

to place before the Committee, nor was it brought forward in a flimsy way. It was brought forward because those who were experts, and who would have to administer the measure had, after mature deliberation, come to the conclusion that the scheme would be a benefit, not only to the consumer but to the worker and to the employer. Every change created inconvenience though ultimately good followed. He objected to the imputation that this had been brought forward in an inadequate manner simply because he had told the Committee on what he was relying.

Mr. ALLEN: While the Minister stated that he had expert evidence, he (Mr. Allen) had expert evidence as well. The evidence he had given was on the authority of representative firms such as Albany Bell, who spoke for the pastry-cooks generally, and who said it would be absolutely impossible to work under this scheme. He did not know whether any of those gentlemen were among the experts who had advised the Minister's officers, but if so it was rather peculiar that they should see members of this Chamber and make statements of that sort.

Mr. Carpenter: Does he say why?

Mr. ALLEN: That gentleman said the public would not buy stale pastry.

Mr. Carpenter: They will not have to buy stale pastry.

Mr. ALLEN: If it was desired to supply a party or a picnic on Monday how could it be otherwise? He believed those in the trade were making an effort to wait on the Minister to express their views to him. He would like to know if the Minister's experts had seen these gentlemen who stated that the conditions would be impossible.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Those pastry cooks who now found themselves confronted by a possible change were bound to say it would irritate. He had no objection to hearing their views so that justice might be done by this legislation and to give them an opportunity to approach him he asked that progress be reported.

Progress reported.

## ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills:—

- 1, Supply (No. 3), £687,770.
- 2, Perth Improvement.

*House adjourned at 11.13 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

*Wednesday, 3rd December, 1913.*

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

## PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: Health Act, 1911—By-law No. 30 and amendment of By-law No. 17 of the Municipality of Boulder.

## SITTING DAYS AND HOURS, ADDITIONAL.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew) moved—

*That for the remainder of the session the Council do meet for the despatch of business at three in the afternoon on all sitting days, and that, commencing with Friday, the 5th instant, the Council do sit on Fridays in addition to the days already ordered.*

If Parliament was to close down before Christmas it would be necessary for hon. members to sit longer hours and sit on

a day extra each week. By sitting early and late four days in the week we would be able to get through the business in good time, and also pay proper attention to the Bills coming up for consideration. It would be necessary now to sit on Thursday nights and also on Friday. Another place had extended their hours of sitting from 3.30 p.m. onwards, and in addition to that had suspended their Standing Orders so that now Bills were rushed through in one day in some instances and came straight on to the Legislative Council.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: When do you anticipate proroging?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: About Christmas week.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN (South-East): Would the hon. the Colonial Secretary leave out Friday for the present? There did not appear to be any reasonable grounds for asking this House to sit on Fridays. This House could do in one sitting as much as another place could do in four. No doubt hon. members would strain a point to meet at three o'clock, although if the Government properly managed their business there would be no need for this.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Would you be willing to meet next week on Friday?

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: Not unless it was absolutely necessary.

The Colonial Secretary: It will be absolutely necessary.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: It was desirable that Parliament should be filled by patriotic men who were showing their patriotism by following an avocation in life. We did not want professional politicians in this House, and most members had their business to attend to. Why should this House be kept dilly-dallying waiting for another place until nearly the end of the session, and then for hon. members to be asked to neglect all their proper business outside and give four days a week, and all day, to the business of this House? Would the Colonial Secretary not leave out Friday for the present, and if it was absolutely necessary later on, say the last Friday of the session, or the last two, an alteration could be made? He for one was prepared to sit as early as the Minis-

ter liked, but to sit late on Thursday nights was very inconvenient as it blocked the regular business of hon. members, which had to be attended to.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH (East): In view of the fact that country members had left their homes and businesses without knowing this motion was going to come on, would the Colonial Secretary be prepared to give an assurance that the House would not sit on Friday night, so that members could catch their afternoon trains? With the assurance that this Friday night would be treated in the same way as Thursday nights had in the past, he would be prepared to support the motion.

Hon. R. D. McKENZIE (North-East): It would be very inconvenient if hon. members could not catch at least the Friday night train to the goldfields, and consequently it was to be hoped the Minister would fall in with Mr. Colebatch's suggestion.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (in reply): It was not in accordance with his liking to sit on Friday at all, or to commence the sittings of the House at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, but it was absolutely necessary. So far as this week was concerned, he would be quite prepared to give the assurance that the House would not sit on Friday night, and if he found it was not necessary to sit at all on Friday he would be prepared to adjourn the House on Thursday night.

Question put and passed.

#### BILL—PEARLING ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Assembly.

#### PAPERS—HARVEY IRRIGATION WORKS.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH (East) moved—

*That there be laid on the Table of the House plans and specifications of the proposed Harvey Irrigation Works Scheme, together with estimates of cost*

*of completed scheme and cost of works constructed up to date.*

No doubt all these were readily available and it was not necessary for him to say anything in support of the motion.

Question put and passed.

## BILL—ESPERANCE NORTHWARDS RAILWAY.

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. R. G. ARDAGH (North-East) : I think this is the fourth Bill which has been introduced for the purpose of deciding upon railway communication for the Esperance district. At any rate it is the second occasion on which a measure has come before this Chamber since I have had the honour of being a member. This time the Bill is for the construction of a line from Esperance northwards a distance of about 60 miles into what is now known as, and has been proved to be, a good district for producing wheat, and where a large number of settlers have, from time to time, gone to live and make their homes, perfectly satisfied from their experience that the district is a good one for growing cereals. A very instructive speech was given here last evening by the hon. the leader of the House, and I do not feel disposed to weary hon. members by going at any great length myself into what is to me a very important question. The valuable information which the Minister gave to the House, information which he gained through his own personal observations when in the district, and also from important Government officials of Western Australia, is, I think, good evidence to show hon. members that the construction of these few miles of railway at any rate is absolutely justified. After the set back the settlers have received through the want of railway communication, and through the lack of other important means by which the district could be benefited, and the way they have stuck to their holdings and improved them in the hope that some time or another the Legislature would see its way

clear to grant them what they deserve and what has been proved they should get, namely, railway communication—

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM : Would it not have been better for them if they had gone somewhere where there was a railway ?

Hon. R. D. ARDAGH : Unfortunately many settlers in Western Australia have been sent out into districts where there is no railway and probably where the land is no better than the land in the Esperance district and where the rainfall probably is not so good. I think the people who have gone down to Esperance, many of whom have had farming experience in other parts of Australia, should receive this railway. The way these people have stuck to their holdings and improved them is a proof that the district warrants the construction of that line. They have proved to my mind and to the minds of others that the district is a good one for growing wheat of a good quality. This cannot be denied, because at the last Royal show they obtained the second prize for wheat produced in that area. It goes to show at any rate that the district is capable of producing wheat of a high quality, and no doubt they can grow plenty of it, too, if given reasonable facilities for getting their stuff to market. Other parts of the State have railway communication, so that the settlers in the respective districts can use their land for various purposes; why not, then, grant these people the same facilities, the same opportunities of getting their produce to market? Other farming districts inland also have railway communication, and I hope that I will have opportunities in future of supporting railways for still other portions of the State. My vote will always go to assist railway communication, because railways constitute one of the best assets the State can have. Railways mean encouragement to people to open up land in various portions of the State, and without railways they cannot make the headway they desire. The statement given to the House last night by the Colonial Secretary as to the quality of the land at Esperance, the rainfall, the

suitability of the ground for holding water—information backed up by reports of Government officials—should be sufficient evidence that this short railway is an absolute necessity. I hope hon. members will see their way clear on this occasion to pass the Bill. We have on numerous occasions been backed up by many of the leading newspapers of the State in this demand for a railway for Esperance. I am sure the opinions expressed by these journals must be widely known. In the *Sunday Times* of last Sunday I noticed an article in which some very important facts were brought to bear in the consideration of this railway. An hon. member says the paper has changed its views. Well, I hope some hon. members will change their views also, in regard to this question. At all events the *Sunday Times* is widely read and goes to all portions of the State, and consequently I am satisfied that when its readers have perused this article and those of other leading papers they will not be so parochial as to say that Esperance does not warrant a railway. The article in the *Sunday Times* reads as follows :—

In our opinion the Council ought to pass this Bill. It represents, as we said two weeks ago, a legitimate agricultural proposition. It will fetch transport facilities to over a hundred settlers. It will open up a vast tract of cultivable country. It will intersect a district the driest area of which is within the fifteen-inch rainfall belt. The suitability of the soil for wheat-growing is attested by the fact that a bag of wheat from Grass Patch took second prize at the Royal Show. A powerful argument in favour of the railway is the fact that its construction was recommended by a majority of the old advisory board. A strong point made by the Attorney General is that an excellent opinion of the land is held by Mr. Sutton. The Minister of Lands is authority for the statement that the Esperance-Grass Patch country has many features in common with the noted Pinnaroo district in South Australia. "The Pinnaroo district," says

Mr. Bath, "would never have been opened up had the attitude towards it been the same as that taken up in regard to the Esperance province. Districts which were formerly condemned are going to pull South Australia out of the mire and give it a decent cereal production even in a year of insufficient rainfall and adverse circumstances. We should act here as they have done in South Australia. We should raise above petty prejudices in a matter of this sort." It is seldom that the *Sunday Times* agrees with the Minister for Lands, but in this issue we are fighting on the same side. Without setting ourselves up as land experts we consider that a good case has been made out by the advocates of the railway.

The article continues—

The Council will not be justified in rejecting this railway. If it does it will lie open to the charge of being prompted by parochial prejudice, of being incurably biassed against Esperance, of refusing to listen to reason when it comes from the Labour Party, of pandering to sectional animosities and stifling the progress of the South, and it will be mighty difficult for the Council to clear itself in the eyes of people who take an impartial view of things.

This is clear evidence of what one section of the Press has to say in regard to the question of this railway. I am satisfied myself that the farming community are not opposed to the consideration of the line. I feel that the representatives of farming communities in this Chamber are no longer opposed to the Bill being passed. We have also the evidence given in the report of Mr. Middleton, who says—

I consider that one million acres or more of this mallee country is equal in value for the growth of cereals to the same area anywhere in the State.

Surely when hon. members have statements like this from so important an official as Mr. Middleton, they must, in all fairness, attach some weight to the evidence. I sincerely hope that in dealing with this question on this occasion they will take the reports of these important

officers into consideration. If these reports are not worth anything, why should these officers be retained to get out information of this description for the benefit of those who rule the country? We find also in the report prepared by Mr. O'Brien, who is a competent engineer, that the average rainfall in the district is fully 15 inches, and Mr. O'Brien goes on to say—

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

We have had statements from time to time that the ground is not suitable for conserving the water; yet we have from no less reliable an authority than Mr. O'Brien the statement that the district is a good one for holding water. I do not wish to take up any more time. I sincerely hope that hon. members will cast their votes for the Bill and that they will give this portion of the farming community of Western Australia the same opportunities for getting railway communication and for working their lands as have been given to other portions of the State. These farmers have struggled gamely and with very little assistance, with indeed practically no assistance from the Agricultural Bank, and I think this is a big factor in their favour. They have taken up the same position as did many of those sterling old settlers in the early days, and have not been spooned in any way; consequently I think they constitute a most desirable class of settlers and I hope that we will have many more such settled in other districts as well as in the Esperance district.

Hon. A. SANDERSON (Metropolitan-Suburban): It is 15 or 16 years since I visited Esperance, and we have on the Table of the House a photograph which looks 15 or 16 years old. I do not know whether it is a recent photograph or not.

The Colonial Secretary: It is intended to show the harbour.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I think I can say a good deal about the harbour, be-

cause on that occasion I came across from Adelaide to Esperance and the chart we sailed under was Captain Cook's. I noticed on the chart several little dots of ink and the captain told me they represented some of the rocks which he had spotted on his trips.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Are there any rocks anywhere else on the coast?

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Unfortunately there are; they represent one of the great natural disadvantages. But it is a very ungrateful task to depreciate any portion of Western Australia in order to defeat a proposition brought forward in this Chamber; in fact, so ungrateful that I do not propose to indulge in any depreciation of Esperance or that part of the country. It is certainly somewhat amusing to hear the goldfields men turned agriculturists. The hand is Esau's but the voice is Jacob's. Of course this is a goldfields business from start to finish.

Hon. C. A. Piesse: Not at all.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I will be glad to hear the hon. member and he will have the benefit of following me, so I will not have the right of reply. As far as the goldfields people are concerned I have no hesitation in saying that this agricultural mask is put forward with great cleverness, and it is certainly not put forward with sincerity. It was a goldfields affair in 1894, 1895, 1896, 1897, and 1898, and it is a goldfields affair to-day, and personally I regret that owing to the attitude of the country, practically as a whole, there is no chance of throwing this State open to private enterprise to develop it and build railways north, south, east, and west, for we certainly want them badly enough.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: If a railway is good for a private company it is good for the State.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: That interjection would take one rather far afield, but the position to be considered at the present time is the financial position. We have been sitting here for some six months dealing with the affairs of the country—the one important affair in this country at present is the financial posi-

tion—and we have been going on with our deliberations—one wishes to use mild language—practically without any regard for the financial position.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: You are the only man who has realised the situation.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I can hardly take that from the hon. member, the representative of millions, as he so frequently tells us, of foreign capital. As a struggling settler I have to look to the financial position, but as one who can look from the heights of Olympus on the struggling mortals of this country the hon. member cannot deal lightly, I should imagine, with the financial position.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: I said you were the only man who really realised the gravity of the position.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: It is childish to suppose that I can realise the financial position in the presence of my hon. friend.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom interjected.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I do not know whether the hon. member refers to himself, but I think he does. The financial position in connection with this proposition of the Esperance railways seems to be the key to the situation. We cannot carry out the development of this country on the lines I have suggested. If a Bill was brought forward by the Government to give a concession for the construction of a railway at someone else's expense I would be prepared to vote for it, but I am not prepared—

Hon. W. Kingsmill: That is probably what it is.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I cannot follow the hon. member's interjection. How can the leader of the House propose that in the present condition of affairs this country should be committed to the construction of this railway? If we commit ourselves to the construction of the railway, if we pass the Bill, we will delude more people to join the hundred settlers already there. These settlers who, I take it, are genuine settlers, quite ignorant of the operations on the goldfields, un-

sophisticated, honest settlers, who know nothing about goldfields tactics, are there, genuinely trying to develop their property. If we pass this Bill it will act as a magnet to draw more people to the district, and we will not be able to build this line.

Hon. J. Cornell: What about those who are there?

Hon. A. SANDERSON: My sympathy goes out to those people.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: We want the railway to go out to them.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The hon. member desires that the railway should be built. He has referred to it as an agricultural railway, and has talked on the rainfall and the crops, and the manures and the dams—

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: I talked of facts.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Yes—a mining representative masquerading as an agricultural representative.

Hon. R. D. McKenzie: Some of our best farmers came from the goldfields.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Yes, and my sympathies are with the hundred settlers who have been led to go out there, when there is mighty little chance of a railway being built, though I will not say of this Bill being passed, as I, for one, do not know how the figures are going. But sympathy is of little use when one is struggling in the desert. If these men have proved their bona fides it would not be too much to remove them to a better portion of the country. It would be cheaper, and it would be a more business-like bargain to settle them in—I will not say a more favoured portion of the country—but a more accessible portion of the country, and if we could get an account dealing with the two propositions, the country as a whole would be very much more advantaged from the cash point of view than if the railway were built.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Does the hon. member say the land is not valuable?

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I have tried to guard myself three times against wishing to depreciate in any way the value of land in the Esperance district. It is a most ungrateful task to one like myself, who knows something about the North-

West, the South-West, and the South-East, to set one portion of the State up against another portion, and to have to listen to the taunts of the preceding speaking regarding the parochial point of view. Why, that view is taken by the hon. member and his political friends. Their eyes have been glued on Esperance, and they can see nothing else, not even the other portion of Western Australia or the financial position.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: I was quoting a Perth paper.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The hon. member has no view of his own, and is frightened to come into the open, but he quotes, and quotes and quotes, on a subject of which he knows about as much as I do about stipes and winzes to which we have been listening for the last three or four weeks. I have a great admiration for one hon. member in this Council in regard to his attitude towards this proposal, and if it was a personal matter I would like to give him a Christmas box of the Esperance railway and harbour, and a block of land as well. It is quite sad sometimes to think what a strain his work in connection with this railway during the last 15 or 16 years must have been to his mind, but I do not think it is a fair thing to accuse those who are opposed, and strongly opposed, to this railway of taking a parochial view of things. The people who look at this proposal from the Western Australian point of view will be the ones who will be most strongly opposed to the railway at present. We have a lot of work to get through. The leader of the House has reminded us that time is going on, and other members wish to speak, and I do not desire to detain hon. members at any very great length. I hope that supporters of the line will not think that because I have compressed my remarks into the space of a few minutes it is a subject which I do not know something about. I believe we can go back in the official records and find that this railway was proposed in 1876. I went most carefully into the subject 14 or 15 years ago when the people on the goldfields would have scoffed at the idea of urging agriculture as a claim

for the construction of this railway. The one thing was a railway to give them the closest communication with the sea. There was a great deal of force at that time in the argument in favour of the line from a purely goldfields point of view, but we need not go over that. Then we come to the plea of health, and for my own part it seems the strongest argument in support of this railway. Certainly it is the only thing which appeals to me. Anyone who has been to Esperance and to Fanny's Cove and other places close by will have found some of the most delightful summer spots for the goldfields people, and it is a great pity that they cannot get down there. Those places I believe would have proved an enormous benefit to the goldfields people, but this agriculture argument is simply a mask on the part of the goldfields. I do not say a word against the settlers who are in the district.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: That is not a parochial statement you are making.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The position of goldfields members in this connection is obvious, and the principal reason which will induce me, and I believe other hon. members at this juncture, to lay this railway proposal aside is that of the financial position of the country. If we pass this Bill at the present time, the railway will not be built probably for years, certainly not for many months to come.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Does the hon. member want to stop all public works in Western Australia?

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The hon. member need not ask me that question. We know that the people who are stopping the development of this country are sitting on the Treasury benches to-day.

Hon. J. Cornell: That is very unkind.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: As I said before, time is running on and there are other members who desire to speak in connection with this matter. For my part I shall vote against the Bill and I trust it will be thrown out by this House.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN (South-East): This fourth request for the Esperance Railway reminds me of the classical story of the importunate widow. The

widow had to deal with a curmudgeon, and the only point of difference between that story and this House is that while this House is not of the curmudgeon spirit, the widow had to deal with a curmudgeon who feared neither God nor man, but who at last said that the widow was beyond everything. Now I confess that I have been somewhat worried over this question. My first trouble was to find that the widow was not an Esperance widow at all, not a struggling attenuated widow such as might be found at Esperance, but a buxom Kalgoorlie widow.

Hon. J. Cornell: You wooed the widow yourself once.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: A widow with many charms indeed and wonderful eloquence, almost Milesian eloquence—such was the Kalgoorlie widow. The weak point in the widow's claim has been freely put before this House by Mr. Sanderson. Hon. members can easily recall the arguments for this railway when the present Government came into power.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: This is quite a different railway altogether.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: The Government when they came into power could not break away from the traditional position and so they proposed a railway from Esperance to Norseman, to connect with the Goldfields railway, and thus make a channel of trade from those newly settled districts to the goldfields market. There was a good deal to be said for that proposal, and there is a good deal to be said yet. The traditional argument against it is this: That after Western Australia had expended such enormous sums of money in giving the goldfields railway communication, water supplies, and mining necessities, it was rather a serious proposition to give our Eastern competitors a short cut to our goldfields trade. It is possible for a State, as well as for a man, to forget to provide for his own, and this State has first of all to look after its own people and its own trade. This State having done its duty at enormous cost to the goldfields, and thus made possible the development of trade there, I think the State had the first claim on that

trade, and that the old traditional consideration had to be weighed in connection with the Government's first proposal; but I say without fear of contradiction that the main consideration of this House in refusing the first proposal of this Government was not that traditional consideration, but the fact that a financial and a commercial case had not been made out for the construction of the railway.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: Has it been made out in the case of other railways?

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: Very much better cases have been made out. Now the Government come around and say there is no truth in the notion that it is a goldfields widow who is asking for this railway. The goldfields, with supreme self abnegation, consent to the existence of a gap of about 60 miles between the head of this proposed line and the line to the goldfields.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Does the hon. member contend that the people of Esperance or the settlers do not want this railway?

Hon. M. L. Moss: Did you ever find a district in the world that did not want money spent in it?

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: The Government say that the goldfields have consented to give up any benefit that might come to them. There can be no possible benefit to them in this new proposal with the existence of a gap of some 50 or 60 miles. This gap will make it impossible for any trade between the goldfields and the new settlers to take place. It is a gap which may be called a bottomless pit, an unbridgable gap. When hon. members look at that remarkable evidence of self abnegation on behalf of the people who have engineered this line, I want to press this point, which Mr. Sanderson so well put, that even though there have been always a few people at Esperance who naturally would like railway communication, and even though the main engineering has been from the goldfields, does any hon. member think the Government would have budged one foot but for goldfields influence. Not at all. A very important



section of the Government supporters are representing the goldfields.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Does the hon. member know that goldfields members represent that district?

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: There is one hon. member representing that district, and only one.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: There are three members in this House.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: Yes, but I am speaking just now of the hon. members who influenced the Government in the direction of introducing this railway. Does any hon. member imagine for one moment that the Government acted at the instance of this House or of members of this House?

The Colonial Secretary: This House passed a resolution in favour of the railway to Esperance some time ago.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: I am afraid no hon. member can take the responsibility for that just now, and the position I am arguing is that the movement is a goldfields movement, and that the Government would never have budged a foot but for the support received from the goldfields representatives. Is this an honest and ingenuous act of self abnegation in consenting to the existence of a gap of about 60 miles between the head of the proposed line and the goldfields trade? I say it is not, and whilst the Government are asking Parliament to pass this 60 miles of railway which I shall show presently to be an absolutely futile proposal, do the Government intend before the echoes of the debate on this Bill are off the air, to bring in a further proposal to bridge that gap? If not, then they are self-convicted of asking Parliament to consent to a wicked waste of public money. What possible trade could be developed by this 60 miles of railway commencing nowhere and terminating nowhere?

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: The hon. member should have a look at the map, and he would find that it will commence somewhere and end somewhere.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: The richest point of all is that we are here presented with pictures that are some 20 years old. There was a time when Esperance was an

important township and when it was intended to be a very important place. Those old pictures are here, and I do not say that the leader of the House intended that the House should be misled by them.

The Colonial Secretary: You know well that I only brought them here to show the harbour.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: Even then I do not think the leader of the House will say that with the aid of those pictures we shall be very much "forrarder."

Hon. J. Cornell: You must know that photographs flatter.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: I am afraid they are not the only flatterers. I am afraid the claimants for public expenditure have a way of flattering also, and I think even the Colonial Secretary did some little flattering last night. I cannot vote for the present proposal because the expenditure which would be involved would be futile. It cannot possibly develop a traffic which will pay interest, to say nothing of working expenses.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Has the hon. member read the figures in the report of Mr. Middleton and Mr. O'Brien?

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: I have heard them read. I am not going to speak of the Esperance harbour. That is a matter for harbour experts. I can only take the case which has been presented by the Colonial Secretary himself, and from the statement which that gentleman made, the harbour cannot be now used for the export of wheat. It would not pay to export wheat from Esperance harbour. The Colonial Secretary admitted that the old jetty is in the wrong place and that when the real harbour is constructed there will have to be a wharf in a different place, and that dredging cannot be undertaken to bring current day shipping to the present jetty. There is no need for engineering experts' advice in connection with those matters. They are manifest to the lay mind. Do hon. members who know anything of agriculture believe that settlers can grow wheat on this belt of country 30 or 35 miles inland from Esperance, take it to Esperance, down to this old jetty, lighter it into the ship in the offing, and compete with the wheat growers of the rest of the world?

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Why did the Advisory Board recommend it?

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: They are not agriculturists.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Then why were they appointed to report upon other railways?

Hon. W. Kingsmill: They have been lightering all over South Australia for years.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: The interjection of the hon. member is very inapt. Those ports in South Australia have established charters that are now worked with the utmost precision. Every cost is reduced to a minimum.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: But how did they start?

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: Leaving Esperance as it is now and building this 60 miles of railway, and trying to compete with the rest of the world, to say nothing of the rest of Australia, it would take 20 to 25 years to develop anything like a traffic that would bring shipping to Esperance.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: John Darling would fix it up in three years.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: The freightage would be simply forbidding. I am speaking on matters I have fortified myself upon with very accurate information, and whenever this subject is to be dealt with, it cannot be done by a small project such as the one now before the House. It would be simply to leave this money idle perhaps 20 to 25 years. When I say idle I mean unproductive or producing only a fraction of what is necessary to pay working expenses and interest. So far as my influence goes, I am not going to shut the door on this project. If the figures supplied last night as to area and quality of country are correct then this problem must be looked into further. Hon. members know that the usual course with agricultural railway building in this country is this: Settlers find out the good country and take possession of it. They start their initial works and develop their holdings, and when they get to a certain stage they come to the Government and say, "So many settlers are here, so much land has been

cleared, so much land is under crop now, and we can give you an absolute certainty that by the time this railway is completed and ready to carry our produce such and such a percentage of the interest and working expenses will be ready straight away." That is an argument that no Parliament can refuse to listen to. It is a practical argument; but the process has been reversed at Esperance. The process there has been, "There is land and if the country will build a railway the settlers will go and develop it and produce stuff for the railway to carry." That was the argument 2½ years ago. I asked when the first Bill came forward, "Where are the settlers?" and the answer was in effect, "They are up at Kalgoorlie, but they will come down by the first train and get to work to develop this land if a railway is built." That has a certain value, but it is a very different argument from the one that has weighed with this House with every other railway that has been built in agricultural districts. In every other case the argument has been, "The land is there, the settlers are there, and so much development has taken place that there is a practical certainty that the railway will within reasonable time become a paying proposition." If there is a belt as report says of something like 100 miles from east to west by a depth of from 35 to 50 miles from north to south of fairly good land, then I say the country ought to look into it. There is nothing whatever in the figures as to actual development at the present. Developments are really on such a small scale, some 3,000 acres cultivated, that they are hardly worthy of consideration.

The Colonial Secretary: Could you expect more in the circumstances?

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: I certainly could, but not to grow wheat. If I were taking up land at Esperance I would not dream of growing wheat for export under present conditions.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Does the hon. member know that the present Government have stopped settlement until they are well satisfied this Bill will pass?

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: I have an uncomfortable feeling that it did not need stopping, and that for all practical purposes a good deal of that settlement was little better than dummying.

The Colonial Secretary: They would not dummy useless land.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: Useless land would be just as good as high-class land for dummying in the sense I am using the term. If an argument has to be worked up for Parliament, if it is intended that the Minister could come to Parliament and say so many thousand acres has been applied for, the cost of that argument is only 6d. per acre, and there has been a suspicious number of cancellations and withdrawals of those first selections.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Because the House refused to pass the Bill.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: We will put the best face possible on it, but to my mind it is very suspicious. However, I am very much more concerned with the figures as to the land capable of use than I am with those 3,000 acres actually under cultivation. I repeat I do not think it would pay to grow wheat there, even if this railway were in existence. How can the settler grow wheat there at 2s. 10d. a bushel? He can do something very much better than growing wheat. That will be essentially a district for growing fat lambs, mutton, and wool; those will be the industries of that district, undoubtedly.

Hon. J. Cornell: They can do that in mixed farming.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: Decidedly, but to say it is a hardship that they cannot grow wheat for export shows a want of practical acquaintance with farming. No one who is a practical farmer would dream of growing wheat for export under the present conditions or for many years to come in a district like that. He could not possibly compete with other wheat growers. My first intention was to record a silent vote. However, I do not want either in that way or in the speech I am making now to shut the door on this problem, so far as my influence may go. I shall be prepared to

make one to investigate this problem. I think it is very probable there may be another alternative. If this area of country is 100 miles long from east to west and only from 35 to 50 miles in depth from north to south it might not be the best thing to run a railway from north to south. There may be a much more practicable plan of running a railway through the middle of that tract from west to east, opening up practically the whole of the belt with one line.

Hon. C. A. Piesse: Where is the port?

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: And that railway may find its proper outlet at some point on the Great Southern railway system. Possibly some hon. member will say that is Katanning again. I am going to meet that objection before it arrives. I am not asking for any particular point on the Great Southern line. It may be through Nyabing to Katanning, or it may be through Ongerup and Tambellup down to Albany, or it may be by a more direct course to Albany itself. Those are matters for the Government and their engineering advisers to decide.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: What is the length?

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: There would be at least 100 miles of railway in that belt of country, and the connecting point would be immediately with the Phillips River country which is even better than the Esperance land.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: How much is there at Phillips River?

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: I cannot say exactly, but it is quite sufficiently extensive and it is practically a continuation of the Esperance belt.

The Colonial Secretary: What would be the length of the line?

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Two hundred and seventy miles.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: If the connection were at Ongerup or at Nyabing the distance from those points to the Phillips River would be only about 100 miles.

Hon. J. Cornell: Judging from your arguments it is an abstract question.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: It is not an abstract question by any means. The Min-

ister for Railways has been over the country, and speaking at the opening of the Tambellup-Ongerup railway he expressed himself entirely in favour of opening up road communication between the Great Southern line and Phillips River as early as possible. At that time he was possibly thinking of Ongerup. But that is a matter for full investigation, and I think this House would be perfectly justified in appointing a select committee to investigate this question. I would make one, and I am satisfied Mr. Kirwan would make another, so that both sides of the question would be represented by us two, and I have no doubt there would be other members who would be willing to give their time freely later on.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan : Has the railway not been long enough before the public?

Hon. J. F. CULLEN : I fear that is really not affected by my proposal, because this House cannot consent to the present Bill. It is 'an unfinancial, uncommercial, and a futile proposal in itself. The only possible excuse would be one which the Government would hesitate to make. I suppose their goldfields friends said "Keep it dark, do not let people think this is the thin end of the wedge by which we may get Parliament committed to the line, because if this is built they can come to us and say, all the money has been wasted unless you build the rest of the line." The only way to bring the money which has been wasted into use is to build the remainder of the railway. I have seriously put this view of the matter before the House that in rejecting this Bill we are not shutting the door on the people who have taken up land in the Esperance belt. We are saying to them, "We want to do the best we can in the interests of the country as a whole as well as in your interests."

Hon. J. Cornell : I hope the hon. member always takes that view.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN : And we will not shut the door on you; we ask you to have a little patience.

Hon. J. Cornell : Their patience is exhausted.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN : And have this alternative proposal investigated so that one may get the fullest light thrown on the matter. I certainly cannot vote for the present Bill, but I do not say for a moment that these settlers are to be left in the lurch. That is entirely absent from my mind, foreign to my desire. Nor do I wish that that tract of country, if it is as good as it is described, should be left unutilised, but we want fuller light and full investigation of this alternative proposal. For these reasons I must vote against the Bill.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH (East) : As one who sympathises most keenly with the settlers in the Esperance district, and as one who sympathises also with the people who may have invested money in the port of Esperance in the hope of it becoming a prosperous place, which I hope some day it will, also as one who sympathises with the long founded desire of the goldfields people to reach the nearest port, I desire to say a few words to justify the action I intend to take in voting against the second reading of this Bill. As other members have pointed out, we can only regard this as a half measure. It would be impossible to look upon it as a completed undertaking. We need not go further than the railway from Coolgardie to Norseman to convince ourselves how little profit there is in these half measures. I should be one of the last to suggest that the Norseman goldfields were not entitled to railway facilities, but when the line is built the country will have committed itself to one of two propositions, either that they must go on losing money on the uncompleted line, or they must complete the railway to Esperance to give the line a chance of paying its way; and the argument would be a strong one with the 60 miles of railway built, that so long as it remains an isolated piece of line it will be a heavy loser, and it is only possible to make it profitable to complete it to Norseman. When it is completed to Norseman it can only be made profitable at the expense of the existing line. I do not say that is sufficient reason to vote down the proposal, but that is one of the things

which we must bear in mind. So far as the settlers of Esperance are concerned, they must have a market. We are told that this line will give them a port for export. They must either have a port to export their stuff from, or a local market, and speaking as one who, whilst not being a farmer, claims to know something about the conditions prevailing in the agricultural districts, I say that at the present time there is very little prospect of a farmer succeeding unless he has both of these outlets for his produce, both the home market and facilities for export. The margin of profit is not large enough to afford him a chance of doing well if he is confined to one of these opportunities. Assuming that these people are to be given a port to export their stuff from we must admit that it does not mean that we have only to build the 60 miles of railway, but that a considerable sum of money will have to be spent in improving the port of Esperance to make it suitable for export purposes. We are faced with the position of the large expenditure of money which would not be justified to serve so small a tract of country. You have to go, according to the reports, for I am not acquainted with the district, some 25 miles inland before you reach what is called good wheat growing land, and you cannot persuade me that the remaining 35 to 50 miles of country will yield sufficient produce to make it profitable to build the line and properly improve the port. We come to this proposition. What is needed, and what will have to be done in the future will be a complete scheme to construct a railway from Norseman to Esperance, an east and west line from 40 or 50 miles north of Esperance to connect somewhere with the Great Southern railway, and the improvement of the port of Esperance. That is the only scheme that is going to pay, and what is that scheme going to cost?

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Why not make a start?

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: I will give my reasons for not making a start with it now, and I have risen for the sole purpose of giving my reasons, and I think

they may animate other members of the House in saying that this is not the time to make a start. Without going into the question too finely, I suggest that the whole undertaking of building the line from Esperance to Norseman, the equipment of the port of Esperance and building a line east and west, will cost at least one million pounds, and I do think that an extravagant estimate. We have to ask ourselves, where is that money coming from. During the last session of Parliament we passed a Loan Bill for £5,600,000. Of that amount one million pounds was raised directly after the Loan Bill was passed. Two million pounds were raised early in this year, and one million pounds a little while ago, leaving one million five hundred thousand pounds still to be raised to carry out the works included in the loan authorisation. We have also to remember that the last loan was raised at great cost, the biggest cost that has ever been paid by Western Australia. We have also to bear in mind that there is very little prospect of money becoming cheaper in the future. New South Wales is committed to large borrowings. Queensland has to borrow something like eleven millions to re-pay loans falling due in 1914-15, and we see from the recent issues of the newspapers that large sums are required in France and Canada.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Does the hon. member want all public works stopped?

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: Not at all. If the hon. member will follow me I will make my position clear. I want him to realise that money is not likely to get cheaper in the immediate future. When we have borrowed the one million five hundred thousand pounds required to complete the works which have been passed, where do we stand? Take the Perth tramways: the amount passed on the authorisation was £550,000 not much more than the money required, and we know there is probably another quarter of a million pounds required for that purchase on top of this loan authorisation, for the power house and the extension of the Perth trams. Then there is the broad-

gauge line from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie. Last session we were told that this work must be passed at once; it was imperative that we should get on with the line from Coolgardie to Merredin at once. For that work £300,000 was voted in the loan schedule. The work was of such urgency that the Government countermanded an order for 60lb. rails and substituted an order for 80lb. rails, in order to push on at once with that work. I suggested at the time there was no need for haste, but I was defeated, and now we find that this work has been entirely forgotten; it is pushed back. I do not know what has become of the 80lb. rails, but I know that the work has not been undertaken, but when it is undertaken—

Hon. W. Kingsmill: The Government are trying to get out of it, and I hope they will.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: I hope they will for the present. Although this line will pass through a portion of the district which I represent, I hope that the Government will not push on with the work in preference to other works which ought to be carried out. If they go on with that work it means two and a half millions of money on top of that already voted. Then there is the Bolgart extension railway. Only £10,000 was provided for that in the £5,600,000 Loan Bill. Another £100,000 will be required for that work. Then there is the Wyalcatehem-Mt. Marshall line. Only £10,000 was voted on the loan schedule for that work. Money will have to be provided for that work on top of the £10,000, and after raising the one and a half millions still authorised it will require another £100,000 to carry out that particular work. Then there is the extension of the Yilliminning-Kondinin line to serve the settlers who have been so unfairly treated in the Kuminin and Emu Hill districts during the last few years. All this money will be required on top of the one and a half millions left out of the £5,600,000 voted on the Loan Bill. Then there is the amount for harbours. A sum of £75,000 was provided for the Fremantle harbour. That is altogether

inadequate for the Fremantle harbour. For Geraldton only £15,000 was provided, not nearly as much as is required. For Albany only £20,000. For Bunbury no provision has been made whatever, and the Premier promised the other evening that a quarter of a million of money would be spent on the Bunbury harbour. All this money will be required after the one and a half million pounds out of the £5,600,000 Loan Bill has been spent. There is nothing for Bunbury. Nothing of the quarter of a million which the Premier promised to spend.

The Colonial Secretary: Another Loan Bill is coming down, you must remember.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: But the bringing down of the Loan Bill does not raise the money and pay the interest. Only in this morning's newspaper or yesterday's newspaper the Premier admitted the necessity of spending money to improve the Busselton harbour. No provision is made for that; there is nothing in the Loan Bill. A new loan will be required for that expenditure. Then there is the important matter of the bulk handling of wheat. I am not prepared to say what it will cost, but it is an immediate and pressing necessity. At the present time it is costing farmers twopence or twopence-halfpenny per bushel for bags alone, and this matter has to be faced. The margin of profit on wheat growing is so small that we cannot afford to neglect this matter. For the Agricultural Bank only £500,000 was provided in the total of £5,600,000. All that has gone, and more too. The Premier gave out as his chief reason for paying an exorbitant amount of interest on the last loan that he had to have money for the Agricultural Bank and workers' homes. The point which I wish to emphasise is that any money exceeding half a million pounds required for the Agricultural Bank must be in addition to the £1,500,000, the remainder of the authorisation. For workers' homes only £150,000 was provided, and I make bold to say that the Government have spent a quarter of a million on top of that amount. The other day we were told it was necessary to spend a

large sum on metropolitan water supply. What that will amount to I do not know, and I do not intend to go into figures regarding the various socialistic ventures such as the State steamers, sawmills, and the implement works, and other things in connection with which there is bound to be considerable borrowing now, irrespective of whether they are going to pay or not in the long run. There is a million and a half to borrow to cover the existing authorisations. There is another two and a half millions more for the broad-gauge line from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie; there is at least a quarter of a million in respect to the Perth tramways; at least a million within the next year or so in connection with the Agricultural Bank. There is at least a million for the harbours and for the bulk handling of wheat, while half a million has to be found from somewhere to cover up the deficit, and at least a quarter of a million to satisfy those agricultural railways which I have already referred to, that are provided for in this loan schedule, but only in regard to the start. There will be another quarter of a million to cover the excess expenditure in regard to workers' homes, so that there is seven millions of money to be borrowed without taking into consideration the Esperance railway at all, or leaving out the broad-gauge line from Kalgoorlie to Fremantle, say five millions. If we pass this Esperance line, which of those works are to be put back? The bulk handling of wheat is far more important than passing a railway which we cannot build for a number of years. Is the improvement of the various harbours going to be hung up in order that this work can be put in hand? I do not know any one of the undertakings I have enumerated, with the exception of the broad-gauge line from Fremantle to Kalgoorlie, which could with any justification be suspended in favour of the Esperance railway. Therefore we are committed to at least five millions of expenditure before we can look at this matter at all. While the Esperance settlers have my sympathy it must be remembered that they have gone there of their own accord, with-

out any promise of a railway, and in defiance of the statement of the manager of the Agricultural Bank that he could not advance money.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: A promise was made to the settlers.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: Any settler who has gone on that land before such promise was withdrawn is entitled to some redress. So far as I am concerned I have not a word to say against the Esperance railway. The time for its construction will come when we have restored sound administration in this country, so that we are living within our means, when we have restored confidence among local people, and have also restored confidence among outside investors, so that we can borrow money at a reasonable rate. Those are the reasons why I oppose the second reading of this Bill.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM (North): I do not propose to say much in regard to this railway. The Esperance railway has been before us for some years, but on this particular occasion it is quite a different proposition from what we have had before, and I feel, after listening to the very able speech of the Colonial Secretary last night, that the Government have been doing justice to one of their greatest friends and supporters, that is the hon. Mr. Kirwan. Mr. Kirwan I know has been a great supporter of this railway for some time, and I think it is due to him that the Government should do something for his undeviating support of them on every occasion. I think it was wise for the Government to bring up this railway because the hon. member has given them splendid support on every occasion. I have tried to bring to my mind many divisions, and I cannot think of one in which Mr. Kirwan has gone against the Government. In the circumstances I think it is wise for the Government, when they get a really good supporter like that, to do something for him. My greatest admiration in connection with the whole matter is the splendid speech which came from the leader of the House the other night on a subject so unworthy of so much at-

tention. I am going to oppose this railway on the best of all grounds, joking aside, because it would mean an entirely new system in every way. There are a few settlers who have gone down there—I do not care whether it is the best land in the world or the worst—they have gone and settled on this land, and it means, if we put a railway there, an entirely new system. We would have to have workshops, men there to repair the engines if anything goes wrong, a new harbour, and all sorts of expenditure, and for how many? I think the Colonial Secretary said 27.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Is that a sample of the hon. member's fairness in the presentation of his case?

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: I could not hear the remark which has just fallen from the hon. member. I have a telegram here from a gentleman who lives in the Esperance distret, and he says—"As a statesman I hope you will support this railway for me."

Hon. J. Cornell: He judged you correctly.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: If he had said "as his friend" I might have supported it, but as a statesman I am absolutely opposed to it, because we would have to start a new system, a new set of railways, everything fresh, for say, 50 people. Suppose these 50 people have spent £2,000 each, my idea is to give them the £2,000 and tell them to go somewhere else where we have railways and land available. We have so much land opened up by railways, very extensive railways, and a great deal of this land is unoccupied. So my theory is that if these men want to go somewhere near to a railway let them go somewhere near to a system which is in operation.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: This is the best land.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: Whether the land is the best in the world or the worst, I say we would have to start a new system, new workshops, a new harbour, and all sorts of things. I say buy these 27 or 50 men out, and let them go to where railways exist and land is available. I congratulate the Government

on the excellent manner in which they please some of their supporters. I think they have had an undeviating supporter in the hon. Mr. Kirwan, and it is very nice of them to have brought this railway proposition forward. We have had a lot of argument about it; some of the arguments have been purely academic, but in these days we cannot go in for academic arguments, we must go in for £ s. d., and in this case £ s. d. would be all loss. There would be no profit there, nor would there be for some time to come. Therefore I say give these 27 or 50 men £2,000 apiece and tell them to go near to some of the existing railways. This line has been Mr. Kirwan's hope for years, and I am so glad we have been able to discuss it. The Government are to be congratulated for bringing in a measure on behalf of a supporter who has given them most undeviating support from start to finish.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Hon. J. CORNELL (South): In offering a few remarks in support of the second reading, I desire to say that there is no Bill that could pass this House which would give me greater pleasure, and I do not think there is any measure that has ever been introduced into any parliament of Australia that has been fought for so long as the measure now under consideration.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: You should sit down and vote yes.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I would be pleased to follow the hon. member's example if he would practise what he preaches. There is much to be said for this line, but it has been said so often that it is needless for me to say it again. One of the main arguments brought against the proposal by the opponents of the second reading is that instead of the line going from Norseman to Esperance it is only proposed to build it 60 miles north from Esperance. I think after a Bill being introduced in this House twice by the present Government for a full length line from Esperance to Norseman, and being defeated on both



occasions, and after all the arguments brought forward in support of a line from Esperance 60 miles northwards—

Hon. J. F. Cullen : That is not so.

Hon. J. CORNELL : Well, it was argued that whilst the line might be justified for 60 miles there was no justification for a full length line. If hon. members listened attentively to the speech of the leader of the House, and if they have read the reports of independent Government officers they must come to the conclusion that there is something in the Esperance district. I was extremely amused at the remarks of Sir Edward Wittenoom on the question of statesmanship. He said that he had received a wire requesting him as a statesman to vote for the line and he replied that he would do so as a friend, but not as a statesman. Then he went on to say that it would be better for the Government to buy out the settlers who had gone to Esperance, to give them a certain amount of money and send them away to some other part. By that remark, the hon. member destroyed all his claim to statesmanship, because we have the reports of men who were deputed by the Government to go there and investigate, and they say that in this locality there is a million acres of land equal to the best parts of the wheat-growing area of this State. To advocate that those settlers should be bought out and sent to another part of the State on the ground that £100,000 should not be spent is a splendid advertisement for the State and a splendid exhibition of statesmanship. A very correct analogy can be drawn between the Esperance district and the Pinnaroo country in South Australia. Mr. Cullen professes to have a wide knowledge of South Australia and its sea-ports. But I have seen the Pinnaroo district, and from reports I do not think that district is to be compared with Esperance in regard to wheat growing. If hon. members, before they vote on the second reading, will turn to the latest number of *Hansard* and read the figures quoted in another place regarding the advancement of the Pinnaroo district within the last few years they

will realise the great possibilities before Esperance. I am sorry Mr. Sanderson is not present, because he gets a certain amount of enjoyment out of my speeches as I do out of his, but he made a remark that it was very amusing to hear goldfields members speaking on farming. I will not go so far as to say it is amusing to hear the hon. member speaking on mining, but as a representative of a mining constituency which has also great agricultural possibilities, I know a great deal more about mining and agriculture than the hon. member, seeing that I was reared on the land and starved off country better than Esperance, and that I worked in pastoral pursuits until I came to this State. I know of men who have gone to the Esperance district, men on whom I place more reliance than I do even on experts, men who worked many years on the goldfields, who had been attracted there by the glamour of gold and the call of the wild cats and who have gone back to the soil to earn their living, and they are absolutely convinced of the capacity of the Esperance land to grow wheat. Mr. Cullen has said it will not pay to grow wheat at Esperance at 2s. 10d. or 2s. 11d. per bushel. I have known farmers who have grown wheat in New South Wales and Victoria for 2s. 3d. per bushel, and carted it 20 miles to a railway, and although it may not have paid them they lived and are now fairly independent men. It is no argument to say they cannot grow wheat in the Esperance district profitably at 2s. 11d. if they have railway facilities, but I do say this, that if the district remains as it is without a railway it is not possible for farmers to grow wheat successfully at even 3s. 6d. a bushel. The leader of the House has stated that it costs £7 10s. per ton to cart fertilisers from the nearest railway. It has been said that what has kept this line back is the spirit of parochialism.

Hon. W. Kingsmill : This line has never been before the House.

Hon. J. CORNELL : But what kept the old project back was the spirit of parochialism, and I hope on this occasion that spirit will not enter into the ques-

tion. I know that hon. members viewed me, when I entered this Chamber, with a certain amount of suspicion, and I have viewed other hon. members with equal suspicion, but I will pay this tribute to some hon. members, that the impression I formed at the outset was not correct, and I do not think that any hon. member can put up a case on the ground that this line is in any way going to interfere with their constituencies or with the trade and interests they represent. I can say on the other hand that although I am the son of a farmer, if a big farming community is established in Esperance, knowing farmers' politics as I do, they will not have too much time for Cornell. Therefore, in endeavouring to get this line through and a farming community established at Esperance, I am not doing something which is going to help my return to this House. I speak advisedly of the farmers and their political opinions. I do not think one could knock my old dad's opinions out of him with a sledge hammer. I do hope that Sir Edward Wittenoom will show some conception of the Christmas box he spoke of, and he will be heralded as a conquering hero if he helps us to carry this Bill. I do not intend to take up the time of the House, because I think hon. members have made up their minds as to how they are going to vote on this occasion. I would just like to remind hon. members of the last session of Parliament when three railway Bills came up in this House for consideration. If I had strictly followed the wishes of a number of my constituents I would have opposed those lines on the ground that the line which I think most justified, and which a majority of my constituents think most justified, was not being granted. However, I was prepared to take the opinion of the Government of the day, who were advised by their experts, that these lines were necessary, and should be built. I am prepared at all times to be guided in the construction of railway lines by the Government and their advisers and by members who represent the constituency, and know the constituency best. That is the only consideration I ask of hon.

members. I ask those who have not finally made up their minds to extend to myself and those who are supporting this line the same consideration which I have extended in this Chamber in regard to the authorisation of various railways that have come before us. Even though this Chamber may be unwise enough not to agree to the construction of the line, that would not forbid me from having an open mind in regard to other lines that come before us.

Hon. C. A. PIESSE (South-East): This matter had been before Parliament for many years and always used to be a proposition for a line from Esperance to the goldfields. It was a very natural wish on the part of the goldfields people to get a line to the nearest port, but I never had any time for this railway as a goldfields proposition. I have always endeavoured in my remarks to speak fairly in regard to the matter, and I have never attributed motives to anyone in regard to this line. Realising as I do from the best authorities the immense agricultural possibilities of this area, and not only this area, but that between Esperance and Ravensthorpe and Ravensthorpe and Ongerup, I look forward to the time when this country will all be opened up by railways through the continuation of one or more existing spur lines of the Great Southern Railway. I anticipate that some day the Great Southern Railway will be repeated in an easterly and westerly direction, and will run through country equally as productive as that through which a great portion of it runs to-day. I am looking forward to such a line and will be disappointed if it is not an accomplished fact within a few years. My heart always goes out to the settlers in the district under consideration, realising that they have stuck to their land manfully, and therefore I would like to see them given some opportunity of getting their produce to the nearest port. I have no time for the proposition just now as a through goldfields proposition, but I hope to live to see the day when there will be an extension of the line from 60 miles to Norseman as it is only natural that the

country should be served by its nearest port.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: You would have to start a new and expensive system.

Hon. C. A. PIESSE: I believe we have the makings of another area of country which will carry as many people in the section from Ongerup to Esperance as we have already along the Great Southern between York and Albany, and it is only natural that I should endeavour to help when opportunity offers to settle that country. My only trouble at present is that in the hands of the present Government, with their idea of doing away with freehold and all that sort of experimental legislation, we would never have this land settled in anything like the quick time we would if people were allowed the freedom to settle as was the custom in past times. With free selection and limitation of areas we would have the people rushing there in hundreds, and the country would be settled in quick time. I am not going to commit myself to any promise with regard to spending money on the Esperance harbour—not at this period—

Hon. F. Connor: Then what is the good of the railway line?

Hon. C. A. PIESSE: There are numerous little ports in South Australia with farms adjacent thereto, and they have very cheap water transit, and by working on the same lines there is nothing to stop us from sending the wheat away from Esperance. The only drawback I can see at present is the action of the Government in limiting settlement and insisting on conditions which are not conducive to progress. I trust that this motion will be carried to-night. I promised last year that if it was made an agricultural question and limited to a certain area I would give it my support. I am not one to go back on promises, and I do not intend to go back on this occasion. I have pointed out what I believe to be the possibilities of that country in the future, and I am quite satisfied there must be something good in this Esperance land or the settlers would never have stuck to their holdings as they have done. What will apply to one's own personal business can be made to apply to State enter-

prises; if we never speculate we never accumulate, as the old saying is, and I admit that the State is not undertaking any great risk in connection with this line.

The only thing is that it is so isolated that it will be a rather expensive line to run, and it will be some years before it can become a thoroughly paying proposition. I do not expect this line to pay at the outset. With reference to our spur lines, I think they should be given credit for what business they bring to the main lines. Spur lines have done their part in proving the great possibilities of the country through which they pass. I do not think the spur line is going to stop at Ongerup or Nampup. I

trust that I will be given credit for not desiring to specially favour the Great Southern. There is one statement I would like to have from the Colonial Secretary in connection with this matter, and that is if the Bill is successful in passing the second reading he will see that all the lines authorised will be constructed before this one. It is only a reasonable request to make, and one which I think hon. members will agree should be made to the leader of the House, that lines should be constructed in the order in which they are passed by Parliament. If I thought for one moment that other lines authorised were going to be put aside in favour of this one, I would hesitate to give my vote for it, but I leave it to the fairness of the Government to see that lines are constructed in the order in which they have been authorised. As showing how it will be possible in the future to connect this line on to some point on the Great Southern, we have already a demand from the people beyond Lake Grace for an extension, and they cannot be denied it. They have some three or four thousand acres of salmon gum country cleared. It goes to show there is something in what I have said, that this country will have to be opened up, and opened up by a railway that will give equally as good results as the Great Southern. And its terminus will not be altogether at Esperance Bay from one point of view, because I am sure from knowledge which I have acquired from

friends of mine down in that country, that the Frazer's Range country will be found to be suitable for mixed farming, and the line can very well go in that direction. I give the matter my strongest support and I trust the motion will be carried.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL (Metropolitan): As I have already indicated on two or three occasions, when I have spoken on a project which in my opinion is vastly different from that now before the House, it is my intention to support this railway as an agricultural railway. I say that with what I claim to be a very fair acquaintance with the circumstances attending the construction of this line and the port of Esperance, which it is intended to serve. As far as Esperance is concerned I lay claim to having a fairly good knowledge of the past history of that port. The first time I was there was in 1897, when Esperance was worthy of its name, when it was full of more than hope, when it was full of confidence, full of young men who had come there in the bloom of their youth and who were only waiting for the line to be constructed through to the goldfields in order to make that one of the principal ports of Western Australia. In those days, before the channels of trade had been fixed, when the goldfields were suffering from what was then a very poor service, when there was practically no harbour at Fremantle, when everything more or less was in an unsettled condition, the Esperance line through to the goldfields might well have been constructed. In those days I supported the project of a line from Esperance to Kalgoorlie. But as time went on it was seen that this country could not afford more than one main trunk line to the goldfields. As the Fremantle harbour was enlarged and improved and over a million of money spent on it, and as the Coolgardie water scheme was taken to the goldfields, and, incidentally, supplied the Railways with the water they had so badly needed, then the whole aspect of affairs altered. It would have been impossible for this State to afford two trunk railways to the goldfields. It was out of the question. Had that railway been built through to the goldfields we would

have increased the capitalisation of our Working Railways very considerably without increasing their earning capacity, or only by very little. This is the reason why I have always opposed a through line from Esperance to Norseman, and why, whatever my opposition has been to that railway in the past, that opposition will be the more concentrated upon the closing of the gap which will exist between the terminus of this proposed line and Norseman. Since my first visit to Esperance in 1897 I have paid, I suppose, a dozen visits at various times, and in some cases have stayed as long as three months, which time has been spent principally in travelling through the Esperance country. So I may claim to have a fair knowledge of that country; not, indeed, as a wheat-growing district, because they were not growing wheat there when last I was in the district, except at Grass Patch—none of these other parts had been opened up. Although I am supporting the line, I envy the leader of the House his capacity for enthusiasm. I could not resist asking him last night whether he had seen that amusing and instructive object lesson now being performed at one of our theatres, and entitled "Get Rich Quick Wallingford," where a gentleman, apparently somewhat of the temperament of the Colonial Secretary, but with that temperament perverted into channels which I am sure the leader of the House would never think of, exploits a little town, perhaps not quite so moribund as Esperance, but still in a desperate condition, and by that exploitation, started with the worst of motives—I hope the Government are not constructing this line with any but the best motives: I hope the Government are constructing the line as an agricultural line, and not as the first instalment of that line which I have always opposed, and which I shall continue to oppose.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: Does the hon. member hope the Minister is not telling the truth? The Minister last night gave us pretty clearly to understand that this was to be the first instalment of a through line.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: The Minister went very near it the other night, and if left alone would, perhaps, have gone the whole way to denying that this was the first instalment. The Minister has not, as far as I have followed him, made any definite statement on the question. At all events, whatever the Minister's idea, I have my own idea, and much as I would like to do so I am not bound to follow the lead of the Minister in that particular. As I was saying, this little town, under the exploitation methods of the theatrical gentleman I am speaking of, assumes an air of the greatest possible success and prosperity, and I hope this may be the case in the instance we now have before us. I do not think the land is as good as the hon. gentleman states, but I think it is an area of land well worthy of the treatment which has been meted out to other areas of land in the State which are, at all events, no better than this. So far as I am concerned the terminus of this line may be considered for good and all to be at the point which is fixed on the plans laid before the House, and which are now on the Table for the benefit of hon. members. Alternative schemes have been mentioned. One hon. gentleman, Mr. Cullen, has treated a scheme of connection with the Great Southern as alternative, while Mr. Piesse has treated it as supplementary. I am not so very much enamoured of that scheme. During my visits to Esperance and district I have had occasion to travel along the coast from Esperance to Bremer Bay, and a good deal of the way from Broomehill eastwards towards the country to the north of Bremer Bay, and I can assure those hon. members that much of the country through which this line would pass would not repay the building of the line.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: It would not follow that course at all, but would run through the Phillips River country.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: I have passed along the route which a railway would naturally follow if the line were constructed. The hon. gentleman shakes his head. As he has not a map of the itinerary I followed I think he is somewhat

unjustified in so doing. However, that is beside the question. If hon. members will look at the rainfall map of Western Australia they will see that a very peculiar circumstance occurs in the matter of rainfall between Bremer Bay and Esperance. Going eastwards from Albany—of course we all know that Albany has, if anything, too much rain—the rainfall gradually falls away until, at Bremer Bay, we have 25 inches. From Bremer Bay onward that rainfall decreases at a very rapid rate, and a minimum of about 11 inches is reached at a place called Fitzgerald River, where the inner rabbit-proof fence runs into the sea. It then increases gradually until, at Hopetoun, the rainfall is nearly 13 inches, and on to Esperance again it rises rapidly to 23 inches. Then, again, it falls away at a good rate until you get 40 or 50 miles to the east of Esperance, when you run out of practicable rainfall so far as agriculture is concerned. Therefore, the rainfall is not regular, or anything like regular, along the coast; and, strange to say, where the rainfall decreases on the coast the decrease inland is very marked indeed. Thus at 20 miles north of Ravensthorpe we get outside the line of rainfall as regards agriculture. I say this as the result of my own experience when travelling through this country.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: That would damn the Bill.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: Most certainly not. It might damn it from the hon. gentleman's point of view but not from mine. It may be that I am less pessimistic than the hon. member, but I do not think the marked irregularities in the rainfall along the coast would decrease the value of the Esperance district as an agricultural asset. A great deal has been made of the necessity for large and expensive harbour works at Esperance. Hon. members have always been in the habit of considering Esperance from the point of view of a future overseas port. That is because they have considered the Esperance railway, as it is known, as a railway connecting Esperance with the goldfields. That view I decline to take. I look upon this project as a project for a completed work, and

as the necessity for a longer line has disappeared so the necessity for harbour improvements disappears, or is greatly modified with it. Hon. members who are acquainted with South Australia will know that a great deal of the South Australian wheat trade is carried on along the coast of South Australia. Along the coast of York's Peninsula, along the western side of Spencer's Gulf, and along the very part of the coast which leads to Eucla and Esperance itself, wheat growing is going on to-day, and, strange to say, some of the very vessels which load wheat and take it to the South Australian ports have been in the habit, if they are not doing so to-day, of going to Esperance with goods for the Esperance people. There is one especially, the "Rachel Cohen," which has been going to Esperance for years, and which invariably loads wheat and other produce at Fowler's Bay and Streaky Bay, on her way back to Adelaide. If this can be done in South Australia there is no difficulty in doing it here. If this is done the port which will receive the benefit of this coastal trade will be, in my opinion, Albany, which should prove some little meed of solace to Mr. Cullen, who is so bitter in his opposition to the Bill, and who desires to take the Esperance trade on to the Great Southern railway. The only trouble I have in my mind in connection with this measure is that which has been raised by Mr. Colebatch. It is one of those little ironies of fate that Esperance—that name surely should be changed from Esperance to Patience—that Esperance which has waited so long for this railway should have, I think, obtained it—for I take it the Bill will be carried—when it is almost too late, when there is but little hope of the railway being built, even if we pass the Bill, for at all events some considerable time. That is, if that priority, which Mr. Piesse has insisted upon, the proper priority of the building of these lines, is observed; and in his remarks I entirely agree, namely, that these railways should be constructed in the order of their authorisation. It must be some time before this railway can be constructed, but I do not take the view

of the hon. member that because this State has been brought, and I speak advisedly, into what I consider is a most undesirable, not to say desperate, financial position, that all projects of this sort should be held up. Surely if we can by judicious legislation add the possibility of what after all would be an additional inducement to outside capitalists to give us those funds which they already show signs of withholding from us, if by the addition of what after all will I think turn out to be a good agricultural area, we might add to the assets of the State and thereby make this State more attractive to the money lender, is it not our duty to do so? Is it not our duty not to despair utterly, but to take such steps as we think will lead to such a result? I would advise the hon. Mr. Colebatch to endeavour to look at things more brightly. I do not think that because things are bad we should preach the doctrine of the cessation of all public works.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch: I have not preached anything of the kind, but I am not so confiding as to think the Government will put this work in its proper place, at the end of the list.

Hon. F. Davis: That is a serious indictment against the Government.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: I am confiding enough to think they will do so. There is always the possibility that it might not be the present Government who will carry out the work. The hon. the leader of the House seems to have a somewhat indefinite period in his mind as to the starting of the work. I am perfectly certain that if any Government succeeds the present Government the Esperance line will be put in its proper place. I think that if some of these silly, futile schemes of State butchers' shops, steamships, and brickyards, unnecessary schemes, and schemes which would be carried on even if the Government did not enter into them, were dropped by the present Government, there would not be the same financial stringency or anything like it in the matter of finding funds for this railway. There is a good time coming, sooner or later. Let us hope it will be

soon, and I have no doubt that the next Government will proceed charily with this work. And in due course we will see Esperance, after its hopes have been deferred for so many years, a prosperous port, not so great perhaps as the people of Esperance imagined at one time it would be, but still affording scope for a good living, and more, perhaps, to those people who have had the pluck to stick to Esperance right through. I am supporting this Bill because I wish to give this district, which I think worthy of them, those facilities which have not been denied to other districts. I wish to give to any agricultural district facilities for the development of the land in a proper manner, and therefore I will support the building of an agricultural line 60 miles northward from Esperance.

Hon. J. E. DODD (Honorary Minister): As a member for the province through which this line will run if the Bill is carried, I desire to say a few words this evening in support of the proposition. I have heard three debates on different occasions in connection with this line. I think that during the second session that I was in the House a Bill was brought forward which was defeated, and last year again a Bill was defeated. This year I hope hon. members will agree to carry the measure which is now before them. It has been somewhat amusing to me to hear the argument of financial stringency used, especially in this House. I do not know that there is any more financial stringency in this State than there is in any other State, and it is indeed pitiful to my mind to hear members getting up and emphasising the fact that we have no money to carry on public works. The present Government have not yet failed to secure money to carry on public works, and they have not yet failed to secure money on terms no worse than other Governments have secured money. They have not failed to secure money where other Governments have not been able to get it. Mr. Scaddon got his loan when Mr. Peake, the Liberal Premier of South Australia, did not get the money he required.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Mr. Peake would not accept the money on the terms offering.

Hon. J. E. DODD (Honorary Minister): There are more ways than one of killing a project, and it seems that the hon. Mr. Colebatch is hard pushed for a case against the Bill when he raises the question of financial stringency. In dealing with many other public works in different parts of the State, the cry is raised that we must go in for a policy of development, do as Sir John Forrest did, adopt a bold policy. But when we come to consider Esperance, a totally different aspect is put on the matter, and we have a cry of financial stringency, stinking fish, and pessimistic utterances such as that which Mr. Colebatch gave expression to this evening. I would like to draw a few comparisons in regard to the country through which this line is to be taken and some of the country in the Eastern States. I have had experience of the mallee country in Victoria, the Pinnaroo country of South Australia, and the country in the peninsula part of South Australia, which parts are very similar indeed to the Esperance district. The development of these particular parts of Victoria and South Australia has made those States. Had it not been for the development of the mallee country in South Australia, South Australia would be nowhere to-day, and the same may be said in regard to the development of the country around Warraeknabeal, Ironbark, Dimboola, and other parts of Victoria. It is not so very long ago since the country around Warraeknabeal was sold for £150 a mile, simply with the object of keeping down vermin. It was sold to settlers from South Australia, and to-day it forms one of the most prosperous parts of Victoria. It is very similar to this land at Esperance. The same may be said of the Pinnaroo land: and I want to read a few remarks made by the Minister for Agriculture in South Australia with reference to the Pinnaroo lands, as showing what can be done in connection with this country. An interstate conference on dry farming was held at Adelaide in March, 1911, and the Minister for Agriculture, who presided, stated—

To South Australia in particular the utilisation of her dry land is a thing of great moment, as we have something in excess of 30 million acres of land receiving between 10 and 16 inches of rain.

That is a lesser rainfall than what we have at Esperance. The land through which we are trying to construct this railway has a very much greater rainfall than what is stated there. Then he goes on to say—

Of this quite half is situated in our western district, and it is here that the greatest development will take place during the next decade. A careful study of our rainfall map will prove of interest to delegates. As showing the extent to which we are producing wheat in districts where the rainfall averages 16 inches or less, I might mention that last year over 55 per cent. of the total production of wheat was grown in these areas, and I think I run little risk in expressing the opinion that by the end of the present decade the proportion of wheat grown in these dry areas will have increased to 75 per cent.

I would just ask hon. members to bear that in mind, that in South Australia in these districts having a rainfall of less than 16 inches 55 per cent. of the wheat was produced in 1911, and the Minister for Agriculture stated that during the next decade 75 per cent. of the wheat of South Australia would be produced in those areas; and the land we are seeking to develop by this railway is very similar to the land there. In trying to carry that argument further, I desire to quote also what has been said about the soil. Mr. A. J. A. Koch, of Lamerook, which is in the Pinnaroo district, in reading a paper on wheat growing in that district, stated—

The land in the Pinnaroo district is chiefly of a sandy, loamy nature, and even in the heavier soils a certain amount of sand can be detected.

Now let me quote what Mr. O'Brien says with reference to the Esperance land, and hon. members will see immediately the similarity of the two reports—

The sandy loams which prevail over the surface assist the retention of moisture in the soil below, and require less cultivation in fallow than heavier and stiffer clay soils.

These two reports, one dealing with Lamerook, in the Pinnaroo district, and the other dealing with the Esperance land, are very similar indeed in respect to the soil, and when I point out that such land is producing 55 per cent. of the amount of wheat in South Australia, I think hon. members will agree with me that it would be something useful and something which would redound to the prosperity and progress of Western Australia if we carried this line. I desire to read another extract from the proceedings of the interstate dry farming conference in Adelaide. Mr. Koch went on to say—

The land was open for application during July, 1904, and in August of that year 100,000 acres were allotted. The first problem to the successful applicant was to get to his block, which from Tailen Bend was between 60 and 90 miles over a road, the last part of which was very sandy. The scrub is mostly low mallee, about from 6 ft. to 15 ft. high; some patches were higher and heavier and had to be axed down; but the scrub roller has played a big part in removing the first barrier to successful settlement.

According to what I have learned about Esperance, the mallee country there is a little higher than that.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: It is much higher.

Hon. J. E. DODD (Honorary Minister): It shows that the soil is not deteriorated, even if the scrub is only 6 to 15 feet high. One point which I have emphasised repeatedly is that this mallee country is more of a poor man's country than that around the coast or the South-West where you require considerably more capital to clear the land. In the mallee country you can simply put a scrub roller to work and when the rolled scrub is dry it can be burned and subsequently easily cleared. I have repeatedly pointed out how necessary it is to provide for those men who have been engaged in min-



ing operations and who have been crippled as the result of their labours underground. I have tried to solve the problem during the past six or eight months as to how it would be best to deal with the miners who are broken down in health. The matter has received considerable attention at my hands but it is one of the most difficult problems which can be faced at the present time. We have a large number of miners who, while they may not be incapacitated now, if they continue to work for two or three years will have lost all energy and will simply become martyrs to miner's phthisis or fibrosis, and will be thrown on to the State. That something must be done in the near future in order to relieve that largely increasing number of people who are not able to continue work in the mines seems to me to be clear, and here we have one of the means by which we could help those men to get away from their occupation where they are gradually becoming crippled, and in relieving them from that occupation we would be doing something to benefit the State, as well as the individuals themselves. We have had inquiries during the past three or four months as to the possibility of placing miners in some other parts of the State, inquiries as to whether we can establish a settlement somewhere, whereby they may be able to live and do something useful for the State. The difficulty is to get hold of a place which is suitable, and if we can only get this line to Esperance, I believe we shall have one of the means at our disposal for solving that problem. The country, as I have said, is a poor man's country, it is easily cleared, and there is no doubt about it the opening up of it would be of material benefit to the people of the goldfields and no harm whatever would be done to any other part of the State. I think the old idea of parochialism is gradually dying out. I would be pleased to see it die out altogether. For the little time I have been in Parliament, I have endeavoured to assist in the establishment of works which have been projected in any part of the State, and I may safely say that none of the goldfields members have ever looked at the

construction of public works from what might be termed the parochial standpoint. I think all the goldfields members can take credit for that claim. I know of no agricultural railway that has been seriously opposed by any goldfields member, and I do hope that on this occasion we shall get rid of any parochialism which may exist in regard to this line. It will not harm Perth or Fremantle, it is a line which will help to open up a province as big as some of the countries in other parts of the world, and it is a province which, according to Mr. O'Brien, contains a million and a half acres which are fit for cultivation. There are many countries which, if they had such an extent of cultivable territory would consider themselves very fortunate indeed. I do not know that I need detain the House any longer in speaking further on this question. As a member of that province, it would be gratifying to me to see this Bill carried. Of course, it would have been more gratifying to me to see a Bill for the construction of the railway right through carried by both Houses, but that has been defeated twice and now the Government have brought in a measure on the lines of the recommendations of some of the members of the Advisory Board. I think we can lay claim to the sympathy of the House and I sincerely trust that members will rise to the occasion this time and give that long delayed justice to the Esperance district and to that province for which the residents have fought so long.

Hon. C. McKENZIE (South-East): I desire to say a few words on this question and to deal more particularly with the Esperance harbour with which I am familiar. I have heard this harbour condemned on many occasions, and therefore the information that I can give to members may, in view of my long experience, be regarded as of value. I am not a farming man and, consequently, I know very little about that aspect of the question. I have travelled from Esperance to Norseman on foot and can claim to know something about the country between those two places. I have seen some very good land along this road, though I must admit

in some parts it is good only in patches. That was many years ago, and I went through that country when there were no houses at Esperance. I was on the south coast for many years and I can speak authoritatively about it and of the harbour at Esperance. I have entered that harbour at all hours of the night and day and in all sorts of weather, and if it is the intention of Parliament to build this line of railway they need not have any fear in regard to the harbour. Esperance is like every other harbour, it is a little rugged, but I have never seen it so that it was not possible to handle steamers and berth them at the wharf. I admit that the present wharf is rather short and that it is not in the right place. I was pleased to hear the Colonial Secretary tell the House that he had a report from Captain Douglas with regard to the harbour. Captain Douglas and I were in company on that coast for some years and I can assure the House that there is no man in Australia who is better able to express an opinion about Esperance harbour than that gentleman. Whatever Captain Douglas says can be relied upon by members because he knows every nook and corner of that coast, and the harbour, and the experiences he has had have been in all kinds of weather and all hours of the night and day. Captain Douglas has lived there now for some years, and it might be said that he knows almost every sea that breaks into Esperance. The existing wharf there is fairly long, but its construction was stopped at the edge of the bank in 16 or 18 feet of water. Beyond that the water deepens very much, and any vessel can lay there at any time and in plenty of room. I took the "Bulimba" there and that was the largest vessel, I think, that ever entered the harbour. There was no difficulty at all in getting it in. Since then other large vessels like the "Buninyong" have entered the harbour without the assistance of a pilot. The seas which break in there have not much force; they are fairly well broken and the consequence is that they cannot do much damage. The holding ground is also very good. The question of this railway has been before the House and

the country for some years. It has always had a rough passage, and on one occasion in Sir John Forrest's time the Railway Bill was defeated by only one vote. I think that the people who are settled there, if something is not done for them, will have to be removed to another part of the State. They have been struggling along, and many have been ruined. A great deal of money too, has been spent there by those people. The rainfall near the coast is good, and we know that it becomes less as we go inland. The country is very good and capable of growing cereals. I was up and down that track for three years, and consequently know something about it. I think the House will be acting wisely if it agrees to the construction of this railway. It is my intention to support the Bill, and I hope it will be carried through this House.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER (Metropolitan-Suburban) : There is a great deal to be said for the construction of this line as an agricultural proposition, and I think the time is bound to come and that shortly, when this large belt of country will have to be opened up. I support the stand taken by Mr. Colebatch that it is not possible at the present time to build this railway on account of the existing authorisations in connection with more important works that have to be undertaken in the interests of the whole State. The Honorary Minister told us that the financial position was not as stringent as hon. members had endeavoured to make out. May I point out that the Premier at Narrogin on the 21st October, spoke these words—

The State had one mile of railway for every 108 of the population, so they were getting near the point where the railways would not pay. It was necessary to see that the population increased with railway development. He had every confidence in the future of this State. It had taken Western Australia only two years to recover from the last period of depression, whereas it had taken other States 25 years to recover from similar bad times. In regard to the State's demand on the

money market, underwriters were now beginning to close up to some extent, being evidently determined to compel the States to ease off in the expenditure of loan moneys. It would be unfortunate if such a thing were to take place as far as this State was concerned, for they were in a different position to the other States, having a tremendous territory only in the initial stages of development.

That is what the Premier thought of the financial stringency. I am not altogether prepared to support the view taken by Mr. Kingsmill that it would be a fair thing that the measure might be passed, and that the Government should be allowed to construct it in its turn. I would sooner go on the opposite principle. I do not think the Government have shown that they are absolutely capable of judging what the State can stand in the way of financial stringency, and therefore I would be prepared to say "When we have sufficient money we will give you permission to construct this line." There are many other important works to be undertaken at the present time. The Premier in his policy speech said there were 430 miles of railway yet to be constructed. If hon. members will read the very interesting report of the Fremantle Harbour Trust they will see that that body draws special attention to the manner in which the development of the Fremantle harbour is being neglected by the Government at the present time. In the last two annual reports the commissioners have drawn attention to the efforts they have made to induce the Government to take in hand the early deepening of the Fremantle harbour, and they add that it is their duty to again state that no actual work in this direction has yet been commenced.

The Colonial Secretary: There has been a large amount of money spent on the Fremantle harbour.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER: Then they go on to say there is a large scheme at present in hand for spending £648,000 on the Fremantle harbour works; they say that is not sufficient and the delay in pro-

secuting that work is to be deplored; and they continue—

If the Government would make some definite announcement of their intention the Commissioners would have at least the material at hand to answer with some degree of certainty the anxious inquiries from owners who are building the larger ships, but even that is denied them, so that all they are able to reply to these inquiries is that they have long ago recommended that the port be improved to take these ships but they are unable to give an indication as to when the works will even be commenced. Truly a sorry position for a board charged with the duty of administering such a port as Fremantle is or should be, to be put in.

The pace is altogether too slow, and they complain in strong terms that no proper scheme for opening up the harbour up-river has been adopted by the Government. There, I submit, is a large and important work yet to be taken in hand. Mr. Ardagh quoted with approval an article in the *Sunday Times* saying that in the opinion of that paper this House should pause before rejecting the Bill. But he omitted a very important part of that leading article, where it said—

It is, perhaps, justified in the present instance in asking for an assurance that this enterprise will not be given precedence over works already authorised and urgently necessary, undertakings like the deepening of the Fremantle harbour.

I would like to just give hon. members shortly the opinion of the Minister for Works when taking part in a discussion on a railway in the Dale River district. The Minister must have spoken in one of those unguarded moments of which we had an illustration the other day, because if his remarks are to be taken as they appear in print, then I say the greatest opponent of this scheme is the Minister for Works himself. He said—

The Government had lines already authorised to complete before they could deal with other propositions. They had, however, secured Parliamentary authorisation for the construction

of the Yillimining-Kondinin line of 70 miles, which had just been started, the Bolgart line of 30 miles which had not been started, and the Cowcowing-Mount Marshall line of 50 miles which also had not yet been started. Thus they already had railways waiting to be started. When these matters were being considered, it had to be remembered that the State could only go on the London market with borrowing powers of a limited character, which meant that operations were limited to a large extent, by the money borrowed. The railway they were interested in was within the scope of practical politics, but he did not want them to think that it was possible to start it within the next year or so.

He continued a little later in the same day—I think it must have been after the banquet—

They were all convinced of the necessity for the railway, and the object of the deputation was to secure the construction of the railway in its proper order, and that in the future policy of the Government that line should receive consideration. It was only right that he should state that he had recommended the present Government—he could not say whether it would be adopted or not—not to carry many railway Bills through Parliament. He thought that it was absolutely wrong to pass Bills through Parliament and leave people to think that because the Bill had passed they would have their railway in a very short time. As a matter of fact, a letter had appeared in the Press recently in which a settler said that he had taken up land four years ago on the promise of a railway within 18 months, and the line, although under construction, was not yet completed. This had been the experience of others. Encouraged by the news that a railway was to be built settlers had gone on to the land and started developing their holdings long before they should have done. He did not want to perpetuate that sort of thing. He desired to pass Bills for lines that were urgently needed, and

then to go ahead constructing them as soon as possible.

The PRESIDENT: I wish to draw the attention of the hon. member to the fact that it is irregular to read any portion of a speech from a printed book or newspaper. I exercise my discretion a little bit, but it seems to me the hon. member's whole speech is a tissue of readings from newspapers.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER: Of course you will appreciate, sir, that it is absolutely impossible to bear in mind all the Minister has said, and I would like the indulgence of the House to be able to quote what the Minister did say. At any rate, in that same speech he said he would be no party to introducing further railway Bills into Parliament this session before the lines at present authorised were completed. I am sorry that my information cannot be given to the House.

The PRESIDENT: I do not wish to check any freedom of debate, but the hon. member can tell the House what was said without reading the speech. I should not have drawn attention to the matter if I had not noticed that the hon. member had a handful of newspaper cuttings.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER: I did not intend to read them all but only extracts from them. However, the Minister on that occasion pointed out that it was part of his policy not to build these new railways until those already authorised were completed, and not to encourage settlers to go into dry areas expecting railway communication when the railway could not be built for a considerable time. That is the reason why I oppose this line, because under the present condition of affairs the Government have a considerable number of railways to complete which clearly take precedence over this particular line. They have also this big work in connection with the Fremantle harbour to undertake, which, again, will clearly take precedence over the Esperance line. Further than that, the money market is in a stringent state. According to the Premier it is impossible to go on the money market without taking the risk of a rebuff, and so far from being satisfied with the suggestion made by Mr. Kings-

mill, that we should trust to the Government to build this line in its proper order, I say let the Government, when they have the money to build it, come to Parliament, and then I believe Parliament will take a reasonable view of this line as an agricultural proposition. I would like to put it in this way: Hon. members are business men. Would any one of them say to the manager of his business, "I will allow you to commit me to a certain undertaking, but do not do it until my position justifies my going into it." Would not any hon. member say "As soon as my position justifies me in going into this matter I will tell you when to start."

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Are you going to oppose all future railways brought before the House?

The Colonial Secretary: Are you going to oppose the improvements to the Fremantle harbour?

Hon. D. G. GAWLER: No, I say those works are urgently necessary; £648,000 worth of works the Government are already committed to, and those works their responsible advisers, the Harbour Trust Commissioners, say they must carry out unless they wish the present harbour to be passed by. The Fremantle harbour is a national undertaking.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Will the hon. member oppose any railway Bills introduced this session?

Hon. D. G. GAWLER: I do not necessarily say that.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Then why take up that stand on this railway and not on others?

Hon. D. G. GAWLER: Because other railways are authorised and we are already committed to them. The Minister for Works says they cannot be completed for some years.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: But I am speaking of railway Bills that may come down this session.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER: I am speaking of authorised works. The Minister for Works has made it his policy to finish these works first and then he will be prepared to introduce other railway propositions. I am not speaking against

the line as an agricultural proposition, because I believe there is a good deal to be said for it, but I object to the country being committed to a heavy expenditure—because it is not only this line but also the improvements to the Esperance harbour—until present commitments are dealt with.

Hon. B. C. O'BRIEN (Central): I move—

*That the debate be adjourned.*

Motion negatived.

Hon. B. C. O'BRIEN: I desire to say at the outset that I am in favour of the proposition, and I might also add I have never been asked to support it from a sentimental point of view, or anything of the kind. Somewhere in the vicinity of 11 or 12 years ago Mr. Connolly brought forward a motion asking that it should be an instruction to the Government of the day to construct a line from Coolgardie to Esperance. On that occasion I promised Mr. Connolly my support, and the project had my absolute approval. It just happened that when the vote was taken in the House I was away on the Murchison, and consequently my name was not shown in the division list. However, I was in absolute accord with the proposition then, and since that time we have had at least two other proposals for connecting the Eastern Goldfields and Esperance by rail. I am sorry that the present proposal is not also to connect the goldfields with Esperance, and that the Government cannot see their way clear to go the whole hog and propose a line right through. However, anticipating the temper of this House, they have thought fit to alter the proposition and make it a line extending 60 miles northwards from Esperance. That, of course, alters the proposition considerably. In regard to the financial aspect, although I think the railway will in the near future become a paying proposition, at any rate it will pay working expenses and interest, it would be a better paying proposition if the line were run right through to Norseman. We would not only open up this 60 miles of country north of Esperance, but we would open up the additional areas from Grass Patch to Norse-

man. Then there would be the goldfields trade; we would open up the goldfields market for a great amount of the produce raised along the line, and there is no doubt that Esperance would be a popular resort for the goldfields people at certain seasons of the year. The women and children of the goldfields would most assuredly patronise the line to a great extent, and that would not make a great deal of difference to the capital city of Perth. A great deal of the opposition to this measure arises from people in and about the capital city. I have been asked the reason why I support a line from the goldfields to Esperance, and people have said to me "Surely you must realise that it will be against your interests as a business man in the city." That consideration has been put to me scores of times, and it is that parochial spirit that has kept the proposition back so long. If this proposition was good years ago it should be good to-day, and I for one will give it my absolute support. Mr. Gawler evidently has been wavering a good deal and he felt almost inclined to support the Bill but he said that there were other more pressing financial matters which required attending to at Fremantle. I thoroughly agree with the hon. member. I think this proposal should not take precedence over other works and railways authorised in the past, but there is no harm in this House approving of the desirability of constructing the line. The works which the hon. member referred to will have to be carried out, and in my opinion they should be attended to at once. And there are many other proposals which should come along before the Esperance line, consequently in regard to any feelings the hon. member may have on that point no doubt the Minister will give him an assurance that this line will only take its turn in the ordinary way. I feel that so much has been said on this question that there is little more for me to add. I do not wish to delay the House; apparently a division is to be taken to-night, and other members desire to address the Chamber, therefore I have said sufficient, and again I say I support the proposal.

Hon. R. D. McKENZIE (North-East): It is not my desire, nor do I intend to traverse the arguments in favour of the building of this line. On previous occasions in this Chamber I have explained my views, and the attitude which I intend to take up, and I may say at the outset I have not changed those views, and on this occasion my support will be given to the Bill, and I trust it will be carried. At the same time I may say I regret and regret very much, that the Government have considered it advisable to bring in a Bill for only a portion of the line from Esperance to Norseman. I trust if this Bill is carried, and it is decided to go on with the construction of the line 60 miles northwards, the day will not be long before another Bill is brought forward authorising the construction of the line from the 60-mile peg to Norseman, thus bringing the line now proposed in the Bill in conjunction with the present railway system of Western Australia, because I realise it is going to be a very expensive matter to run a short railway of 60 miles entirely upon a system of its own. For eighteen years the agitation has been going on on the goldfields for the construction of a line to the goldfields natural port. In the days when the agitation started there were no agricultural prospects between Norseman and Esperance; things have changed somewhat since then, and now we have what I think everyone will admit, a tract of good agricultural country which is crying out for settlement. The agricultural potentialities between Norseman and Esperance are such that all admit the country will be able to grow all the agriculture produce and all the garden and farm produce required for the goldfields, and the goldfields people will be able to get the whole of their supplies from the land situated between Norseman and Esperance. Apart from the agricultural aspect of the case, what has always appealed to me, and appeals to me to-day, is that Esperance is going to be such a magnificent sanatorium for the teeming thousands on the goldfields. There is no doubt if we had railway communication between Esperance and the goldfields there would be

thousands of people, particularly women and children, going there every year to enjoy the invigorating and health-giving breezes which blow in from the ocean to Esperance. From that point of view we are justified in constructing the line, and from that point of view the Bill has my support. I am not going to traverse the arguments again. I have no doubt every member in the Chamber has made up his mind what he is going to do, and it is no use taking up the time of members going over the grounds which have so often been traversed before. I merely desire to say that the Bill has my entire sympathy and support, and I also desire to say that if the Bill is going to a division to-night I wish to have recorded the fact that I have paired on this occasion with Mr. Lynn, who has been suddenly called away to the Eastern States. When the division is taken, my name will not therefore appear in the division list. I desire to express my sympathy with the Bill, and I hope members will see fit to carry it on this occasion.

Hon. E. M. CLARKE (South-West): Like other members, I do not want to give a silent vote on this question, but I am prepared to believe in all that the Minister in charge of the Bill has said about the capabilities and possibilities of that line. I think that can be safely given in and made a present of, but there is this fact, when we look around and see the various engagements that the Government have undertaken—by that I mean the different railways and works they are pledged to and promised—I think they have quite enough to do to carry out those obligations within the next three or four years at the least. I was always considered cautious, and in some instances I even humped up against no less a person than Sir John Forrest. On certain points we differed, but I like to err on the side of being cautious. There is a time for that, and I think that time has arrived now. We must bear in mind that the profit on a bushel of wheat is narrowed down to a few pence, and we must also bear in mind the facilities there are in other parts of the world for handling wheat expeditiously. One of the

things they do say is that the cost of sacks now amounts to something like 3d. a bushel which emphasises the fact that the Government, to get the full benefits of the railway, must have proper facilities in the first place to accommodate vessels of a deep draught. I consider the harbours of Geraldton, Fremantle, Bunbury and Albany require proper facilities for receiving deep draught vessels and the most up-to-date methods for shipping wheat. It is said that wheat growing is increasing in Western Australia. I am well aware of that, and it is going to be something tremendous, the amount of wheat shipped from the State. But that does not prove that the men engaged in growing wheat are making a fat living out of it. I believe 3s. is about the minimum at which wheat can be grown, and I may say that that is governed absolutely by the distance farmers have to cart the wheat and the crops which they get. I want to emphasise this, that we do not want to spread ourselves over too much; we must link up the finances and carry out the obligations we have now undertaken before entering on any more. It is not very often the Minister for Works and myself agree, but I absolutely endorse and approve of what he said, that the Government should not undertake any more railways until such time as they have carried out those they are already pledged to. I want to say this, that as far as I am concerned I would not pass this Bill if only for one reason, and that is that the passage of this Bill through this Chamber might induce settlers to go on the land, and I am satisfied they are not likely, even though the Bill passes, to get the railway for some years to come. I would deter them from going there, and I would go so far as some hon. members have suggested, that it would be better to buy the settlers out rather than keep them there in the hope of a railway being built which they are not likely to get for some years. When we consider the financial position of Western Australia, and that there are a little over 300,000 people in this State, and that the loan liabilities alone amount to between £80 and £90 a head for each man, woman and child, it is high time we paused, and so to speak

called a halt and reviewed the financial position of Western Australia before we go into anything like this railway proposal. With regard to the line paying or not, that does not enter into the question from my standpoint, because my experience is that up to several years ago there were only two spur agricultural railways paying working expenses with anything left to the good. But I would support railways notwithstanding that, because it is obvious that although these short lines do not pay they swell the amount of traffic on the trunk lines, and they are absolutely necessary as feeders. And if we wait until such time as it is proved that a spur line will pay we should get very few more railways constructed in Western Australia. I think we should pause and consider our position, the position of the money market, and our present liabilities, and I am sure if I was running the show my ambition would be to give proper railway facilities to the people who have been induced to go on the land with the promise of a railway. I would carry out my obligation to them, and have the whole thing complete before undertaking any other railway. I adopt the suggestion thrown out by no less a person than the Minister for Works, that I would rather defer the passage of the Bill until such time as there is a possibility of the people at Esperance getting the railway within reasonable time. I have nothing more to say. I simply spoke with a view to letting my reasons be known for opposing the line at this stage, that I would not induce people to go on the land with the hope of a railway when at the same time I am satisfied it cannot be built for some years to come.

On motion by the Colonial Secretary, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 9.15 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Wednesday, 3rd December, 1913.*

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

### ELECTION RETURN, CUE.

The Speaker announced the return to a writ issued for the election of a member for Cue, showing that Mr. Thomas Chesson had been duly elected.

Mr. Chesson took the oath and subscribed the roll.

### PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Works: Health by-law of the municipality of Boulder.

By Hon. W. C. Angwin (Honorary Minister): Report of the Chief Inspector of Fisheries for the year ended 31st December, 1912.

### QUESTION—STATE ENTERPRISES BALANCE SHEETS.

Mr. MONGER (without notice) asked the Minister for Lands in the absence of the Premier: When do the Government intend to furnish balance sheets in connection with the operations of the State steamships and other State enterprises?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: I will be glad if the hon. member will give notice of the question.

### BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Roads Act Continuation (introduced by the Minister for Works).

2, Illicit Sale of Liquor (introduced by the Attorney General).