended by the Roebourne police. Then his report resumes—

At the time of his apprehension he was shearing at Mardie station where he had been employed on and off nearly the whole of his life. I examined him at Bezout Island on the 28th October and found him to be suffering from well marked leprosy.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this report was submitted to the health inspector. Let me read further from the doctor's report; he says—

Kurrartha and Chirrata stations were reached on the 7th November. These two properties proved like Mardie station to be very interesting as far as the object of the expedition was concerned as it was from Chirrata that the two females came whose cases in 1909 were diagnosed by me in Roebourne as true leprosy. One of these, Clara, has since died of the disease, and the other, Wagar, still drags out a miserable existence at the leper lazaret. Twenty-five natives were examined on this property (Kurrartha and Chirrata), and here again another fresh case of leprosy

was found, the victim being a male native named Duncan.

Since the furnishing of this report it has been confirmed. Let me read a letter I have received quite recently from a gentleman in Roebourne, one of most reliable character, and who occupies a responsible position in the town.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What is the date of the doctor's report?

Mr. GARDINER: It is dated nine months ago, and since that report nothing has been done in regard to the treatment of lepers or the amelioration of the conditions of those on the island suffering at the present time. The letter reads as follows:—

Leper Lazaret at Bezout Island: This matter is still in a very unsatisfactory condition, and prompt action is necessary to remedy same. Aboriginal lepers are still being brought in from Mardie station, one being sent to this island during May. The whole of the natives on this station should be immediately segregated, as they are only employed on the station during shearing, about two months in the year. The rest of their time is occupied in beachcombing for the owners of the station, and freely intermingling with the Asiatics employed as crews of the pearling luggers. Only last week it was reported by an Asiatic wood contractor for the supply of fuel for the lepers, that the latter were starving and in urgent need of water.

The Asiatic wood contractor contracted to supply these lepers. He has free access to the island, notwithstanding the fact that he is of dubious character, and has been convicted of offences in regard to the aborigines. The letter continues—

This Asiatic during his visits to the lazaret with wood had on two occasions given these unfortunates both food and water. The resident magistrate, when notified, gave immediate instructions for both food and water to be sent out by this Asiatic.

I would like to point out that although there is some divergence amongst medical men as to the danger of white men contracting this disease, like many others I

hold the opinion that the fact of these natives being free to roam about at their own sweet will through this particular district constitutes a menace to the whole of the community of Western Australia. Those of us who are compelled to live in the North, where natives are relatively numerous, know that they are not conspicuous for personal cleanliness, but live in conditions which, in themselves, are opposed to all principles of health. If, as the doctor so confidently reports, the disease exists among these natives, there is no knowing where it will stop. One eminent doctor told me it was quite possible for a white man travelling through the country to handle some material or other which the affected aborigines had handled, and so contract the disease—with this peculiar feature: that he might subsequently come to the metropolises, or visit any other part of Australia, with the germs of the disease dormant in his system, and perhaps convey them to others in whom the germs would at once become active, and manifest themselves before the unfortunate conveyer of them was himself aware that he, too, was a victim to the disease. I contend the Government should take immediate action to segregate every native in the vicinity of the three stations mentioned in my motion. The cost might be considerable, but there is plenty of fairly good country in the district which could be resumed at a nominal price, and upon which these natives could be placed. If this were done, and a special station formed, it would in time become self-maintaining, or, at the very least, would give such a return as would substantially reduce the actual cost. And when speaking of cost we must realise that the health of the community is at stake. Even if hon. members are not afraid of the disease reaching Perth, I would ask them to display some sympathy with the white men who have to travel through the northern districts. I might say that there is, and has been for a long time past, great consternation among the white men in the vicinity of these stations in consequence of the existence of the disease. In my opinion the Government should take immediate action to stir up the health

authorities. If their handling of this leper question may be taken as an indication of the general ability of the health authorities, then for absolute ineptitude and culpable negligence they are unequalled in any department of Western Australia, or, I hope, of any of the Australian States. Here we have in our midst one of the worst complaints known in history. As far back as we can go this leprosy has been dreaded by mankind. Yet it breaks out in our midst, and the health authorities sit back and take no action whatever, allowing the Asiatics to come and go among the lepers as they please. Dr. Moloney in his report told us that an Asiatic had brought ashore and distributed among the white residents fish which had been caught by the lepers. And, in the face of this, the health authorities sit back on the score of economy. I say it is a scandalous shame. It is time the Government took some steps to prevent the spread of this disease, and, if possible, stamp it out entirely. I think the extracts I have read from the doctor's report will be sufficient to convince hon. members of the necessity for immediate action.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): There is no doubt hon. members will sympathise with the member for Roebourne. So far as the department is concerned, let me say that immediately it was reported, in 1909, that leprosy existed in that district, or that its existence was suspected, action was taken to protect the unaffected natives. It is true that the Government, at the time, experienced a good deal of difficulty in ascertaining how far the disease had spread, and, as hon. members may judge, there was also a good deal of difficulty to be faced in segregating the natives. The Government were of opinion that it was necessary the natives should be taken from the mainland and placed on an island, for the purpose of isolating them from the other natives on the mainland. Consequently these natives were put on the island which the hon. member now condemns. Even at that time, the Minister controlling the department was not too well satisfied with the island on which

the natives were placed; but it was a matter of urgency and it was necessary that steps should be taken immediately, and consequently this, the most convenient island at the time, was transformed into a lazaret to accommodate natives suffering from the disease. The hon. member stated that nothing had been done to rid the country of this disease, but he went on to say that the Government appointed Dr. Moloney—

Mr. Gardiner: They did nothing with the doctor's report when it came to hand.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): The hon. member admitted that they appointed Dr. Moloney to go through the district and ascertain if there was any person suffering from the disease. The doctor's report was brought in eight or nine months ago. In that report the doctor recommended the making of periodical examinations. To-day we have another medical officer going through that district for the purpose of ascertaining whether there has been any further spread of the disease. Dr. Moloney, at the time he made his investigation, feared that there were three or four additional natives suffering from the disease, but it has now been proved that there was one only, and he has been placed in the lazaret. The numbers of later date, to which the hon. member referred as having developed the disease, have not been so many as the hon. member would have us to believe.

Mr. Gardiner: I am depending on Dr. Moloney's report.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): But I mean since Dr. Moloney's report. It is true that during this year it was reported that another four or five natives were suffering from leprosy.

Mr. Underwood: That is enough to start things going, surely. It ought to be enough to start even Dr. Hope.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): Yes, if it were true, but on bacteriological examination it was proved that only one additional native was suffering from the disease, and I think, seeing that this disease was only brought under the notice of the department in 1909—

Mr. Gardiner: Three years ago.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): Seeing that it is necessary that the medical officers should travel over very long distances for the purpose of examinations, to ascertain to what degree the disease existed, it speaks well for the medical fraternity that they have been able to arrest the disease so that within the borders of this State they have been able to find only four or five cases.

Mr. McDonald: The report says that probably further cases will be found.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): To-day we have four or five lepers on Bezout Island and endeavours are being made to place them in a better position than the locality in which they are now detained. I want members to realise that the Aborigines Department and the Medical Department are endeavouring to have a careful examination made throughout the districts in which it is supposed this disease exists, with a view to having the disease eradicated entirely. Seeing that is so, while I sympathise with the hon. member and while I realise that it is necessary to protect those who are not suffering from the disease it will be difficult to segregate all contacts. I must say that the Aborigines Department and the Medical Department have done what they considered best in the interests of the community. I have no objection to the motion. I realise that it is necessary that those who come in contact with lepers should be kept apart for a considerable time so that it may be ascertained whether they have contracted the disease. This is being done as far as possible.

Mr. McDONALD (Gascoyne): It will be apparent to hon. members that, as a layman, certain difficulties must exist in dealing with a purely technical and professional question such as this. But the statements of the member for Roebourne are backed up by the only evidence which it is possible for us to obtain—certified reports by various medical officers and men connected with the Health Department. Apart from Mr. Gardiner's local knowledge, we depend mainly upon the

reports of Mr. Gale, the Chief Protector of Aborigines, the annual report of the Health Department and the report by Dr. Moloney. So far as leprosy is concerned, there can be no doubt that segregation must be held to be the only way of coping with the disease in its early stages. On Mardie, one of the stations dealt with, there are from 60 to 100 natives living all the year round, and the member for Roebourne has pointed out that after shearing these men are sent to the coast; there they come into contact with the Asiatics from the pearling luggers, and there can be no doubt that it was through the Asiatics that leprosy was introduced into the North-West. Mr. Gale, in his report, says—

Both sexes suffering from leprosy have, on the authority of the Medical Department, been sent to the island and are living together. The question of separating the sexes is one outside the scope of this department.

That is a confession coming from the Chief Protector of Aborigines. These people are put together on a small island, and I maintain that something should be done—the scope of the department should if necessary be increased—to prevent any possibility of the sexes living together on that reserve. Mr. Gale goes on to say—

Unsuccessful efforts were made during the year by many responsible persons to send the leper patients to the lock hospitals. This was strongly opposed by myself on the grounds that unless they were kept within the four walls of an enclosure, it would be impossible to segregate the lepers from the other patients, and as these had been brought from all portions of the State, it would be extremely foolish to even run a remote risk of discharged patients taking germs of the disease into clean districts. Leprosy among natives, as far as can be ascertained is confined to one locality in the State between Roebourne and Ashburton, and every possible means must be taken to prevent its spread to other parts.

Strengthened by the extract from that report the member for Roebourne asked—and I gladly support him in the matter—

that proper precautions should be taken to segregate the natives on the three stations mentioned, namely, Mardie, Cherita, and Karratha. Dr. Moloney, in his exhaustive report dealt with the natives on those three stations, and the member for Roebourne is to be congratulated on having the courage to bring forward what might be considered an adverse motion in behalf of the natives in the North. Notwithstanding the statement in the annual report of the Medical Department that one fresh case had been discovered amongst natives and confirmed by bacteriological examination, the report goes on to say—

The case above mentioned was the only result as far as leprosy was concerned, but probably there are still lepers in this district who have not yet been recognised, and who themselves are keeping away, but a further examination of the district will be undertaken during the year, with a view to securing and segregating any person found to be suffering from the disease.

The object of the motion is to ask that all possible contacts established on the three stations mentioned should be immediately segregated in the interests of the remaining inhabitants of the State, whether aboriginal or white. I gladly support the motion.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara): I do not desire to discuss this motion at any length, as there is no opposition to it, but I do desire to compliment the member for Roebourne on bringing this matter forward, and I must say the reply of the Honorary Minister in charge of the Health Department is not too satisfactory. The Minister stated that three years ago this matter was brought under the notice of the authorities, and they are going to get a move on directly. I have to admit that my experience of the Medical Department is that if they move in three years that is pretty rapid for them, but I want to say, as I have said before, that in my opinion until they get some more rapid head of that department than Dr. Hope there is not going to be any satisfaction in the out-back portions of the State in regard to health matters. The

position stated by the member for Roebourne is somewhat appalling, and it is marvellous that the Minister should sit there calmly and say that three years ago the department made a move and that possibly in three years or six years something may be done to prevent the spread of this dread disease. I want to impress upon the Minister the urgent necessity of not only agreeing to the motion, but also of giving the fullest effect to it and of impressing on Dr. Hope that if he cannot prevent leprosy spreading in the country, it is up to him to get out and let a younger man in, who will show some activity in this matter. There is no doubt that even after segregating the natives the authorities have taken no precautions whatever to prevent contagion, even on the island itself; and this seems to me the most grave portion of the charge which the member for Roebourne has made—that they have segregated natives and taken no precaution to prevent leprosy spreading from the island on which the sufferers have been placed. I think the Minister has failed to realise the seriousness of the charge against his department. I hope he will realise the seriousness of it, or this Parliament will have to make him realise it.

Mr. LANDER (East Perth): It gives me pleasure to compliment the member for Roebourne on having the courage to bring this motion forward. The report of the Medical Department seems to suggest that they know there are more lepers in the district, but they have not troubled to look for them.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): I deny it.

Mr. LANDER: I will accept the Minister's denial, but, if it has taken the department three years to deal with these cases at Roebourne, they cannot be doing much to diagnose leprosy in other parts. When we realise the seriousness of this matter, it is the duty of members to urge upon the Government that every step shall be taken to prevent the spread of the disease. Here is a danger that will kill more human beings than all the wars, and yet the department is willing to allow the matter to remain in abeyance.

On top of that, we find that others are allowed to come into contact with the lepers on the island and return to the mainland without being fumigated.

Question put and passed.

PAPERS—PUBLIC SERVANT'S REMOVAL, E. HAMEL.

Mr. LANDER (East Perth) moved—

That all papers in connection with the removal of E. Hamel from the public service be laid on the Table of the House.

Mr. Hamel had been in the service of the Government for a considerable time and had lately been removed. That gentleman considered he had not been justly treated, and in those circumstances it was desirable that the papers should be produced, so that it might be possible to see if any further inquiry was necessary.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin) seconded the motion.

Question put and passed.

MOTION—RAILWAY PROJECTS, WEST OF GREAT SOUTHERN RAILWAY.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin) moved—

That there be laid upon the Table a copy of the Railway Advisory Board's report on the best means of opening up the lands west of the Great Southern Railway, in which the construction of the Narrogin-Armadale Railway is recommended, together with a plan showing the proposals of the board.

He said: In view of the fact that this particular report was published in the *West Australian* by the Government last October I anticipate that my motion will be treated as a formal one. Therefore, I shall be brief in my remarks. Why I wish this report laid on the Table is because it is really one of the most valuable reports the Railway Advisory Board have made. In it they recommend the immediate extension of the Dwellingup-Hotham railway to Narrogin, and also the immediate construction of a railway from

Brookton westward. They also recommend that at some later time the Narrogin-Armadale trunk railway should be completed, coupling up with that railway from Brookton westward, thereby completing both the Armadale-Brookton and the Armadale-Narrogin railways. On the hustings I advocated the extension of the Dwellingup-Hotham railway to the town of Williams, and I am still of the opinion that the best extension of that railway would have been to Williams; but if the Government decide to accept the recommendation of the Advisory Board in this matter, then I shall support them in doing so. If this recommendation is accepted, and if the Hotham-Crossman railway is at once extended to Narrogin, a distance of 37 miles will be saved to the traffic from the Great Southern district south of Narrogin to Fremantle. In other words the extension of this railway to Narrogin, either by connecting at Williams or direct, will bring the Great Southern districts 37 miles closer to Fremantle by rail. The recent rains have had a splendid effect on the harvest; we are going to have huge crops in the Great Southern district this year, and I tell the Government that they will have to build this railway at once if they wish to handle these crops. I can foresee, and other members have mentioned, that there will be a tremendous congestion on the railways next year unless something is done to meet it. I urge that nothing could be done to relieve the congestion in the Great Southern district better than the immediate acceptance of the Advisory Board's report and the immediate extension of the Hotham-Crossman railway to Narrogin, either *via* Williams or direct to Narrogin, as recommended by the Advisory Board.

The Premier: It will not go back to Williams.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I am reluctantly forced to admit that the present Government do not seem disposed to take the line to that centre, although I would like to see them do so. That being so, I urge them to accept the Advisory Board's report and take the line through to Narrogin without delay.

Mr. GEORGE (Murray-Wellington): I second the motion.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan): There is no objection to having this report laid on the Table, but I desire to say that the Government have taken into consideration the question of extending the Hotham-Crossman railway, and propose to introduce a Bill this session for the purpose of making a further short extension of that line pending the settlement of the question as to where it will connect with the Great Southern Railway. Until that is finally settled, we have decided we can continue the line a little further than was provided last session without interfering with the ultimate route it must take to connect with the Great Southern Railway, but we have to bear in mind that the route for the Trans-Australian railway has not yet been fixed, and until it is fixed we are not in a position to say what connections there will be between the South-Western Railway and the Great Southern Railway. If one connection be the Trans-Australian railway it may not be an Armadale-Narrogin line as mentioned in the motion. However, there is nothing to prevent us from continuing the railway from Hotham to Crossman for a further distance, because it will not interfere with any route that is definitely decided on. We require authority under a Bill to keep the men at present on this line rather than take them away, and then, at a later stage, take the plant back. The whole matter will be considered by the Government after we have decided the question of the Trans-Australian railway. The member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) may smile, but if he knew as much as Ministers know he would find it a most difficult question to settle. It will require all the data we can obtain before we can come to the House with a route, and we must consider it from the standpoint of the future of Western Australia and the people who have to provide the money. For that reason we are not committing ourselves to any route at present, but are collecting all the data possible for submission to the House when we will bring the project before members. If the member for

Williams-Narrogin needs some information so that he can properly deal with the Bill when it comes forward, we have no objection to these papers being laid on the Table.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam): I am glad to hear that the Premier has agreed to lay these papers on the Table, because the country to the west of the Great Southern Railway deserves attention. I hope the Advisory Board's report will be attended to. It was the duty of the board and their business to mark out railways to open up our great agricultural belt.

The Premier: The Trans-Australian railway was not considered then.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Of course not. We want a line to serve the land west of the Great Southern Railway, and it will be useful information to have the report before members. The Trans-Australian route is beside the question altogether, but I hope when that railway is built it will follow the route of the Eastern Railway as closely as possible. Apart from that, the information the hon. member has asked for should be made available. The Advisory Board consists of expert officials, and their advice might reasonably be followed by the Government in this and other matters. I know the country they have reported on in this case, and I know it is seriously worth the consideration of the House.

Mr. TURVEY (Swan): I support the motion for the papers. I also have a very intimate knowledge of the country between the Great Southern district and Armadale. If the Government can see their way clear to open up this country by railways at the earliest possible moment it will certainly be in the best interests of the State. When speaking on the Address-in-reply I understood from an interjection of the Premier's that the Armadale-Narrogin railway or the Armadale-Brookton railway could not be definitely decided until some definite stand was arrived at in connection with the Trans-Australian route, and the Premier inferred that it was not altogether improbable that the route at the coastal end of the Trans-Australian rail-

way might go *via* Armadale. I wish to congratulate the Armadale people on the attitude they took up in connection with the agitation on what is termed the battle of the routes. The people of that district and of the Victoria Park district carried resolutions leaving the matter entirely in the hands of the Government, showing that they were prepared to trust the present Government to look upon the Trans-Australian railway in a national spirit, and not showing the parochial spirit just exhibited by the member for Northam.

Mr. BROUN (Beverley): I hope the Premier will have these papers laid on the Table for the information of those members interested. I have a good knowledge also of the country west of the Great Southern Railway. There is a lot of land there that will be taken up and utilised if this railway goes through the district.

The Premier: The same land has been there for years.

Mr. BROUN: There are farmers there, some, very old settlers, carting from twenty to thirty miles to a railway. It is only natural that people are not likely to take up the land if they have to cart that distance. I hope the Premier and his party will do their utmost to have the Trans-Australian railway taken through this district if the grades are suitable. If that railway does not go through this particular district there will be no harm in having these papers on the Table, because we would then have a knowledge of the report of the Advisory Board, and I trust members who are interested in this district will put up a fight to have the district opened up by railway communication.

Question put and passed.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

RETURN—TRADES AND WORKERS' HALLS.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS (Subiaco) moved—

That a return be laid upon the Table of the House showing—1, The amount of money granted towards defraying the

costs of erecting trades halls at Fremantle and Kalgoorlie. 2, The value of land granted for the purpose of erecting trades halls thereon at Fremantle and Kalgoorlie. 3, The amount of money and value of the land granted for the erection of workers' halls throughout the State. 4, By whom were the various grants made?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. T. H. Bath): I would ask the hon. member to make an amendment. In fact, I will move the amendment myself. My reason for doing this is that it is a very difficult matter to get at the actual value of the land granted for these purposes from time to time in various parts of the State. The blocks are usually reserved and set apart for the purpose of workers' halls, and at the time perhaps no value is placed upon them. To get the information the hon. member desires would necessitate a very big investigation as well as an investigation of the values of land adjoining or in the same locality which might have been disposed of to the ordinary citizen. Under those circumstances I desire to move an amendment—

That in line 1 of paragraph 3 the words "and value of the land" be struck out.

Amendment passed.

Question, as amended, agreed to.

RETURN — ARBITRATION CASES, VALUATIONS.

On motion by Mr. ALLEN, ordered:

That there be laid upon the Table of the House a Return showing:—1, The amount of the respective valuations given by the witnesses (either for the claimants or the Government) in the recent arbitration cases of G. H. Holmes, Robert Bunning, and Bunning Bros.;—(a.) for land, (b.) for buildings. 2, Name of valuer.

RETURN—SEED POTATOES, PARTICULARS.

Mr. GEORGE (Murray-Wellington) moved—

That a return be laid upon the Table showing:—1, The quantity of seed pota-

atoes purchased by the department up to date—(a.) imported, in tons; (b.) locally grown, in tons. 2, The quantity of each (a. and b.) that has been sold to growers in this State. 3, The average cost per ton to the department for each (a. and b.). 4, The average price per ton realised by the department for each (a. and b.). 5, The amount received in payment for seed supplied. 6, The amount remaining unpaid. 7, What action the department proposes to take.

He said: With reference to this motion I do not think there will be any objection to it on the part of the Minister. I would like to explain why I desire that it should be carried, as it may seem at variance with the conversation I had with him a little while ago. Since then I have received a deluge of letters from various parts of the South-West with reference to these potatoes, and I shall have something to say about them in another motion at a later stage. I am not in a hurry for this return, and the Minister might have it prepared at his convenience. I think, however, it would be advisable in the interests of the department and others concerned that the return should be prepared.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. T. H. Bath): I pointed out to the hon. member in conversation that it would be impossible to get out this return.

Mr. George: At present.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: As a matter of fact the seed potatoes have only been imported this year. The first consignment came to hand in February and the second in April, and only a small proportion has been sold, and the remainder has been planted on the share system with growers under quarantine regulations. Another portion of the consignments has been planted by the department in two instances on land which we were kindly granted the use of free of charge for the encouragement of this very desirable effort to secure seed potatoes true to name, and new seed. Therefore, until we have the results of the planting of these potatoes, it will be impossible to supply the information asked for. If the hon. mem-

ber is content to wait until we can give him a full account of what has happened, I fail to see that there can be any object gained in moving the motion at this juncture.

Mr. GEORGE (in reply): There are certain portions of this information that can be given. For instance, there should be no difficulty in stating what quantity of potatoes was imported and the quantity bought as locally grown, the average cost per ton to the department, what the potatoes cost landed in Western Australia, and the price paid for them locally. I am quite prepared to leave the matter in the hands of the Minister. If he wishes me to withdraw the motion I shall do so. I am satisfied, however, that the information which will be supplied will be of assistance to the department and to others concerned.

The Minister for Lands: Let it stand as it is, and when it is possible to supply the complete return, it shall be prepared.

Question put and passed.

MOTION—RAILWAYS DEVIATION, WONGAN HILLS - MULLEWA AND WICKEPIN-MERREDIN.

Select Committee.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS (Subiaco) moved—
That a select committee be appointed to inquire into the deviation of the Wongan Hills-Mullewa railway, also the Wickepin-Merredin railway.

He said: I am influenced to move this motion, firstly because of the great amount of controversy that has taken place with regard to the routes for these railways, and secondly because select committees have been appointed in another place, and I am of opinion that this is the Chamber which should appoint a committee to make inquiries into these propositions. In dealing with the matter I would first of all place before hon. members a résumé of the history of the Wickepin-Merredin railway. It was on the 29th July, 1910, that the Advisory Board's report was presented, and we find from that report that great stress was laid upon the fact that the railway was to be a through railway, connecting the

Great Southern and the goldfields lines to carry the products from the South-Western portion of the State to the goldfields. They deal with a comprehensive scheme of railway construction in the South-Western district, and they say—

We have considered the Wickepin-Merredin line as the backbone of this scheme of extension. It is likely to become a line of importance for the through traffic of coal, timber, fruit, potatoes and other products from the South-West to the Eastern Goldfields, seeing that its construction would shorten the distance by more than 50 miles.

In introducing the Bill for the construction of the line, the then Minister for Works, Mr. Daglish, also laid emphasis upon this aspect of the question. He pointed out that it was necessary to have this line for the carriage of these products to the Eastern Goldfields. And when the measure was introduced in another place the chief argument used was that the line would be a connecting link between the South-Western portion of the State and the Eastern Goldfields. And we find that in the discussion between the various members that point was especially emphasised. The member for Collie saw the great necessity of making this line follow as direct a course as possible, so that the coal from the Collie coalfields could be landed on the Eastern Goldfields at the cheapest possible cost. And not only the present member, but the ex-member for Collie, who at that time was not in Parliament, also took up this proposition strongly, and wrote to the *West Australian* newspaper advocating the direct route for the line. We find that on the 17th August, 1910, the Engineer-in-chief wrote a minute with regard to this proposition as follows:—

I propose to send a party, leaving Perth on Monday next, to start the survey of the Wickepin-Merredin railway. Would you please instruct as to whether the direct route recommended by the advisory board from Wickepin should be adopted, or the divergence from Wickepin to Kurrenknuten via Kulin to Merredin.

And in reply to that minute we have another minute on the file as follows:—

Please have the survey made the direct route between Wickepin and Merredin; I have consulted the Premier on the matter.

This was signed "F. W., Minister for Works," and F. W., I understand, are the initials of the present leader of the Opposition. We find that on the 21st January, during the second reading debate on the Bill before Parliament, Mr. Daglish, in reply to the criticisms of various speakers, confirmed the promise that the line would be straightened. He said—

The Government recognise the desirability of, as far as possible, straightening up the line as hon. members desire. The Government themselves desire to make it as short as it reasonably can be made.

Further on in his speech Mr. Daglish said—

If this direct route can be adopted the total saving in distance between Merredin and, respectively, Albany, Collie and Bunbury would be about 71 miles.

You will notice that the distance to be saved had previously been stated as 50 miles, but that we now have it extended to no less than 71 miles. Further on in the same speech Mr. Daglish said—

The saving in cost, if this direct route is proved to be practicable, would represent somewhere about £12,000.

Mr. Daglish on that same day wrote a minute as follows:—

When dealing with the Wickepin-Merredin railway in Parliament I promised that, as far as possible, having due regard to engineering difficulties, I would instruct the surveyors to straighten up this line and make it a direct connection between the two termini. I informed the House that the first consideration would be the getting of a favourable grade (1 in 80 if possible), and the second consideration, the securing of a line representing the shortest distance between the two points. Please instruct the Engineer-in-Chief accordingly.

The matter went on, and the surveyors started out to survey this railway. As hon. members will see from the plan, they did not get very far before instructions were issued altering the route.

Mr. Monger: That is not shown on the plan.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: It is shown on the bottom of the plan. The member for York will there find the dates of the starting and completion of the various surveys which were made. He will also see the various routes outlined on the map. Things were going along fairly smoothly up to the 24th February, 1911, when the member for York came along with a deputation in regard to this line. Shortly afterwards, on the 29th May, Mr. McGibbon wrote, enclosing a report of a meeting of settlers held at Kuminin, also in respect to this line, and on the 12th July Mr. McGibbon forwarded a petition to the then Acting Premier, Mr. Gregory, asking that the line should be taken in an easterly direction. Mr. Gregory replied on the 25th July to Mr. McGibbon to the effect that he had forwarded the petition to the Minister for Works, asking for inquiry and a report on the matter. On the same day the Acting-Premier wrote a minute to the Under Secretary asking him to forward a plan showing the survey as far as it had gone, and also the route as shown on the advisory board's report, with a further direction to furnish these as early as possible as it was desired to submit the matter to Cabinet. On the 27th July Cabinet had evidently considered this proposition, for the then acting Premier wrote a rather long minute with regard to this matter to the Minister for Works as follows:—

Cabinet instructs that in connection with the survey of the Wickepin-Merredin railway the surveyors should be instructed with a view of serving the settlers east of the country south of Merredin. The railway should be surveyed from Merredin to a point as due south as the contour would permit to a point about 40 miles south of Merredin, and then south-west. On no account is the railway to be surveyed

west of the route as proposed by the Advisory Board.

Mr. Monger: Where did you get all that data?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: From the files. These are actual facts; this is true history. On the 4th September, 1911, the then Minister for Works, Mr. Daglish, wrote a minute in reply to the minute of the acting Premier. Mr. Daglish wrote as follows:—

It is impracticable, for engineering reasons, to follow the course proposed in Cabinet minute. I have, therefore, directed that the line north of Kurrenkutten lake should as nearly as possible follow the route marked by the advisory board for 23 miles, and then take a course direct for Merredin.

There is one other point which must strike anybody who peruses this file; it is the amount of information that the file does not contain. The file contains a wonderful lot of information, I will admit, but when one reads through the file, when one sees how spasmodically certain things spring up in connection with it, one is forced to the conclusion that had all the information which should have been on the file been in its place, the file would have been very much larger than it is at present. After the acting Premier had given instructions as to which route this railway was to follow, and the Minister for Works had stated that it was impracticable to follow that route, on the 7th September, three days after the Minister for Works had penned his minute, a conference was held between the Minister for Works, the Minister for Lands and Mr. Stoddart, inspector of engineering surveys. Mr. Stoddart was then instructed to take an intermediate course between that directly south of the original survey and the other route. He was instructed to go in between the two. That instruction was given on the 7th September, 1911. On the 3rd October something happened. I do not know whether it was unlooked for or not, but I know that it put a new complexion on this railway proposition, because on the 16th of that month I find there is a new Minister for Works in

office, and he issued instructions that all these surveys have to cease on this line, and that the survey in connection with the Quairading-Nunajin line can be gone on with in the meantime. The Minister stated in that minute that he was stopping the survey because of the great waste of public money which had taken place in connection with it. It had, at that time, absorbed £1,000 over and above the estimate for the survey, and he contended—rightly so, I think—that it was time some finality was reached in the matter; and to give him an opportunity of looking into the question he decided to withdraw the surveyors from that line until he could make up his mind as to future action. I think that the remainder is sufficiently recent history to be well within the knowledge of all members. We know that the present Minister for Works journeyed right through that district, and soon came to the conclusion that the promises which had been made in the early history of this line were the promises which should be carried out, viz., that the line should go as direct between Wickpin and Merredin as the engineering difficulties would permit. I am quite satisfied that the Minister acted wisely in that connection. There is just one other little matter I would like to point out in regard to this proposal, and it is that after the present Government came into office, and after the Minister had expressed his great dissatisfaction in connection with this railway, a deputation waited upon the Premier in regard to this line. Mr. Daglish accompanied that deputation, and although he had made a definite promise that this railway should follow a direct course, he went with that deputation advocating that the easterly route should be adopted. Another request was made that if the line were to be straightened it should be straightened within the limits of deviation allowed by the Act, and the leader of the Opposition, who also was present on that occasion, went so far as to threaten the Premier with dire results if that railway were allowed to go outside the deviation allowed by Parliament, forgetting entirely that in constructing one railway his

Government had gone $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles outside the limits of deviation.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Never.

The Premier: Yes.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: The leader of the Opposition was shown the map during the debate on the Address-in-reply, which clearly proved how his Government had constructed portions of the Katanning-Kojonup railway $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles outside the limits of deviation.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Nothing like $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles; it was more like $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Four-and-a-half miles.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Supposing it is so, what difference does it make?

The Premier: You threatened me with a Supreme Court action if I went outside the limits of deviation.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: There can be no question about the matter. This just shows that these gentlemen, who are so anxious that the present Government should not do anything which is not allowed by Parliament, had no qualms of conscience when they themselves held the reins of Government, and, so long as no one knew, they were willing to take all these risks, even if a Supreme Court action followed. Now I desire to deal with one other aspect of this question. We had the spectacle of the member for York presenting a petition in connection with this railway, and one would have thought by the noise he made on that occasion that he was backed up by the settlers to be served by this railway; but what do we find are the true facts of the case? That the settlers are repudiating the action taken by the member for York. We find that a meeting of the Kumminin Progress Association, which was reported in the *West Australian* as being well attended, was attended by only 14 members out of a total membership of 106, and of those 14, eleven carried a motion censuring the Government for their action and forwarding a petition to the member for York.

Mr. George: Were they not representative men?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: They were not representing those whom they professed to

be speaking in behalf of; the settlers of that district have repudiated the action of the meeting, and have carried a motion expressing their satisfaction with the proposals of the present Government. Later on, another meeting was held in that district, and it was attended by 20 members of that association, who carried a motion by 12 votes to eight to write to all Liberal members in the Upper House asking them to take up the case in behalf of the Kumminin Progress Association.

The Minister for Works: That is why a select committee has been appointed in that House.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: That is a fact; the select committee appointed by another place is the outcome of that resolution carried by 12 members out of 106, and repudiated by the vast number of members of that association, as well as by the general settlers in the district. I will just read, for the edification of members opposite, a motion which was carried at a well-attended meeting of the Emu Hill and Eastern Districts Progress Association—

We, the members of the Emu Hill and Eastern Districts Progress Association, herewith wish to express our approval of Cabinet's decision to construct the Wickepin-Merredin railway on the extreme westerly route, as we fully realise that any route west of Emu Hill would not serve these districts, and that these districts would be better served by a continuation of the Yilliminning-Kondinin loop.

I think I have clearly made out a case for the appointment of a select committee in connection with the Wickepin-Merredin proposition. I will now deal briefly with the other railway, and in connection with this I want to say that to my mind the gentleman who moved for the appointment of a select committee in another place, acted very injudiciously in so doing, because, in my presence, in a public street in Perth—

Mr. George: At a street corner?

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: It was not a street corner, but the centre of a block. This gentleman made a statement that the Government were deliberately deviating

that line because he owned a block of land on the route that was first proposed, and he said that the Government stooped to such conduct as to deviate the railway simply to show spite against him as an individual.

Mr. Monger: I said stronger than that in this House.

Mr. George: He was expressing his opinion.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: Yes, that was an expression of his opinion, and because of the fact that he held that opinion I say it was wrong of him to move for a select committee in connection with this matter. He might have delegated that duty to somebody else not so directly interested in it. I want to also say that the member for Irwin, in whose district this railway proposition is, is quite satisfied, and, furthermore, is convinced that the proper route for this railway is the one now proposed by the Government. If anyone has a casual look at the map he will be convinced that the proper railway to serve those people to the west of the Wongan Hills will be an extension of the Bolgart line, and, for that reason, the Wongan Hills-Mullewa line should be taken as far east as possible. When the member for the district is satisfied I think it ill becomes—

Mr. Moore: It is not in my district.

Mr. B. J. STUBBS: I was under the impression that it was in the hon. member's district, because he told me he was convinced that the route proposed by the Government now is the one that should be adopted. Though I have made a mistake as to the member in whose district the line is to be built, I would ask the member for Moore now whether he is not satisfied with the route proposed by the present Government. I am sure he will answer that he is, and that proves conclusively that there could be no ulterior motive such as is assigned to the Government for the deviation of this railway. I am not going to delay the House any further; I think I have made out a case for the appointment of a select committee to inquire into these matters, and I now move the motion standing in my name.

Mr. MONGER (York): This afternoon, when I moved a series of motions in this House I anticipated that I would have some kind of fight put up on any one of the first three I submitted. I do not know why the Government delegated to the member for Subiaco the important motion which he has undertaken this evening. When I saw the peaceful manner in which these references of mine to one particular railway were passed over it reminded me of the old proverb, "Fear the Greeks when they come bearing gifts." When my friend opposite agreed to every motion I submitted to the House, I thought there was something. I fully expected that they would not trust to their Solon, that great wise man from Subiaco, to put up their fight; I thought at least, when submitting anything for the consideration of the House, the Minister for Works would have taken it in hand. But, to be a little consistent, I understand the member for Subiaco has moved for a select committee to be appointed to inquire into the deviations of the Wongan Hills-Mullewa and Wickepin-Merredin railways. That is his wording. Only a few months ago I presented a petition to Parliament.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: On behalf of eleven people.

Mr. MONGER: On behalf of 82 people. There were 82 signed names to the petition, and the petition is among the records of the House. It was a petition that a select committee be appointed to consider the question of the route of the Wickepin-Merredin railway. How much support did I get from hon. members on the Government side of the House? How much support is the member for Subiaco to receive from that caucus-ridden crowd? A member interjects, but I will make use of that expression until some of those gentlemen who get up in absolute contradiction to their own votes within so short a period—it is only a few months ago that I moved that a select committee be appointed to inquire into one section of the hon. member's motion, and I want everyone to be conversant with the result of the division on that occasion.

Mr. Taylor: You did not have much of a chance.

Mr. MONGER: We have no chance on this side of the House. We had not even a fighting chance. There was not one member on the Government side of the House who but eight or nine months ago on the very same resolution which the member for Subiaco is asking us to give effect to this evening, supported me. Not one member supported me on the very exact motion that the hon. member is bringing forward this evening. I am quite willing to allow this matter to go to a select committee; no one hails it with more pleasure than myself, but I do want to see how that crowd is going to vote.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! the hon. member is not in order.

Mr. MONGER: I apologise. I desire to see how hon. members on that side of the House are going to vote in regard to the motion that is now under our consideration. I shall give that quiet, quiescent vote that my friend, the Minister for Works, gave this afternoon. I shall say I hail the motion with pleasure and that I am going to support it, but I should add a little peroration to my remarks; and, considering the member for Subiaco has been good enough to read out from certain files and to give certain information he has had, I think I am perfectly justified in referring quietly to that great progress association that has recently been started in the far eastern portion of my electorate. I think I am perfectly safe in referring to the resolution which he has been good enough to tell us has been unanimously passed by this association. I dislike bringing into a debate of this kind what may be construed as private correspondence, but I had forwarded to me, as also had the member for Subiaco and, I know, the member for Beverley and other members of the House, a copy of this resolution, and I shall read it to the House—

We, the members of the Emu Hill and Eastern Districts Progress Association, herewith wish to express our approval of Cabinet's decision to construct the Wickepin-Merredin railway on the extreme westerly route, as we fully realise any route west of Emu Hill would not serve these districts, and that these

districts would be much better served by the continuation of the Yilliminning-Kondinin loop.

I might mention for the benefit and edification of Ministers that, as a rule, when I have forwarded to me any communication deserving of reaching the notice of Ministers, I send in full the communication; but I refrained from attaching to that communication the original letter of the honorary secretary of that association, because there was a postscript which I thought might have hurt the feelings of the Minister for Works. However, I addressed the Minister in the mildest form imaginable, and I ask hon. members here if the slightest exception could be taken to this communication—

The Minister for Works, Sir, I have been requested by the hon. secretary of the Emu Hill and Eastern Districts Progress Association to forward to you the enclosed resolution passed by a recent meeting of their association. I may, however, say this association only embraces about ten members. I am still of that opinion.

The Minister for Works: I disagree with you.

Mr. MONGER: This is what I wrote—I may, however, say, this association only embraces about ten members, nearly all of whom signed the petition which I presented to Parliament last session. I have the honour to be, your obedient servant.

I do not think anyone could take the slightest exception to that communication.

Mr. Taylor: What is the date of it?

Mr. MONGER: The 15th July. I received on the 18th July the following communication from the Minister for Works:—

Dear Sir,—I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 15th instant covering a communication from the secretary of the Emu Hill and Eastern Districts Progress Association containing a resolution passed by the association relative to the route of the Wickepin-Merredin railway. In reply I have to state that the membership of this association is small, although I

have been creditably informed that, through the formation of this association, the majority of settlers who belonged to the Kuminin Progress Association have left the latter association and joined the Emu Hill one. In any event even if your contention was admitted, which I do not, the members of the association have the redeeming virtue of being residents of the district and their resolutions are not influenced from St. George's-terrace.

I hope that is a portion of the file from which the member for Subiaco took his extract.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: The extract was not taken from the file at all.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Who signed that letter?

Mr. MONGER: It is signed, "W. D. Johnson, Minister for Works."

Hon. Frank Wilson: It is an insult.

Mr. MONGER: I replied to that letter. I wanted to burn all this literature—because it is going to be literature handed down now that it is on the files and records of *Hansard*, but I had to reply to the letter, and I think hon. members will agree that my reply was a justifiable one in the circumstances. I wrote—

I have to own receipt of your letter of the 18th instant, which reached me on my return from York this morning. In the first instance allow me to congratulate you for the insolent peroration to your letter, and to ask from you, as Minister, the meaning of the following words:—"and their resolutions are not influenced from St. George's-terrace."

I am going to ask the Minister before I sit down what his real meaning was in those words—

In the absence of any explanation from you these words appear to me to convey a direct insult, and I shall be glad to know whether this was your intention in writing.

Later on, on the 27th July, I received the following reply from the Minister for Works—

With reference to your letter of the 23rd instant relative to the resolution carried by the Emu Hill and

Eastern Districts Progress Association in connection with the route of the Wickpin-Merredin railway, I have to state that I cannot understand how my remarks to which you take exception, and which were merely an expression of opinion, could have any personal application, as there was no such intention desired.

I am glad that the member for Subiaco has given me the opportunity this evening of allowing this correspondence between myself and the Minister for Works to be made public. We shall see whether in the minds of the people of Perth and the people in the country the expression of opinion as laid down by the Minister in his discourteous replies to my communications are deserving of that kindly consideration to any Government which, whether we sit on this side or on that side of the House, we always like to accord to them. Now, having dealt in a mild form with my personal matter in this regard, I have still another communication. The member for Subiaco dealt with everything that he thought appertained to his case from the public file—

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: Oh, no.

Mr. MONGER: From the public file which has evidently been placed at his disposal until commandeered by another place. I have here a copy of a letter which I sent to the Premier yesterday, and I am desirous of reading this out to show that not only a section of my electorate, but a section of the electorate represented by the member for Beverley, are concerned in the route of this railway. Could there be a kinder appeal made to the Minister for Works than the one I submitted to him last December and on every occasion up to the time he gave his—well, I will not say ultimatum, because I do not look upon it as such. The letter which was sent to the Premier through me only yesterday was as follows—

I have the honour by direction of the council of the Farmers and Settlers' Association in the Pingelly electorate to respectfully beg that you will be pleased to expedite the construction of all railways authorised by Parliament

to the Pingelly electorate, as the farmers interested feel the distance they have to cart their produce a very heavy burden. We are led to believe that money is available,

That I doubt.

and an early start would come as a boon to some of the centres where there is at present a scarcity of employment. My council would also earnestly plead on behalf of the settlers concerned in the route of the Wickpin-Merredin line that the Government would yet, at this eleventh hour, be graciously pleased

This man is too polite for me.

to stay its hand in the construction thereof until an independent inquiry is held as to which route is absolutely the best calculated to serve the good of the greatest number. My council feel that somehow a huge mistake has been made in the adoption of the present route,

I do not know that it has been adopted yet.

and being assured that not one member of the Government would knowingly be guilty of an intentional injustice to any one section of the community when the same was pointed out, make bold to present this request.

I am going to point to the Minister for Works, and say in my few retiring words that if ever there was a man who attempted to overstep the bounds of ordinary prudence in his Ministerial position it is the same gentleman who for the past few months has occupied a seat upon the Treasury benches, and I say that no man I know of in Western Australia would have had the colossal effrontery to have delegated to himself the alteration of that route, and remember, he has had that plan prepared according to his instructions. I repeat no man would have had the colossal effrontery, other than himself, to have dared and attempted to do what he has done. Whilst supporting the motion of the hon. member for a select committee, I desire to ask him, and every other hon. member on that side of the Chamber, their reasons for changing the attitude they adopted on the 21st December last.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY (Moore): Evidently the member for Subiaco has not been coached too well on this question when he referred to the hon. member for Irwin as one through whose district this deviation will go. The hon. member asked whether I was in favour of the deviation. I am not in the habit of answering questions across the floor of the House because I know you, Mr. Speaker, do not approve of it, but I will reply now. It is my duty in a matter of this sort, where a deviation is objected to by the constituents I represent, not to take up the side of one party or the other, but to endeavour to see that justice is done to the individuals affected. So far as this deviation, which we understand is to take place is concerned, a short time ago I introduced a deputation to the Minister for Works which included several influential gentlemen from that district, and others representing the progress association. They strongly objected, as the Minister knows, to this deviation taking place, and they represented that for the last fifteen or eighteen months they had lived in the hope or in the expectation that the railway would proceed along the route proposed at that time. Now they were told that a deviation was to take place and that the railway would be taken right away from them. We have been told by the member for Subiaco, who I am afraid is not too well acquainted with the facts regarding this matter, that the Bolgart extension will serve the settlers on the west side of Wongan Hills. Until we are in a position to know where that extension is going I do not see how we are to judge whether that proposed line is going to serve these people or not.

The Minister for Works: You know it is being surveyed at the present time.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: We know that surveys go for nothing. We heard of a survey having been made some years ago with regard to a railway which the member for York has been speaking on and now it is being deviated and a controversy is taking place.

The Minister for Works: There were five surveys in that case; there is only one in this.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: We never know how many surveys there will be. There was one survey of the Wongan Hills-Mullewa line, and now there is another.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): You are not well acquainted with that either.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: I think the Honorary Minister said I was not too well acquainted with it. If I am not acquainted with that part of the country, there is no one in the State who is.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): I was not referring to the country, but the railway.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: I am speaking with my mind's eye, not only on the subject itself, but on the country through which this railway is likely to pass. The people on the west side of Wongan Hills are much exercised with regard to this deviation. No doubt if the Bolgart extension will serve them as well, their anxiety will be appeased, and they will be satisfied, but until that time comes and they know where the extension is going, I am not in a position to say whether I am in favour of the deviation or not. I know that there are a large number of settlers on the west side of Wongan Hills, who have been there for some years, and who have experienced a distressing time during the last twelve months. They have been clearing their land, and many of them had hundreds of acres in last year and got no result. This year they are living in hopes of having a good season, and that with it they would have a railway to assist them to take their produce to market without much expense, but when they heard that the line was being deviated some miles, hon. members will agree that a considerable amount of uneasiness must have entered into the minds of these people. With regard to the appointment of the select committee it seems rather an unnecessary trouble to appoint two select committees, one in this House and one in the Legislative Council. It is usually the custom, when it is necessary to have select committees of both Houses, to appoint them jointly. In this instance we shall have all the same evidence taken over again, and not only will

a great deal of trouble be given to the people concerned, but also to the witnesses who will have to give evidence. I can realise that the member for Subiaco has the ear of the Government, or at any rate, he has moved this motion with the approval of the Government. I would not like to say for one moment that the hon. member has been put up by the Government to move the motion, but I think it was the hon. member's great philanthropy, and his desire to see justice done, which induced him to come forward and ask that a select committee of this House should be appointed.

Mr. Taylor: You have put it very nicely.

Hon. H. B. LEFROY: I certainly cannot disapprove of this select committee, but I hope if it is appointed we shall see that its deliberations will result in justice being done to the people who have been living under the impression for some time past that the railway was going in a certain direction.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. D. Johnson): I do not propose to take up the time of the Chamber further than to say that I welcome the fullest investigation into the question of the routes of these railways. The member for York asked the question as to why we are agreeing to the appointment of a select committee to-day when we refused it on a previous occasion. The position is that on the previous occasion the Government had the question under consideration and they were prepared to take the responsibility of unravelling the question that had got into an undoubted mess through political influence, on the part of the previous Government. After some little trouble we unravelled the mess, and we stated which we considered to be the best route in the best interests of the State. Having said that we are now prepared for our work to be investigated by an impartial tribunal, and to leave it to them to say whether right has been done. As one who has had some little connection with the matter, and more especially having land in the vicinity, I welcome the appointment of the committee. But the member for York con-

stantly brings up the proposition that we have no right to depart from the advisory board's report. One can repeat as often as one likes without succeeding in getting that hon. member to realise that, after all, it was Parliament that departed from the advisory board's report. The report was submitted to Parliament, and Parliament decided that they would not build the line on the route suggested by the advisory board. The Minister in charge of the Bill, realising the spirit of Parliament, and recognising that he could not get the Bill through, decided that he would build the line on the direct route, and, on that distinct promise being made, the Bill was passed. Consequently, the departing from the advisory board's report was no act of Ministers or of a Government, but was the act of Parliament, and, after all, Parliament is the authority to decide these questions. Then, too, if we are wrong on this occasion, we have erred in very good company, because, in the first place, Parliament decided in favour of the direct route. The honourable gentleman has read, as I read on a previous occasion, the remarks of the Minister who was in charge of the Bill, Mr. Daglish, who promised to adopt the direct route. Then the hon. member read again to-night, as I have previously read, the instructions Mr. Daglish gave to the Engineer-in-Chief, explaining that he had given a promise to Parliament. In that minute Mr. Daglish said definitely that he had promised to straighten the line, adding "Please instruct the Engineer-in-Chief accordingly." The surveyors started, and surveyed 60 miles, when political influence came in and stopped them. The Minister altered his decision again afterwards, but I say he was then doing something that was wrong. He gave his promise to Parliament and gave his instructions to his engineers, and when he allowed political influence to over-ride the promise he gave to Parliament, he was doing something wrong.

Mr. S. Stubbs: Are you sure of your ground when you say political influence was the cause of it?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The fact remains that the surveyors were

going along the direct route as instructed by the Minister, when deputations came along, and after that the St. George's-terrace influence set to work, and changes began to take place. I would not mind a bit if the Minister had made only one change; but when it is realised that five different surveys were made as the result of all sorts of influences brought to bear on the Minister, it will be seen that a grave injustice was done to the State, and in particular to many settlers in the locality. Then the member for York comes forward and takes exception to my remarks in reference to the influence of St. George's-terrace. The honourable gentleman wants no educating in that regard, because he knows as much about it as I do, very likely a good deal more. But, surely to goodness the honourable gentleman does not want this Chamber to believe that St. George's-terrace has not influenced this matter, has not influenced much of the agitation which has taken place. The honourable gentleman knows it full well.

Mr. Monger: I do not.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The position is that the settlers in the locality presented a petition, as the honourable gentleman points out. But, after the Government policy was announced, and we made it clear to the settlers exactly how we proposed to serve the area so that not one of the settlers would be more than $12\frac{1}{2}$ miles distant from the line; and when we pointed out that we proposed to take the line in a direct route, in order that none of those on the west would be left more than $12\frac{1}{2}$ miles away, and that we proposed to continue the other line within 25 miles, so that those on the east would not be left—

Mr. Brown: But how long would they have had to wait for that other line?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Suppose they had to wait a little longer—is it not better for a few to wait a little longer than for a large number to be permanently isolated? The honourable gentleman knows that a grave injustice has been done to a number of settlers because of the action of the previous Government in placing railway lines more

than 25 miles apart. Take the Yorkra-kine area: many of these people have been permanently isolated because of the blunder in the Doverin-Merredin line. We do not want that sort of thing; we want to see that our policy is carried out in its truest sense, and that no man is left more than $12\frac{1}{2}$ miles away from the line. We pointed this out to the settlers, and, realising that our policy was sound, although it might temporarily delay the construction of the line, they admitted that we were right, and therefore they tried to influence their association to support the Government, and to work together with a view to getting the line constructed as early as possible. But they could not get their way with the association, and so they said, "Well, we will secede from this association and set up an association of our own, and carry on for ourselves." They seceded, and formed their own association, and carried a resolution. Now it is an absolute virtue in the member for York to point out to me in the letter he wrote that these were an insignificant few who carried this resolution, while he was supported by a large majority of influential persons. I knew that the influence was that of St. George's-terrace, so when he took up the attitude of trying to discount the resolution because it supported the Government, I took the other course and pointed out that I knew what the influence was which had urged him to cast a reflection on these few. Not only do we find that we had St. George's-terrace influence in connection with the route of this railway, but we find this non-political Farmers and Settlers' Association carrying a resolution also. I suppose the Liberal League will be at it next. As a matter of fact the trouble all along the line has been due to the political influence brought to bear in regard to it. We do not want political influence as far as our railway construction is concerned. We want to serve the State and to see that every settler is within $12\frac{1}{2}$ miles of a railway. We are doing that and going straight ahead. Let us look at the Wongan Hills line. Exactly the same thing has influenced the Government in adopting the more easterly route in regard to that

line. We found in the first place, on assuming office, that a very large file was built up, composed of letters from resident settlers along the track complaining bitterly of the route of the railway. So numerous were these protests that I instructed Mr. Muir, the inspecting engineer for surveys, to go along the route and see for himself. My instructions to him were definite. I told him to go right along the route and meet as many of the resident settlers as he could, and as many of the progress associations as possible, and after getting all the information to make a recommendation as to whether we should definitely decide upon the route as surveyed, or, if he found that a wrong was being done, how we were to put it right.

Mr. Monger: Why not have adopted the same policy in regard to the Wickipin-Merredin line?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Because I realised that there had been plenty of inquiry in regard to that. The leader of the Opposition had declared in favour of the direct route, and had written a minute to that effect. I do not suppose he remembered that circumstance, because he would not have been guilty of writing the minute and then going to the Premier and denying it.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I never denied it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not think the hon. member could do a thing like that. Mr. Daglish, who was then Minister for Works, declared in favour of the direct route. Consequently, why should we further investigate? We had the leader of the Opposition in favour of the direct route, and writing a minute to that effect. Then the hon. member declares in favour of the direct route, Parliament declares in favour of it, and so, as I say, why should there be any more investigation, when all authorities are unanimous upon the route—until the general elections come along. Then, when there were some votes to be caught, the Ministers of the day changed their opinions, and they have been changing them ever since. But let me get on to the Wongan Hills line. Mr. Muir submitted his report. It has been stated

that it was personal objections to Mr. Sommers which influenced me in deciding to adopt this more easterly route. As a matter of fact I did not receive the report and recommendation from Mr. Muir, and the member for Moore will bear me out when I say I was not aware that the alteration had been decided upon when the hon. member brought his deputation along. I was quite surprised, and told him that I had no idea of any alteration having been made. On making inquiries I found that Mr. Muir's report had been submitted to my colleague, Hon. W. C. Angwin, during my absence, and that after investigation, the Minister had decided to adopt the report, with the result that the surveyors were instructed accordingly. I promised the honourable gentleman and his deputation that I would re-submit the matter to Cabinet, because I was of opinion that Cabinet had not fully considered it. I referred the matter to Cabinet, and found that they had fully investigated it, and had decided in favour of the more easterly route, because, had they adopted the more westerly route, it would have taken the line within some 35 miles of the Midland Railway Company's line, and the people out east would have been permanently isolated. On the other hand, if we sent the line out in the easterly direction, we would take it out 50 miles, and by running the Bolgart extension through between the two, we would have a twelve and a-half mile radius right through. The people on the east and on the west, and the people of Bolgart and those along the Midland line, would all be served; everybody would be served. But, as I say, had we adopted the route as decided upon by the previous Government, the people out east would have been permanently isolated, and to do them justice we would have had to bring them in again, because they could not hope to farm successfully without railway communication. As it is we are serving these people and doing no injustice, unless it can be called injustice to place somebody 12½ miles from the line who, obviously, would not have been quite so far away had we adopted the westerly route. Consequently we adopted the easterly route to get the 12½ mile

radius, so that we could serve all the people instead of serving a section of them, and isolating others. The member for the district desired to know where the Bolgart line is to go. It is part of the Government policy that whenever we propose to extend a line, instructions are to be issued for the survey of the proposed extension before the Bill is introduced, so that we can tell Parliament exactly where the line is to go. In accordance with this policy we have surveyors along the Bolgart extension to-day. They are out some 15 or 16 miles, and presently it will be the responsibility of the Government to say exactly what distance the line will go.

Mr. Moore: Fifteen miles will not serve the Bolgart people.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: But the instruction to the engineers from me is to take two lines, the Midland line and the Wongan Hills line, and fix a direct route which is equi-distant between the two, if engineering difficulties will permit. Consequently, I claim that we have adopted the right course. In connection with the Wickepin-Merredin line, we adopted it so that everybody would be served.

Mr. Monger: You did nothing of the sort.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We adopted it so that everybody would be served, and consequently we welcome investigation; but I want to say that I agree with the member for Irwin, that when another place decided to make an investigation of this matter they should have realised that the Assembly is the Chamber that should be consulted in this affair, and that the select committee should have been a joint one of both Houses. However, another place having taken the responsibility of saying that they were going to have a committee on their own, I say it is only fair that this Chamber should also have an opportunity of investigating it. Personally, I regret the expense in connection with all these investigations, for I am sure that the evidence will endorse the action of the Government, because it is carrying out the policy of the Government to place a line

not more than 12½ miles, as the crow flies, from every settler. We have done that, and I am satisfied that our policy will be endorsed.

Hon. FRANK WILSON (Sussex): I am not rising to oppose the appointment of a select committee in connection with the routes of these railway lines, but it is passing strange that a motion of this description moved by the member for York last session should have been rejected with scorn by the Minister for Works and his colleagues on that occasion, and to-day we have the Minister putting up a member to move a motion in identically the same terms. We have also the marvellous statement of that hon. member that he is moving because another place has thought fit to appoint a select committee to inquire into these routes. Then he went on to announce the opinion that he holds, that select committees of this description should be appointed by this House and apparently by this House only. I should like the hon. member to understand that Parliament, as it exists under the Constitution, consists of two Chambers, and that the Upper House has equal rights with this Chamber in connection with matters of this description. The only exception is with regard to certain money Bills, but another place is perfectly justified, just as much justified as we are, in asking for and appointing a select committee to inquire into this matter.

The Premier: Who claimed otherwise?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The member for Subiaco.

The Premier: No.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Yes, he did. I admit at once that it seems to me to be unnecessary, and I have very seldom known it occur in Western Australia at any rate, that we should have two select committees appointed by the different Chambers of the one Parliament to inquire into one subject and sit at the same time. It seems to me to be a waste of energy.

Mr. Taylor: A waste of money.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: And a waste of money. Because we will have, I suppose, exactly the same evidence called by both committees and possibly opposite decisions given.

The Premier: What makes you think that?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I say possibly, because I believe that the hon. member is moving for a select committee and Ministers are supporting him in order to counteract something that is going to happen before the other committee.

Mr. Green: You evidently know what is going to happen up there.

Mr. Monger: Do not whisper so loud.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The hon. member will intimidate the select committee if he is not more gentle in his remarks. Why did not the Premier, when he knew that a select committee was to be appointed in another place, suggest a joint select committee, and then he would have had the inquiry carried out on the most economical lines, and the decision would have represented the opinions of the members appointed from both Chambers?

The Premier: Because in this Chamber we do not transact any business until the Address-in-reply is disposed of.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier could have asked to have the matter delayed. That is not a valid excuse at all. People outside will recognise that it is a foolish excuse to put forward, and it does not justify the extra expense that will be incurred by having two select committees to consider the same evidence. The Minister for Works had the audacity to refer to St. George's-terrace in his correspondence with the member for York, and he has the audacity to rise in his place in this House and refer in terms of scorn to St. George's-terrace, and say that St. George's-terrace has influenced this question from beginning to end. What does the hon. member mean by St. George's-terrace? I wonder that he would be seen in the terrace, but what does he mean by his remark? In this instance he means two people, having offices in St. George's-terrace, who are interested in this rail-

way—Mr. Hedges on the one part and Mr. McGibbon on the other part.

The Minister for Works: You evidently know more about it than I do.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It is in *Hansard*; it was ventilated last session. Therefore his scornful remarks in regard to those two gentlemen who are interested in the construction of this line, and it seems to me that the hon. member goes out of his way to insult people.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Is Mr. Hedges in St. George's-terrace?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: He has an office in St. George's-terrace although he is mostly in Melbourne, but he is a large landholder and is doing excellent work to the east of the lake on the west side of which the Minister is going to construct this line. Let me say that there is far too much of the personal element drawn into this debate. I asked the Minister last session to do justice to the settlers to the east of the salt lakes some 200 of them I was informed at that time, who were likely to suffer considerably because the line was being deviated to the west of the lakes; and I think it goes without saying, on the Minister's own admission to-night, that these people will suffer extreme hardship if they have to use the route which the Government are adopting. Mr. Hedges will suffer with them; probably he will suffer more than any of them because he has a larger area under cultivation, but perhaps he can weather through. The Minister rises and says that we are all in favour of the westerly route, and he stated that I am in favour of the westerly route because of a minute written by me in August, 1910, and he then accused me of denying this minute to the present Premier. I admit that I had forgotten about this minute. I cannot remember all the minutes that have been written, but I am prepared to be confronted with my minutes on any occasion.

The Premier: But you are not always pleased you have forgotten them, surely.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I think the Premier might try to preserve the dignity

of his position somewhat and listen calmly and patiently when I am explaining, coherently I hope, this very minute in connection with which the Minister for Works accuses me of advocating this western route. At the time when that minute was written, August 1910, I had just recently taken charge of the Works Department, and the Engineer-in-Chief in that minute which is headed "Survey of Wickepin-Merredin railway" said—

I propose to send a party, leaving Perth on Monday next, to start the survey of the Wickepin-Merredin railway. Would you please instruct as to whether the direct route recommended by the Advisory Board from Wickepin is to be adopted, or a diversion from Wickepin to Kurrenkutten, via Kulin, to Merredin.

My reply to that was—

Please have the survey made on the direct route from Wickepin to Merredin. I have consulted the Premier in the matter.

That was the direct route as recommended by the Advisory Board, and yet the Minister accuses me of being in favour of placing a ruler across the map.

The Minister for Works: That is exactly what you wrote.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Of course it is what I wrote. But where is the Advisory Board's recommendation? To the east of the lakes as per the yellow mark on the Minister's own map in this Chamber. The Advisory Board never recommended that the line should go to the west of the salt lakes.

The Minister for Works: You have twisted that minute round.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: How can I twist it round?

The Minister for Works: Well, it is twisted round.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: How can I twist it? Here is the Engineer-in-Chief's minute on the 17th August and my reply is under it on the 18th August. The Engineer-in-Chief asks if he is to make the survey on the direct route recommended by the Advisory Board—

The Minister for Works: The Advisory Board recommended against the direct route; it must be wrong.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: How can the Minister accuse me of being in favour of the westerly route on that minute?

The Minister for Works: The Engineer-in-Chief has made a mistake then.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: No, he says "the route recommended by the Advisory Board," and if anyone examines the map he will see that it is a direct route in contradistinction to the other route to Kurrenkutten via Kulin to Merredin, which would take it to the east of Emu Hill.

The Minister for Works: The diversion is the Advisory Board's report.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Minister is trying to wriggle out of it; he has made an accusation and he admits that he has failed in it.

Mr. Green: You have twisted the minute.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I am sorry the hon. member is unwell.

Mr. Green: You have been twisting all your life.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The hon. member is twisting, or wriggling, at any rate, because he is rapidly being convinced by my argument. I object to the Minister putting a wrong construction on my minute, which was a direct reply to the Engineer-in-Chief's minute. What direct route did I refer to? I referred to the engineer's minute and that is as plain as a pikestaff. It says the route recommended by the Advisory Board, yet the Minister wants to make out that I denied the minute I had written to the Engineer-in-Chief when I went to the present Premier on a deputation in connection with this matter. Now, my reading of the whole business is that the Minister wants to state that Parliament has sanctioned his action in bringing this line to the west of the salt lakes. Parliament never sanctioned that action. He wants, further, to state that Parliament has sanctioned his action in going outside the 12 miles deviation limit, which is provided for in the Act of Parliament giving power to construct this line. Parliament has never sanctioned it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): We are not outside the deviation.

Mr. Monger: You are.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: If the Minister is not outside the deviation allowed he is all right, but I think he is outside, and if he is, he is all wrong.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: What did Mr. Daglish promise?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: He promised to straighten out the line between Wickepin and Kurrenkatten, the first 26 miles, if I remember aright. It was in response to a question by the hon. member, and he used the words "to take out the curve to the west."

Mr. A. A. Wilson: No, I said "the twist and pot-holes"; those are the words I used.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: What are pot-holes? The hon. member asked the Minister to straighten out a certain curve in the line, and Mr. Daglish said he would endeavour to straighten out the curve to the west. I quoted his language on a previous occasion, when we were debating this very question; the curve was to the west, and it was straightened out; that was between Wickepin and Kurrenkatten at the south end of the salt lakes.

The Minister for Works: How could it be at that end? The line was surveyed at the time to that point. It was from Kurrenkatten he started his straight line.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Minister had promised to take that curve out. I know that very well, and I quoted *Hansard* on that occasion.

The Minister for Works: He promised to go direct, the same as you promised it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Minister is making a false assertion again; he has no right to go on repeating it. I instructed that the survey should be made to the east of the salt lakes, in accordance with the recommendation of the Advisory Board, and the Minister for Works knows it, though he goes on repeating that I instructed that it should go to the west of the lakes. I can lay my hands on the exact words of Mr. Daglish as recorded in *Hansard*—

In January, 1911, when the Bill was being adopted, Mr. A. A. Wilson, the member for Collie, asked that the line should be straightened out. He quoted

John E.W.'s letter, which ap-

peared in the Press, a letter which clearly set forth that the line should be straightened out between Wickepin and a point 40 miles south of Merredin somewhere in the vicinity of Emu Hill. The words used by Mr. Wilson bear this out clearly. He wished to have the westerly curve straightened out. The curve the Minister for Works is taking exception to is the curve to the east of the proposed route he thinks it ought to follow. Mr. A. A. Wilson was not making any reference to the curve which the Minister for Works thinks is the one that needs to be straightened out. Mr. A. A. Wilson asked, "Would the Minister state whether he intended to take full advantage of the ten miles deviation or whether on the other hand he would attempt to remove the twist from the route." He said "twist," not "twists." The Minister in replying evidently understood which twist was referred to, for he said he had endeavoured to make it clear that he desired to straighten out the line as far as possible. He agreed that Kunjin would be well served by the construction of the proposed line from Brookton to that place. Mr. A. A. Wilson had used that as an argument also, that the line was going from Brookton to Kunjin, and consequently there would not be much necessity for the curve to the westward about Kunjin on the route under consideration. That was the gist of the whole thing. The people of Kunjin were considered, even if the line were carried to the east of Kunjin instead of tapping it as was first considered. That being so, I think it is necessary to put the matter clearly before the Minister for Works and he will agree, especially if he inquires carefully into the matter, that in the best interests of the greatest majority of the settlers in that district the line ought to be carried in as straight a line as possible from Wickepin to a point somewhere 40 miles south of Merredin.

And then I go on to say that I was away in the Old Country when the matter was brought before Cabinet, and that it was considered by Cabinet and that there was a minute on the file signed by the acting

Premier, Mr. Gregory, and that I presumed the late Minister for Works was present on that occasion and desired to get definite instructions from Cabinet in regard to the matter. This is the position in a nutshell.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: It was affected by political influence.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Nonsense. Every day the Minister is receiving deputations; it is not a question of political influence; it is a question of deciding on a route that will serve the greatest number of settlers and the largest area of land. The Minister for Works should know that full well; but he argues, by inference, that if a deputation waits on me, as Minister, it is political influence, and that a deputation that waits on him, as Minister, of course, has no political influence, but is something to get the best service in the interests of the greatest number.

The Minister for Works: You twisted with every deputation that came along.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The hon. member has been twisting all the time he has occupied his position; he is always twisting; and it is very easily proved; he will go on twisting until he vacates his office.

The Minister for Works: I will not survey five routes.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It does not matter what the hon. member will do; he will make heaps of blunders; at any rate he twists my minute, and I thank the member for Subiaco for giving me the opportunity for refuting the Minister's statement.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: You have not refuted it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I have absolutely refuted it.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: There is Mr. Daglish's survey on the map.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It does not matter about that. What was the Advisory Board's recommendation?

The Premier: Was it direct?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: What?

The Premier: The line in red on the map.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: To the east of the lakes?

The Premier: I do not care whether it is east. Is it direct?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Is it to the east of the lakes? It is a childish argument for the hon. member. He knows very well where the crux of the question comes in. It is a question of whether the line should go to the east of the lakes or to the west of the lakes. If it goes to the west of the lakes it means that the settlers who go back 30 or 40 miles cannot possibly get their produce to the railway, because they cannot cross the lakes.

The Premier: You never mentioned that in the minute.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I mentioned it in *Hansard*.

The Minister for Works: That was after the elections.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: What have the elections to do with it? Evidently elections weigh very heavily with Ministers; they have always got elections on their minds. Is the hon. member pointing now for an election? Let me assure him that elections never concern me one iota when deciding a question of this sort.

The Minister for Works: You changed your opinion on that railway.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I have never changed it; it has been there standing for all time; and if the hon. member will follow my advice the railway will be constructed on the direct route as recommended by the Advisory Board.

The Premier: It cannot be direct if that red line is followed.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Premier is quibbling with words.

The Premier: You must have a meaning to words.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: If there is any misconception as to the meaning, take the Bill itself, and take the schedule, and construct the railway accordingly. There is no misreading the schedule; here it is—

Commencing at a point in the Wiekepin station yard on the Narrogin-Wiekepin railway and proceeding thence in a generally north-easterly direction for about 36 miles; thence in a generally easterly direction for about

34 miles; and thence in a generally northerly direction for about 50 miles and terminating at a point in or near the Merredin station yard on the Northam-Southern Cross railway as more particularly delineated and coloured red on the map marked P.W.D., W.A., 15285.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: Is that the Advisory Board's report.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It is not; it is the schedule of the Bill; the only authority Parliament has given to Ministers to decide a route with the exception of a deviation ten miles on either side. Ministers cannot get away from that. I do not care where the line goes one iota; it does not affect me; but I want to see the best route taken to serve the greatest number and the biggest area of land possible.

The Premier: We take a different attitude; we want it to serve all the settlers, not a few only.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: How on earth can the hon. member serve all?

The Premier: We are going to.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Yes, if the hon. member lives long enough he is going to do it; but I do not think his life will be long enough. He is committed to heaps of promises for railways.

The Premier: We are building faster than you did.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The hon. member has not even got his pace yet; he has not got his pace at all; he is waiting to make a start; he is tied down by his Minister for Works, who has pledged the country and says he is going too fast, to build 200 miles per annum. I do not think he is going to reach half that mileage in the present year.

The Premier: He is building faster than you did.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: That is only a statement. The proof of the pudding is in the eating of it. When we get the hon. member's pudding, we will know what it contains. But we have the hon. member's assertion that he cannot construct more than 200 miles per annum, and we have his assurance, in reply to a deputation, that he thinks he is building

railways too fast. What is he going to do? He puts these poor deluded settlers off with a promise that some day they will get the Yillimining-Kondinin line extended to the Eastern Railway. I wonder how many years they are going to wait for that extension. We know that the Yillimining-Kondinin settlers already are in doubt as to whether they will get their line.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Nothing of the kind.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I am glad that the hon. member is satisfied. He was not when he waited on a deputation to the Minister for Works the other day in connection with the construction of this line; and, of course, now he is perfectly satisfied to sit back and let the settlers whistle for a railway. We know that the line, according to the Minister for Works, cannot be commenced until March of next year, if it is commenced then. We know it cannot be constructed until a considerable time after that.

The Minister for Works: That is absolutely untrue.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The hon. member said it to a deputation.

The Minister for Works: I contend you are misquoting me.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I read the hon. member's words the other day.

The Minister for Works: For goodness sake be correct sometimes.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Bother it, does the hon. member want me to read it again? I do not know whether I have the paper here or not.

The Minister for Works: I can correct you. I said I would start before March.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: No, the hon. member said he would start in March, but it might be started before.

The Minister for Works: I said it would be started before March.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: No; it is in the paper. Let me read it, if I can find it. I cannot find it for the moment, but I have a cutting here about Mr. Chinn and some recommendations of Ministers opposite because of political services rendered.

The Minister for Works : I can supply you with the extract.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Thanks; let me quote a few sentences from it—

He was of opinion that he was doing too much in the way of railway construction, and because he was doing so much he was getting criticised. The deputation asked him to tell them when the line under discussion would be constructed. He could start the line within a week if he had unlimited capital to draw upon, but Mr. Piesse would agree that there must be some limit to expenditure. To start the line to-morrow they would have to have new plant and new organisation and that would make the railway too expensive. He had laid out a plan which he proposed to follow in connection with the construction of the different railways. The Northampton-Ajana railway would be finished in the course of a few weeks. That organisation would then be taken to the Mullewa end of the Wongan Hills-Mullewa line. The Quairading-Nunajin line was being constructed, and he was going to put up a record in railway building there.

Always going to do something, and the Premier is as bad as his colleague.

The Wickepin-Merredin line had been started at both ends,
After nine months.

and as its construction was completed one part of the organisation would go on to the Brookton-Kunjin line, and the other on to the Yillimining-Koondinin railway. He claimed that he was building more lines and carrying out the construction more economically than was the case previously, and he did not think it was fair for any body of electors to attempt to push him into a position in which he could not say that he was doing justice to the State.

I do not suppose they were attempting that.

He had tried with the engineers to figure matters out so that he could give them a definite date on which the railway would be commenced, but he had not been able to get at it as definitely as he would like. He could tell the

deputation, however, that the construction of the railway would be commenced by next March. He reckoned that when they did get a start they would go along at the rate of seven miles per month.

Mr. SPEAKER: All this discussion is out of order.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: What am I to understand?

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must discuss the motion.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The motion is for a select committee to inquire into this railway line.

Mr. SPEAKER: That has nothing to do with the construction of another railway.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Yes it has, because if this line is deviated as the Minister proposes, it will necessitate the continuation of the line I am referring to. The Minister has already said in his speech that this line must be constructed, and he has put that forward as an argument why this route should be adhered to. It will take some years before these settlers can possibly get any railway facilities even if the Minister's scheme is carried out, and then I want to reply to the Minister's remarks with regard to the distance between the parallel lines.

Mr. SPEAKER: If the hon. member's intention is to make these comparisons he is in order, but he is not in order in entering into any argument as to the rate of progress made in railway construction.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Surely if I can show that these people who have changed their views with regard to the construction of this railway line away towards Emu Hill, and if they have done so on the understanding that they will get another line within a certain time, and if I can show that they cannot possibly get that line, that is an argument.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is a comparison which can be used, but I cannot allow members to get away from the matter under discussion. The construction of another line is an entirely different matter from the motion under discussion.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The deviation compels this construction and the

Minister says it is warranted by this construction.

The Minister for Works : It has nothing to do with it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON : I am not asking for the Minister's ruling. Then the Minister goes on to say, "I told you the railway would be started by March, and if things go along well we may be able to make a commencement earlier." I am not misconstruing the hon. member's remarks, I have read exactly the same words which I read the other night.

The Minister for Works : You said distinctly on both occasions that the line would not be started by March.

Hon. FRANK WILSON : I did not say that; what I said was that in my opinion it would not be started by March. I can advance my own opinions, and, I repeat, if it is to await the completion of the Wickepin-Merredin line, my opinion is that it will not be started in March.

The Minister for Works : As long as you keep that as your opinion it is all right, but do not say I said so.

Hon. FRANK WILSON : With all due respect to the hon. member, I am not voicing his opinion. I would not give a penny for it. I am showing that he is going to land these settlers, or rather where he is not going to land them, and I am now trying to refute the charge that I have misrepresented him. According to the files of the department there is the reply. When I indited the minute to the Engineer-in-Chief, stating that the direct line was the line recommended by the advisory board, and the Minister puts his rule over that and draws a pencil line like Peter the Great, the Emperor of Russia did, when he constructed the railway between St. Petersburg and Moscow, through towns and villages, and because it is not direct in that sense, he says, "I did not mean that." What I want to point out in conclusion is that the appointment of a select committee from this Chamber to inquire into a matter which is already the subject of an inquiry by a select committee in another place and upon which the Government have their own representation, is to my mind somewhat derogatory, to say the least of it,

to that Chamber. I do not believe in these political tricks and the endeavour to outwit another place which in its wisdom has thought fit to appoint a select committee to inquire into this matter, and more especially I do not believe in it when members here absolutely refused the member for York a select committee a few months ago. They now propose to appoint one. Will anyone tell me that this is a proper political game? If so, I shall be very much surprised indeed.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs : I wish to ask if the hon. member is in order in referring to this motion as a political trick and a political game.

Mr. SPEAKER : The remark is distinctly offensive.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs : I will ask that it be withdrawn.

Hon. FRANK WILSON : As I am always obedient to the Chair, I withdraw the words to which exception has been taken. I hope that Ministers will be as considerate as I am when they refer to people who are outside this Chamber and cannot answer for themselves. Again let me say that I take very strong exception to the Minister's methods of continually casting a slur upon people who have their business offices in St. George's terrace. It seems to me we are going beyond our province in this Chamber, whether it be Ministers or ordinary members, when we designate in terms of scorn any section of the community or the capital city of Western Australia. We might just as well refer to the poor selectors in the country—these men who want railway facilities—in terms of scorn, and say that they should not be considered. What has St. George's terrace to do with it? Why should not I refer to the Trades Hall? Where is the influence of the Trades Hall? We see that it is apparent on many occasions, and here, because two individuals who are well known residents of this State, and are doing good work in settling the lands out east of this proposed railway route, happen to have their offices in St. George's terrace, the whole Terrace must be condemned by the Minister. Can he not take into consideration that there are 198 other

settlers who are interested in this matter, rather than single out the two who belong to St. George's terrace? If he were impartial as he would have us believe he is, he would never have hesitated eight or nine months ago when the hon. member moved in the direction of appointing a select committee to have granted the inquiry then asked for, and he would have had the evidence which he is now seeking to get. Instead of this, he is going to have the matter duplicated because he wants a select committee appointed by this Chamber. One would imagine that the policy was enunciated for the first time in the history of this Parliament that these agricultural lines should be 25 miles apart and not an inch further. Let me point out, however, that my colleague, the member for Northam, came to that conclusion months and months before the hon. member ever thought of or suggested it, and if a mistake has been made in keeping these railway lines rather too far apart it was not pointed out by hon. members on the other side of the House that the mistake was being made. It is quite understandable in a big territory like ours when we first set out on this agricultural railway problem, we might possibly have thought that 15 miles was a proper distance for produce to be carried. I think the Royal Commission which sat upon this question and which has been extensively quoted on more than one occasion in connection with this very policy, said that the proper distance to provide between agricultural lines was 30 miles, and we followed that advice. Ultimately my colleague came to the conclusion that we ought to contract that distance somewhat, and that although 15 miles as the crow flies might be the utmost distance any settler would be away from a railway, he might possibly find that the 15 miles would be much further and that he might be seventeen or eighteen or nineteen miles when he has to follow the tracks or the roads. And so my colleague announced, and I have heard him do so on many occasions, that in future we ought to endeavour to bring the settlers to a point not exceeding 12½ miles from the railway system. The Minister for Works

has rightly adopted that course. I am bound to admit that he will not be able to carry it out mathematically, for you cannot lay out the country on a chess-board scale, because you must follow the contour of the land. I commend him on his endeavour to keep the settlers, as far as he can, within the 12½-mile limit. Let me say we do not wish to oppose this select committee; how can we? We advocated the appointment of such a committee seven or eight months ago, and I am only too pleased to find the Minister has at last backed down from that obstinate position he then took up, and on this occasion, urged by what influence I know not, he has agreed, because one of his own supporters has moved the motion, that this select committee should be appointed. Whether this is the result of political influence, or whether it is the outcome of persuasion by those interested and who have been waiting upon him recently, or whether it is due to the force and power of my friend, the member for York, who has persistently advocated a proper inquiry into the route of this one special line, I know not. Nevertheless, it is a step in the right direction. Let us have the inquiry—better still would it be if leave were asked to make it a joint select committee with the one already appointed in another place. Now, a few words with regard to the Wongan Hills-Mullewa line. Here I am bound to say I shall welcome a further inquiry. I want to put it clearly to the Chamber, as I have on other occasions, in regard to this line, that the promise of the previous Administration was, that in order to meet the interests of the settlers who live to the west of the Wongan Hills, as soon as we could get away from the present terminus, and clear the spur of hills which runs out in a more or less easterly or north-easterly direction from the main range, we would draw in and run up towards the northern gap, and thence proceed almost due north on a direct line. This, hon. members will remember, was due to a forcible debate, or debates I should say, in connection with the proposed construction of this line, when members on both sides of the House, and notably my hon. friend, the member for Murray-Wellington, advocated the con-

struction of the line on the west side of the hills altogether.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): He was then a member of the third party on the cross benches.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: He urged the construction of this line to the west of the Wongan Hills altogether. It was decided that the line should go on the east side of the hills. I am satisfied that is the proper route to take. I am not altogether satisfied, however, that the line should be slewed out into practically a semi-circle away from the hills before it proceeds on its northerly route. However, I am not going to dispute the attitude of the Minister for Works. He says he instructed the inspecting engineer for surveys to inquire personally into the matter, and that he is now acting on the recommendation of that officer. However, I am satisfied that, like myself, he will be pleased that a select committee is to report on this proposed deviation also. If it be found in the interests of the settlers to the east, which I doubt to some extent, that the line should be slewed out so far from the Wongan Hills, then let it be constructed according to the decision arrived at. My idea is that the line cannot serve those settlers who lie so far away to the east, some of them thirty or forty miles distant, and that they must eventually be served by a spur line to tap the country, or if not a spur line, at any rate a line to pass through that territory and curve down to couple up with the eastern railway system. I congratulate the Minister on his *volte-face* in regard to this matter, on the point that at last he agrees that an independent inquiry should be made into the deviation which he has himself already decided upon, and I only hope that when he gets the report of the select committee—not that I maintain that two such bodies are required—he will be prepared to act upon them.

Mr. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret): I have listened closely to the debate, but I have failed to find any argument to justify the appointment of a select committee of this Chamber at this juncture. Something must have happened since the 21st of last December, when the member

for York moved a similar motion. The motion moved by the member for York did not embrace the Wongan Hills-Mullewa line. It was a distinct motion dealing with the Wickiepin-Merredin railway. The whole of the arguments advanced by the member for Subiaco in moving this motion, and in endeavouring to convince hon. members of the necessity of carrying the motion, were in favour of inquiring into the route of the Wickiepin-Merredin line. He pointed out that there was little or nothing ever said about the other line, and, admittedly, he addressed himself to the more serious subject of the two. We have already one branch of the Legislature dealing with this question as a select committee of members chosen from that House, and I think those hon. gentlemen should be well capable of dealing with the subject. If this Chamber is satisfied that they are not capable of dealing with it, the reasons for the belief in that incapacity must be largely based upon their political views. If that be so, I am confident that there is at least one hon. gentleman on that committee who will voice the views of this side of the House. The personnel of that committee is known to this Chamber and I think I will be in order in giving it. The members of that committee are Hon. C. A. Piesse, Hon. R. G. Ardagh, Hon. V. Hammersley, Hon. C. Sommers, and Hon. H. P. Colebatch, the mover for the select committee. Now why should this Chamber duplicate that work unless, indeed, there is a desire on the part of members of this side of the House to appoint a select committee at this stage as a counter-blast against the committee already in existence? I can thoroughly understand my friends opposite desiring a select committee on this question, because they desired it last December, and in my opinion there was a justification for it at that time. The route had not then been decided upon, but the Minister for Works with the concurrence of Cabinet has now decided upon the route which the line is to follow, and I venture to submit that the report of a select committee will not alter the hon. member's view in that regard. What will be the nature of the report of the select committee other than to show whether

the Minister has been right or wrong in his judgment? I am not going to enter into any personal elements in connection with this question, but I want to know where is the justification for duplicating the work and for incurring additional expenditure unless we are satisfied that the select committee appointed by another branch of the Legislature are incapable of faithfully dealing with the question, and truly reporting to their own Chamber? The Minister for Works opposed this very motion last December, and the voting is in *Hansard*. The Minister was solidly supported by his party, while the member for York was solidly supported by the party sitting on his side of the House. The numbers were twelve in favour of the select committee, and twenty-five against. Now I say that there should have been a select committee appointed then if there is any justification for one now. This for two reasons. In the first place the member for York believed an injustice was being done to a certain section of his electors, and he thought that at that stage a select committee might prevent that injustice being carried out; because had the select committee been appointed before the work commenced and before the Government had decided definitely on the route, the Government must have been influenced by the report of that select committee. But now the route has been decided upon, and I would ask are we satisfied or convinced by the statements of the Minister for Works to-night that if the report of the select committee to be appointed by this Chamber, and of the select committee now sitting and investigating this very proposition, be adverse to the route decided upon, will he alter it? That is the point. I have not heard from the Minister that he will do so, and I want to know why this select committee has been decided upon after the matter has been thrashed out in Cabinet and resolved upon. We find the member for Subiaco, a supporter of this side of the House, moving for something which the hon. member and the Ministers on the Treasury benches objected to last December.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: You objected to it also.

Mr. TAYLOR: I took no part at all in the discussion last December, nor did I record my vote, because I believed there was a justification for an inquiry at that stage. And when I believe there is justification for an inquiry and a possible doubt about people getting justice, I am not, for party reasons, going to object to the subject being investigated.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: You said the other night that you always voted for party.

Mr. TAYLOR: Yes, when a matter affects the party; but when the party is whipped on non-party lines, I am not going to support it. When my party are supporting their principles, whether they are doing it correctly or not, and it is legitimately a party question, then I support it.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: They were in a pinch.

Mr. TAYLOR: When the hon. member lifts them out of a pinch as often as I have done, he may be justified in speaking of it.

Mr. Thomas: How many holes have you got them out of?

Mr. TAYLOR: I am not going to say how often I have got them out of a hole. I find them to-night in the somewhat awkward position of asking for a select committee which they refused last December, when there was a possible chance of the select committee doing something in the interest of seeing that justice was done to the whole of that section of the community before a decision was arrived at by Cabinet.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What is the reason for having a select committee now?

Mr. TAYLOR: I want to know why the Government want a select committee now? It is indeed a victory for my opponents to know that my colleagues have to give them now what they refused them last year. I hope that before a vote is taken a Minister who understands the position and who knows why a select committee is desired, will give reasons for duplicating the work now proceeding, and state what the justification is for appointing a committee now when the Government claimed there was no justification for it last year.

Mr. BROUN (Beverley): I regret that there has been so much controversy in regard to the route of this Wickopin-Merredin railway, and although a great portion of it passes through my electorate, I have refrained from saying anything in this House because my knowledge of the district and of the Act authorising the railway was not as great as that of the leader of the Opposition and the member for York. They have been acquainted with the position from the beginning, and therefore I thought they were quite capable of doing their best in the interests of the settlers in that district. But I cannot refrain from saying a few words tonight in regard to the position the Minister for Works has taken up in carrying the line along the route shown on the plan in this Chamber. When I accompanied the Minister and other members through that district, we journeyed through the best country, and the trip gave Mr. Johnson a very good knowledge of what the country could produce. After hearing the appeals of the different deputations from the settlers, I thought he could not have done otherwise than construct the line on either of the two surveyed routes, either the one in the schedule of the Act or No. 3 marked in yellow. The Minister said that he was constructing the railway so as to serve the whole of the people and bring them as nearly as possible within the 12½-mile radius. The radius taken from these lines is as the crow flies, and we have only to glance at the map and notice the distance between the Brookton-Kunjian and Quairading-Nunajin lines to find that a number of settlers on the west side of Wogerlin will be distant at least 15 miles from the railway as the crow flies. Therefore, I consider that the railway should have been constructed according to the schedule of the Act, and if that had been done it would not have been difficult for the Minister to have built the Brookton-Corrigin line five or six miles further north. That would have Wogerlin within the 12½ mile radius. There is another point I would like to emphasise in regard to this. When these settlers in the Kurrenkutten area took up land in that district, they selected

according to a plan, shown in Cathedral-avenue I believe, showing the railway passing through that area, and in taking up that land they had to pay a greater price than they otherwise would have done if they had known that the railway was not going to follow that route. Therefore, I consider those settlers have a god claim against the Government to have the railway taken to the district of Kurrenkutten according to the promise made by the previous Government.

Mr. Green: Why?

Mr. BROUN: Because when a settler sees a railway marked on a Government plan, he naturally expects that the promise of the Government will be carried out. If the promise is not performed, the least he would expect from the Government is that the value put on that land should be reduced to a certain extent.

Mr. Green: The Esperance settlers have had a plan for about ten years; what about them?

Mr. BROUN: If the line is going on the direct route the Minister should give consideration to those Kurrenkutten settlers. With regard to those in the Enu Hill, Wadderin, and Mount Arrowsmith districts, I have received a number of complaints from the settlers about not being given railway facilities, and through me they are urging upon the Minister for Works to have the Yillimining-Kondinin line extended as soon as possible; they have even suggested that the line should be commenced from Nunajin. They think that if that is done they would be served much more speedily and would be more satisfied, but as it is, these settlers will have to wait about two years for railway communication, and will have to cart 25 and 30 miles before the Yillimining-Kondinin line is extended to the goldfields railway. The least that can be done now in my opinion, is for this House to appoint a select committee. We will expect good results from it, and I hope that the expectations will not end in disappointment when the two select committees have sent in their reports.

Mr. S. STUBBS (Wagin): I am rising to support the appointment of this

select committee, not because I am at all interested in the route beyond desiring to see justice done to every section of the persons who live along the proposed route. But my chief reason for rising is that the Minister for Works stated distinctly that political influence compelled the previous Government to alter the route on several occasions, and I think a grave charge like that warrants further inquiry. I think, and I hope it will be proved, that the Minister was wrong in making that statement, and I sincerely trust that the committee will investigate everything in connection with that railway from beginning to end.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): The same thing has been said in regard to this side.

Mr. S. STUBBS: It is a great pity for the honour of this House that political charges are made by either side in connection with matters that should be above political influence. It seems to me that Parliament is being dragged in the dust by the innuendoes and charges that are being made.

The Premier: You are always talking on that side of the House about purity and about the Government being controlled by an outside body.

Mr. S. STUBBS: No one has ever heard me make charges such as I have heard made in this Chamber. The debates could be carried on without hints that political influence has been brought to bear in the manner that such hints have been thrown about from the Government side.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Did you never hear them in the other Chamber?

Mr. S. STUBBS: No.

Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Well, there have been plenty of them.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Two wrongs do not make a right. We have appointed a committee and I take it the majority of members appointed to it will be from gentlemen on the Ministerial side of the House. Let us suppose, for the sake of argument, that the committee appointed by this House bring in a report different

from that submitted by the select committee in another place.

The Premier: What grounds have you for making that statement?

Mr. S. STUBBS: I am only stating a supposititious case. What then will happen to the line? Will the Government continue with the Minister's route?

The Premier: Absolutely, until this House turns us out.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Notwithstanding that an adverse report may come from the committees appointed by this House and another place?

The Premier: We are satisfied as to the reports.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Well, then, it is merely wasting time and money to have this inquiry at all. I think it is a great pity that the Premier admits now that, no matter what the report may be, he is going to adhere to that route. It is nonsensical and farcical to have the committee appointed.

The Premier: That has not been the object of the committee in another place.

Mr. S. STUBBS: I have no idea of the reasons that actuated the appointment in another place.

The Premier: Certain charges were made against the Government.

Mr. S. STUBBS: Then this move to-night is to counteract them?

The Premier: The same charges have been made here to-night.

Mr. Taylor: They made those charges in December last.

The Premier: They could not have been made last year; the route was not altered then.

Mr. S. STUBBS: To come back to the Premier's statement that it does not matter what the deliberations of the committee may be, the Government are going on with the route they have adopted, I for one should not care to go on that committee and waste my time if no notice is to be taken of the report. That is a phase of the question that actuated me in rising, and I also desired to say that it was not nice of the Minister for Works to assert that political influence had been brought to bear on the previous Government to have so many surveys made. I

hope that the Premier will not persist in the action he proposes, namely, that he will construct the line along the route adopted, even if the committee's report is adverse. I am sorry that he is going to take up that attitude.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): It is very amusing to hear the hon. member rise with that innocent remark about accusations being thrown from this side of the Chamber, when repeatedly personal attacks have been made upon members on the Government side.

Mr. S. Stubbs: You have never heard me make them.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): Accusations have been thrown out repeatedly in regard to these two railways. In the first place the accusation has been made that the Wongan Hills-Mullewa deviation was made for the express purpose of serving some political supporter of this side of the House. It has been said in another place. I want to say here that the alteration was made entirely on the report of a departmental officer, a man who was sent out for the express purpose of inspecting the land and seeing that the people had justice done to them; and on his report, and on his report only, was the deviation made. So far as I am personally concerned, as the Minister for Works stated just now, in recommending that officer's report to be adopted I did not know of one person who had land on the eastern side of the Wongan Hills-Mullewa railway. It was an officer we all had confidence in, Mr. John Muir, the Inspector of Engineering Surveys.

Mr. Monger: I accept him.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): If anything is wrong in regard to the deviation proposed to be made it rests on the shoulders of a departmental officer who should give an unbiassed and reliable report. In regard to the other insinuation, has it not been thrown out repeatedly throughout the State on every conceivable occasion that the Wickepin-Merredin railway route has been altered for the express purpose of serving land held by the Minister for Works?

Mr. Monger: No.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): I say it has, and the member for York has been one who has done it repeatedly.

Mr. Monger: I have never made any such insinuation that the line was deviated for the interests of any Minister.

Mr. SPEAKER: I would like to point out that it is not permissible to interrupt a member speaking. Explanations must be made after the member who is speaking has resumed his seat.

Mr. Monger: May I have five minutes after he has spoken?

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member may have that.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): If I have said anything the member for York can take exception to I withdraw it, but the general public have been given to understand that the alteration has been made for the express purpose of serving land owned by the Minister for Works, when those who make these insinuations know well that, no matter where the railway goes, whether it is the line surveyed by the late Government or the line surveyed under instructions from the present Government, it will make no difference whatever so far as the land of the Minister for Works is concerned.

Mr. Monger: So far as I am concerned, may I refer the hon. member to my remarks when speaking on the Address-in-reply?

Mr. SPEAKER: I hope the member for York will not again interrupt the member for East Fremantle. He may make any personal explanation when the hon. member has resumed his seat.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): My reason for rising is to point out that insinuations have been thrown out repeatedly in regard to these two deviations; and, seeing that is so, I think any hon. member is quite justified, when the honour of those whom he puts trust in for the time being to administer the affairs of the State is at stake, in seeing, if he is supporting the party, whether the insinuations are true or otherwise; and if they are true it is his duty to take such action as will remove those persons from their responsible offices. It is stated that

refusal was made in December last to the member for York for a select committee. Things have been altered entirely since then. The very line they were objecting to was not in existence; the survey was not made; it is an entirely different survey now; as a matter of fact, it is almost impossible to know what was the survey at that time; if anyone looks at the map he will see the number of surveys made. Seeing that is so, how is it possible to say that the select committee asked for to-night is to deal with the very question that the member for York asked for a select committee concerning in December last?

Mr. George: What is the select committee for?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): It is to see that the railway is to be constructed in the best interests of the people of the State.

Mr. Monger: Hear, hear; hear, hear.

Mr. George: You are the first man who has said it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): It is to go further and see that those who have taken part in the alteration of the route have taken no action with any ulterior motive, and to see that what has been done has been in the best interests of the State and the settlers on the land. I maintain the member for Subiaco is quite justified in moving the motion, and I am pleased indeed members opposite are willing to give it their support.

Mr. ALLEN (West Perth): The Premier made an interjection when the member for Wagin was speaking that no matter what the report of the select committee might be the Government intended to pursue a certain action. I want to give an intelligent vote on the question. If that is the intention of the Government I fail to see the need for a committee.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan): Not by way of interjection, but by a deliberate statement I again desire—

Mr. SPEAKER: Is the hon. member rising to speak?

The PREMIER: Yes, to address myself to the House. I want to say that whatever may be the result of the select committee the Government are taking the

responsibility of their action in straightening up this line and building on the route as shown on the plan in the Chamber. If members of the Chamber are not satisfied with that action then they can take any step that is necessary, but the Government are not going to be controlled by the decision of a select committee on matters of this kind when they have made all inquiries.

Mr. Monger: I say you are absolutely incorrect there.

The PREMIER: The hon. member might content himself for a moment if it is possible. We have made inquiries and have had advice from our departmental officers, and we are satisfied that the action we have taken is the correct one, and, as a Government, we are satisfied to take the responsibility.

Mr. Allen: Then why have a select committee?

The PREMIER: Will the hon. member ask those supporting his party in another place the necessity for a select committee? But I will answer his question. Certain charges have been made. The member for York, though he may deny it, said on the Address-in-reply that it must not be forgotten the Minister for Works had land on this railway.

Mr. Monger: Yes, and I repeat it.

The PREMIER: Yet the hon. member admitted just now that he never meant that the Minister had that in mind when he came to a decision on this route. The insinuation implied by the hon. member was that the Minister was led to come to the conclusion to straighten up the line because it would serve his personal interests. These statements have not only been made here, but have been made in another place, and in the country, and at Liberal Club meetings and Liberal rallies, and other places. There have been accusations against the Government; and the member for Subiaco is as much concerned about the decision arrived at by the Government as are members of the Cabinet, and has a right to satisfy himself that he is supporting a Government that is acting honestly. The accusations that have been made by members opposite are to the effect that we have not acted honestly and uprightly in this matter.

Mr. Monger: I say you have not.

Mr. SPEAKER: I will ask the hon. member to behave himself and refrain from frequent interjections.

The Minister for Lands: Is the member for York in order in saying that the Government have not acted honestly?

Mr. SPEAKER: I did not hear the hon. member for York say that.

Mr. Monger: If I did, I withdraw it.

The PREMIER: The question that we have to consider is whether it is necessary, in the interests of the Government which the member for Subiaco supports, to allow these charges to go unchallenged. I consider that a select committee from this Chamber, which is a party House and which does not deny that it is a party House, can have members from both sides of the House on a select committee that can get all the evidence required and submit a report. Another place has called for a select committee, but it claims it is not a party House, though it is rather remarkable that on the Address-in-reply four of the five members of their select committee voted for the amendment to the Address-in-reply, which amendment was a direct vote of want of confidence in the Government. Having that in mind, and having in mind also the contention of the leader of the Opposition that there was a probability of the two select committees arriving at different decisions, which we were pleased to hear from that gentleman—

Hon. Frank Wilson: Is there not a possibility?

The PREMIER: The hon. member did not say it in that way.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I did not say there was a "probability."

The PREMIER: The hon. member used the word "probability."

Hon. Frank Wilson: I did not.

The PREMIER: The hon. member has apparently been conferring with the gentlemen of another place.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You know that is not correct.

The PREMIER: I said what is correct. I interjected, "How did the hon. member know it was probable?"

Hon. Frank Wilson: I did not say it was "probable."

The PREMIER: In these circumstances then the hon. member is asserting that either this select committee, or the committee appointed by another place, is not going to give an honest decision.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Nothing of the sort.

The PREMIER: The hon. member distinctly stated in his remarks that they would both call the same evidence, yet he says there is a probability of each committee arriving at a different decision. What does that mean except that on the evidence which the two committees have alike the committee will come to an honest decision and the other committee to a dishonest decision.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You can get two juries to come to opposite decisions.

The PREMIER: Very often it all depends on what side of politics you are on.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You should be ashamed of yourself.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. Frank Wilson: Well, there is a lot of provocation; the Premier ought to be ashamed of himself.

The PREMIER: The hon. member seems hurt; I do not know why; I did not say anything reflecting on the hon. member.

Mr. George: You said it was a question of politics with a jury.

The PREMIER: The hon. member also seems hurt.

Mr. George: I would say something stronger than what the ex-Premier said.

The PREMIER: You can say anything you like.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. George: The hon. member ought to be ashamed of himself.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. George: Very well, Mr. Speaker, but I have my feelings all the same.

The PREMIER: Hon. members will get on a pedestal. Let me again repeat that the Government are responsible for their actions. They have arrived at a definite decision in connection with the route of this railway between Wickiepin and Merredin, and they are responsible to Parliament for their actions, and the select committee, if I understand the member for

Subiaco correctly, is to satisfy the House whether the Government have acted dishonestly, as has been asserted against them by innuendoes, or whether they have acted in the interests of the country.

Mr. S. Stubbs: Would not the other select committee have given an honest report?

The PREMIER: I am not denying it.

The Minister for Lands: I have very considerable doubts myself.

The PREMIER: Notwithstanding the statement made by the leader of the Opposition, this Chamber is directly responsible to the people for undertaking works and finding the money, and is essentially responsible in that direction, and members should satisfy themselves without any other Chamber. This House is directly responsible and essentially responsible to the people for the works we undertake in their name, and that being the case we have no right to be satisfied because a select committee is appointed in another place if accusations of dishonesty are charged against the Government. The Government consists of six principal Ministers, five of whom sit in this House, and are responsible through this Chamber to the people. Every member of the Chamber who wants to uphold the dignity of the Government of the country has a right, when these charges are made, to see them proved or disproved. That being the case no member, even sitting in Opposition, could object to the select committee moved by the member for Subiaco.

Mr. Monger: Answer those questions of mine.

The PREMIER: The hon. member knows this is not the time for submitting questions or answering them. I have answered several questions asked by the hon. member, and apparently given complete satisfaction, and that being the case, why does he press for further information? I believe that neither select committee, from the standpoint of the cost to the country, is warranted, that is from the standpoint of a Cabinet Minister, but I want to ask members if they are satisfied. If there is an hon. member who is not satisfied, and who feels in his heart that we have acted unfairly or dishonestly, as some have

stated, it is his duty to assist the House in appointing the select committee, and I am perfectly satisfied the decision will be arrived at that we have acted with only one object in view. Let me now come to the question of the Wongan Hills-Mullewa deviation. The line, as proposed by the previous Government, was to be taken in a westerly direction immediately after Wongan Hills had been passed, and would eventually have run a distance of 35 miles from the existing Midland railway line. Taking 12½ miles as the limit a settler should be from railway communication, as the crow flies, that would leave a space of 10 miles that would not be served. Will Parliament be prepared to find a huge sum of money to expend on the Bolgart railway, only to serve five miles on the other side?

Mr. S. Stubbs: No.

The PREMIER: We look at it from the point of view of taking it out to a certain district that would be left permanently without railway communication, leaving space for the extension of the Bolgart line in order to bring settlers within 12½ miles of railway communication. Let me point out that the Merredin-Dowerin line has been so altered that there are no less than two places where people will be 18 miles away from it as the crow flies, and I do not see any possibility of them being served. There may come a time, after Parliament has served all the other districts, when it may turn its attention to those who have been overlooked, but that time, I am afraid, is a long way ahead and we want to avoid repeating a blunder of that kind. Let hon. members look at the map which hangs on the wall of the Chamber and take two points into consideration. The first is that the Wickepin-Merredin line is to be a trunk railway which will take produce from the Great Southern line to the Eastern Goldfields, and consequently by straightening it up it will go further eastward and serve a district that would not otherwise have been served. It must be remembered that every ton of produce carried over a railway has to be paid for at per mile, and we do not want to build a railway that is going to leave settlers un-

served and provide for the carrying of produce a greater distance than is necessary. May I point out that the same thing arises in connection with a proposition that the member for Toodyay knows of well. I hold the opinion that we can serve the district and at the same time shorten the railway considerably and so save any amount of haulage to the settler by giving him a more direct route to the market. We are also providing for 60lb. rails on that line. Why? Because this Parliament and the previous Parliament decided that it was going to be a trunk line and as such the route should be made as direct as possible, keeping in view the serving of the settlers.

Mr. Monger: I think the member for Cue said it was a terrible mistake to use 60lb. rails.

The PREMIER: The Government are of a different opinion. In view of the facts I have stated, and in view also of the promise made to those people who are further east of railway facilities, I do not think that any member can complain. Naturally enough, some of those who will be some little distance from the railway and who would have been closer had the line been constructed as shown in the original plan, would naturally complain, but what about the poor beggar of a settler living 17 or 18 miles from the railway and who is brought nearer? It is impossible to bring every man's back door to the railway line, and if we are going to bring every settler within 12½ miles, I think we have done our duty to the settler and to the country as well. On each occasion that a deputation has waited upon me, I have told them definitely that we are not a bit concerned about the starting or the finishing point, or what town it will serve; the only thing we are concerned about is the bringing of the people who are producing the wealth of the country at least 12½ miles from railway communication, and we propose to continue that policy until Parliament otherwise directs.

Mr. S. Stubbs: That is a good policy.

The PREMIER: That is the reason why the Government came to this conclusion, and we believe that it is fair to

the country that they should know the true position, and the Select Committee from this House can best throw light on that position.

Mr. GEORGE (Murray-Wellington): I have listened to nearly all the speeches which have been delivered this evening and I have only lately found out the real reason for the motion. The member for Subiaco, in submitting the motion, really gave no reasons why the committee should be appointed, but the motive has been supplied by the Premier, who has practically told the House that the select committee is desired to take upon itself whitewashing functions. Certain charges have been made presumably against his Government and have been scattered broadcast through the country, and the Premier desires that these charges should be investigated and either proved or disproved. If that is the reason why this motion has been put forward, why not have instituted a Royal Commission, and let the thing be gone into thoroughly? I know the silly statements that have been made in regard to the land held by the Minister for Works. It has been stated that this route was decided upon because it will best serve the Minister's land; but the Minister for Works himself has told me that whichever way the line went it would serve his land equally well, and I am quite prepared to accept his statement. Another similar rumour is that the deviation has been decided upon out of private spleen on the part of Ministers against a certain gentleman who owns large interests in the district. But all this furnishes no reason why the time of the House should be taken up, as it has been this evening, with a motion to appoint a select committee to enquire into the deviation of the line. What the Premier desires is that the deviation or the non-deviation of Ministers from the strict line of political honesty should be proved.

The Premier: I said if the Chamber desires it.

Mr. GEORGE: Exactly, but why not have put it in a form which the House would understand at once? We are asked to appoint a select committee, and from

the speeches made I gather that this is regarded as a sort of counter move against the select committee appointed by another Chamber.

Mr. Underwood: By an interested party.

Mr. GEORGE: I do not care. Surely members have a right to their own opinion, no matter on which side of the House they sit. I think the Premier will be sorry he let fall that unfortunate remark about juries, to the effect that their verdict might depend upon their politics. We know he never meant anything of the sort, but at the same time it hurts, whether hurled at this side or at the other. I am further concerned in this matter with the statement made by the Premier that the Government have gone into this question thoroughly, have taken evidence and arrived at a decision; and if I understand the Premier aright, even if a select committee appointed by this House were to bring in a finding against the route decided upon by the Government, the Government intend to go on with it, so long as they can get the support of members sitting on their side. If this is the attitude taken up by the Government, why should we waste time in debating these matters at all? Surely politics have not got down so low that, because of a temporary majority, we are to be told by the leader of that majority that the minority are not to be regarded. Who so loud as the hon. member in declaring for the rights of the minority when he sat in Opposition? I hope the Premier will take counsel with himself, and will regret that he has practically told the House that he intends to go on his way, no matter what the result may be. I can quite understand the Minister saying that the reason why they desire a select committee which was refused in December last, is to be found in the altered circumstances. No one could charge him with inconsistency on that score. We know that with the passing of time come developments which may furnish good reasons for an alteration. The Premier tells us that no matter whether or not the committee endorse the action of the Government, it is intended to go on with the course they are pursuing. I

say it is a travesty, it is an absolute intrusion upon the rights of the people of the State that any Government should determine that, regardless of the opinion of a body of men who will have made a thorough and impartial inquiry, they shall pursue the course previously adopted.

Mr. Monger: It proves them the curs and cowards I have called them.

Mr. A. A. Wilson: I ask that the hon. member withdraw the words "curs and cowards."

Mr. SPEAKER: Did the member for York use those words?

The Minister for Lands: Yes, he did.

Mr. Monger: If I did, I withdraw them.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Are we not entitled to an apology for an insult of that kind?

Mr. GEORGE: The leader of the Opposition made a remark in reference to what would happen in case of different conclusions being arrived at by the select committees appointed respectively by this Chamber and the other. The leader of the Opposition says he used the word "possibility," and I think the Premier can accept that. There is a possibility of differences of conclusion being arrived at even on the same evidence put before different persons.

Mr. S. Stibbs: And honestly, too.

Mr. GEORGE: Yes, every member knows that if an accident occurs in the street it is almost impossible to get two eye witnesses to agree upon the details. One from his position sees the thing on one side, and the other from quite a different point of view. You could take five men out of this Chamber, and subsequently select another five, and give both committees the same opportunity of getting evidence from the same witnesses, sitting separately, and the conclusions arrived at would show some difference. In the main the conclusions might be the same, but in details there would be a difference. The Premier was asked to state what would happen in the event of different conclusions being arrived at, and I hold that as Premier he should answer that question. Assuming the two committees sit and bring in different conclusions what are the Government to do?

Mr. Underwood: Follow the conclusion of the committee of this House.

Mr. GEORGE: That, of course, would be following out logically and consistently the policy which belongs to that side, namely, that only one Chamber should exist. But so long as the second Chamber does exist, I maintain that neither the Government nor anyone else should withhold respect from its decisions. When the Premier tells us that no matter whether even the committee of this House bring in a conclusion adverse to the Government, it is intended to take no notice of it, we come back to the question asked by the member for Mount Margaret, when he said, "What is the use of the loss of time and expense in dealing with this?" Then we come back to what was said by the member for Mount Margaret—what is the use of putting the country to the loss of time and great expense that these committees will involve? If the Government are so very sensitive about these irresponsible statements concerning Mr. Hedges and Mr. Johnson—they may be honestly believed by the man who makes them, but in many cases they have no foundation—if the Government are really honestly disturbed by any of these things, which are only a few of the many they will experience before they are finished, why do they not ask for a Royal Commission?

The Premier: We are not a bit disturbed.

Mr. GEORGE: Well, why make such a fuss?

The Premier: We are not making a fuss.

Mr. GEORGE: The Premier made enough fuss for half a dozen. I am quite prepared to vote for the select committee, but as the motion is now worded I cannot see what the committee are going to do. They are to inquire into the deviation of the Wongan Hills railway, and also the Wickepin-Merredin railway, and if they do the work thoroughly they will not finish before this session ends, and perhaps not before the next session begins. To go into the matter thoroughly they will have to investigate from one end of the line to the other. They should

interview nearly every settler along that route and be satisfied that those settlers are being properly attended to, and are not being robbed. And for hon. members to say in an airy sort of way that the inquiry is only a matter of a few days—why, no Parliamentary words I can use would describe such a statement. To go thoroughly into the ins and outs of the building of that railway is a matter for experts, not for members of Parliament.

The Premier: That is not the point of the motion.

Mr. GEORGE: I have been trying to ascertain the point. The point I have learned from the Premier is that he wants a whitewashing committee. The member for Subiaco said he wanted a select committee, but he did not tell us on what grounds, whilst the member for Mount Margaret said that there was no necessity for duplicating expense.

The Premier: I am not looking for a halo anyhow. I will get one from your head.

Mr. GEORGE: The hon. member's head is far better prepared for a halo than mine. Halos are generally around the heads of bald men. I do not think it is necessary to say any more on the motion.

Question put and passed.

Ballot taken and a select committee appointed consisting of Messrs. E. B. Johnston, F. Monger, A. N. Piesse, R. H. Underwood, and the mover (Mr. B. J. Stubbs), with the usual powers, also with power to move from place to place: to report on the 20th August.

BILL—SUPPLY (TEMPORARY ADVANCES), £150,254.

Returned from the Legislative Council without amendment.

House adjourned at 11.8 p.m.