

The PREMIER : The hon. member was again showing lamentable ignorance of the resources of Western Australia. There was, in close proximity to Nannine, one of the best orange orchards in the State.

Clause passed.

Clauses 5, 6, 7—agreed to.

Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment; the report adopted.

*House adjourned at 10.48 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

*Tuesday, 15th December, 1908.*

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

### ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Governor received and read, notifying assent to Supply Bill, £365,579.

### PAPERS PRESENTED.

*By the Colonial Secretary:* 1, Annual Report of the Woods and Forests Department for year ended 30th June, 1908. 2, By-laws of the municipalities of Boulder and Subiaco.

### URGENCY MOTION—LAND SETTLEMENT. SENATOR NEEDHAM'S STATEMENT.

Hon. C. SOMMERS (Metropolitan): I wish to move the adjournment of the House on a matter of urgency.

The PRESIDENT: I have a statement of the matter the hon. member wishes to bring forward which is as follows:—"To draw the attention of the House and country to the unwarrantable statements of Senator Needham while speaking on the Appropriation Bill in the Senate during the present session of the Commonwealth Parliament." In my opinion the motion is in order and it deals with a definite matter of urgent public importance. If it is supported by four members, according to Standing Order 58, the hon. member may proceed.

Four members having risen in their places,

Hon. C. SOMMERS (Metropolitan) said: I desire to draw the attention of this House and the country to the unwarrantable statements of Senator Needham when speaking on the Appropriation Bill in the Senate during the present session of the Commonwealth Parliament. I bring this matter forward with very great regret—regret to think that one, who should at all times truthfully uphold what we know to be right, and for the good of this State, so as to help the State as far as possible to attract people to its shores, has not only failed to do so, but has made incorrect remarks as to the land available for settlement. Press reports of the proceedings, which doubtless members noticed, appeared in the *West Australian* on the 10th instant, but to make quite sure the report was absolutely correct I telegraphed for and received a corroboration from Parliament House, Melbourne. The following is the message:—

"Speaking on Appropriation Bill he says, 'I admit that there is any amount of room for population, but my desire is to have a judicious scheme of immigration. It would be wise before we invite people to come to our shores to have land available

on which they may settle. At the present time I venture to say that there is not land available for immigrants from the Home country.' Senator Dobson: 'A nice thing to publish abroad.' Senator Needham: 'I have made the statement before and I make it again.' Senator Millen: 'The Western Australian Government offer free grants of land.' Senator Needham: 'When I speak of land I mean land worth settling on and all such land is held up in my own State as well as in New South Wales by those who own millions of acres which they do not use.' Senator Millen: 'Then the Western Australian Government in offering free grants of a hundred and sixty acres commit a fraud.' Senator Needham: 'I cannot help what the Government of my State or any other State offer.' These are unwarrantable and untrue statements, and I think it is the duty of this House to draw the attention of the Government to them, so that means may be taken promptly to refute them. We do not attach much to the utterances of Senator Needham as Mr. Needham, but owing to the position he occupies as a Senator we expect something different. This is the gentleman who was recently occupying the exalted position of holder-up to a boiler maker at a wage of 7s. 6d. per day. The first matter he voted on when he entered the Federal Parliament was to increase his salary from £400 to £600 a year. He says that the statement to which I have referred he had made previously, and that he, on the occasion when he made the speech, desired to repeat it. We know the truth of the matter and how serious it will be for the State if his statement is not contradicted. Sir John Forrest has frequently said in the Federal House, and out of it, that the men sent from this State to represent the electors are not public men in the true sense of the word. Further, he said that if some of the Senators and members of the House of Representatives for this State, walked down any of the principal streets of Perth, not one man in a hundred would know them. That

is true, and certainly so in regard to Senator Needham.

Hon. J. T. Glowrey: Was not he the man who found a difficulty in getting someone to identify him at a bank?

Hon. C. SOMMERS: I think the circumstances of the case justify me in referring to that incident. I was one day recently waited upon by a bank official, accompanied by Senator Needham. It appeared that the Senator wanted someone to identify him at one of the banks, and he had the greatest difficulty in doing so; he was lucky enough eventually to find me.

The PRESIDENT: The chief matter of the motion is the land of the State.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: This incident I refer to is merely by the way. We can despise the utterances of Mr. Needham, but when he speaks as a Senator and defames this State, it is a matter of urgency, and one the Government should be called upon to take immediate steps upon. I hope and trust all the members will say in no unmeasured manner what they think of him. There is no doubt about the utterances having been made, for I have read the report received from the Federal Parliament House. His statements are untrue, and I trust every publicity will be given to this matter in this State, so that the electors may know exactly what to expect from these so-called representatives. I am sure other members will have something to say on this question. One other matter I would refer to. It is very significant that the other five representatives of this State in the Senate remained silent while these untrue statements were being made. Senator Lynch spoke immediately after Senator Needham, but no reference was made by him to the statements, nor did he attempt to refute them. I move—

*That the House do now adjourn.*

Hon. M. L. MOSS (West): I think Mr. Sommers is to be commended for having brought up this question, because it enables us, at any rate from this distance from Melbourne, to do something to refute the statements made by Senator Needham. I quite agree with Mr. Sommers that the statements are both

unwarrantable and untruthful. What are we building the agricultural lines in various parts of this State for, and what are we inducing people from the old country and from other parts of Australia to come here for? Is it not because there is an abundance of land, and that we are also satisfied that the permanent prosperity of this country is wrapped up in agricultural development throughout Western Australia? It is to me a surprising statement. I think hon. members will agree that there is never any dearth of land in this country. The difficulty is rather to give such facilities of transit that the land can be utilised to the best advantage. It is astonishing to think that any person holding the responsible position that Mr. Needham occupies should utter a slander so serious as that contained in the statements attributed to him. Unless rapidly contradicted, such statements cannot help doing a considerable amount of injury to the State. In fact such a statement as this, if put side by side with some of the literature distributed by the Government in various parts of the world, would go to show one of two things; either gross fraud on the part of the Government in endeavouring to induce immigrants to come to this State, or that Mr. Needham has made what the hon. Mr. Sommers has characterised as a most unwarrantable and untruthful statement. Except one be quite sure of one's ground it is always a wrong thing to attribute motives, but I think that in this instance the motive underlying the statement is clear. Mr. Needham is a nominee of the Labour party and he owes his position in the Senate to the fact that he was a nominee of that party at the last elections. Many of us, indeed most of us in this State, are striving our utmost to assist the Government in their policy of attracting population to Western Australia, and are supporting generally the policy of bringing population to all parts of the Commonwealth. The only safeguard we have against this place being made an object of attack in time to come is by placing a considerable population throughout Australia. It is as

good as any defence scheme. But apart from that aspect of this question—the point of view of defence—this immigration policy is a thing that cannot fail to make the people already in the country wealthy. And we know that the party to which Senator Needham belongs is opposed to immigration of any kind.

*The Colonial Secretary :* Hear, hear.

Hon. M. L. MOSS: The statement has been made with a view to keeping the whole of Australia for the handful of people now settled around the coast. If statements of the kind can get publicity they will scare people away from Australia. It is part of the Labour party's policy, and as pursued has already done serious injury to the Commonwealth. When one listens to the observations made by Mr. Needham, one cannot help being struck by the contrast they present to the conduct of all public men in Canada. There, no matter to which side a man belongs, his efforts are put forward to further the policy of bringing an abundance of population to the Dominion. It is only by that means that they can hope ever to fully develop their areas; and loyally do they uphold the policy. Although not perhaps in the immediate future, the time will surely come when, if the people of Australia do not populate their country with the right class of immigrants, the civilised nations will not continue to allow Australia to hold the country and keep it in idleness. Germany with its millions of people barred altogether from landing in America—if anything should occur to the mother country it is certain that Germany would make its descent on Australia and demand a large slice of the country. The policy of the Labour party and of Mr. Needham is to keep people out of this country and it is simply motives of that character which have impelled him to make the statements he has made. It is just as well to know that all the people in the Eastern States are not imbued with Mr. Needham's ideas. It was a pleasure for me recently to attend a congress at which Mr. Deakin spoke, and at which he gave unstinted praise to the Government of

this State for the efforts they are making towards populating our large areas. Were it not for the fact that Mr. Needham occupies a position as member of the Senate we could afford to ignore his statements altogether. There can be no doubt about our policy of opening up the country. One has but to take the monthly Statistical Abstract and turn to the figures showing month by month the land taken up and put to agricultural purposes. These figures cannot fail to be thoroughly convincing. They in themselves give an emphatic denial to the statement made by Mr. Needham which as has already been said is a very untruthful one indeed. I have pleasure in supporting the motion.

Hon. W. MALEY (South-East): Having been through the Eastern States and got into touch with a number of people of all shades of opinion I must say that the speeches made here to-day are expressive of the opinion that is held throughout Australia with regard to the need for population. It is a cry in every State of the Commonwealth, and it is a great libel to say that Western Australia has no land available for the purpose. I cannot understand how a Senator representing Western Australia, or as the hon. member says, misrepresenting the State, could dare to make the assertion he has made in Melbourne in view of the fact that in Collins-street we have an agency which is sending a large number of farmers to settle on the land in Western Australia, and through which agency reports are daily made public of the success attending the efforts of the Government to induce the people of the Eastern States to settle on our soil. When I was in Tasmania an insignificant newspaper published at Launceston came out with a leading article on Western Australia in which it was said that the bubble had already burst. This question was discussed at one of the principal hotels in Hobart, and I was very pleased to find that there were present many cosmopolitan men who had been in Western Australia and who were cognisant of the real facts and who, I must say, roundly denounced the

newspaper. That newspaper I have occasion to believe did itself no good whatever by decrying Western Australia. After all we are not dependent entirely upon our own reports. We have the private reports which these people on our lands are continually sending back to their friends. We have 40,000,000 acres of land suitable for agricultural settlement in this State; and not only for agricultural settlement but for fruit growing. The possibilities are so great that one is astounded at the audacity of any person, however uninformed, who can get up and make such a statement as that credited to Senator Needham. I hope that when he comes to Western Australia he will be better known than he has been in the past, even if he be less respected.

Hon. G. THROSSELL (East): To refute the statements made by Mr. Needham, it should be sufficient to point to the enormous amount of new settlement now proceeding in the State and to the policy of the Government under which we are building so many agricultural railways. It may be true that Australia does not lend itself to settlement as does Canada with its 1,000 miles of prairie lands 600 miles in width. Yet we are told that we possess some 6,000,000 acres of land with sufficient rainfall for wheat growing. Such figures going forth should be in themselves a sufficient condemnation of Mr. Needham's statement. It is remarkable that anyone should decry in the way he has done the capabilities of our own State. We have not only room for hundreds of people but for millions if we do our duty by this splendid land of ours. I have no more to say except to remind hon. members that we have 6,000,000 acres of land with a rainfall ample for wheat growing. That fact in itself should be a sufficient refutation of such a libel as this.

Hon. F. CONNOR: I think the statement made by Mr. Needham is one deserving of condemnatory notice by every citizen of Western Australia. I think, in fact I am sure, that this is the result of our entering into what is known as the "noose" of Federation. The fact that it is possible for a so-called representa-

tive of this country to go to what we may now, as far as we ourselves are concerned, regard almost as a foreign country and deery our resources in the manner this misrepresentative of this country has done, is worthy of notice. His statements should be resented by every public man in the State. I think almost every member of this House was cognisant of the fact that these remarks had been made by Mr. Needham. However thanks are due to Mr. Sommers for having put the matter in such shape that it is now brought under the notice of everybody. As no doubt this matter has been taken notice of by the Government we are naturally anxious to know what steps it is proposed to be taken in respect to refuting this libel. Have any steps been taken up to the present, and if not why not? If no steps have already been taken, I think we have a right to know what steps will be taken in the future towards the refutation of the libel on this great State which the gentleman who misrepresents Fremantle has made. I hope some action will be taken by the Government to refute this statement in the very near future.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. D. Connolly) : I think it is very much to be regretted that a gentleman, occupying the position which Mr. Needham does, should have made such a statement. As correctly stated by previous speakers, the statement made by Mr. Needham would not matter so much, but, occupying the position he does as a Senator, people may perhaps believe him. I am willing to put it down more to his ignorance, as I believe the Senator possesses no real knowledge of the State, rather than that he has made a deliberately false statement.

Hon. W. Patrick : What about the silence of the others?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is regrettable that any of the other five did not see fit to contradict the statement, and that there is a Minister in the Senate at the present time who is a Western Australian representative, and he did not seem to think it his duty to contradict the statement. It is a pity that a statement should go forth which can in

any way retard the land settlement going forward, and the inflow of immigrants which are steadily coming into this country. When I say that Senator Needham is ignorant on this matter, that is apparent, for the *Statistical Abstract* shows that during the month of August 143,000 acres of land were taken up under different sections of the Land Act. In September 158,000 acres were taken up, and in the next month 182,000 acres, and this is going steadily on. That is a sufficient answer to this gentleman, and shows that we have land which is being settled. There is no getting away from the fact that the party to which Senator Needham belongs, although they do not always openly state so, are opposed to any increase in our immigration policy; their policy seems to be to keep a few people in this State, so that there will not be so much competition for positions or billets that are going. I have felt that for a long time. As some members have mentioned, take the example of Canada. We find there that no one publishes any adverse report of the country, but all are very keen in praising up their country and saying everything in its favour. Here, unfortunately, even our own legislators think it their so-called duty to deery our own State. I am pleased indeed that Mr. Sommers moved the motion, for it has given an opportunity for a denial in that way, and the hon. member deserves the thanks of the House for so doing.

Hon. E. M. CLARKE (South-West) : The thanks of the House are due to Mr. Sommers for bringing forward this matter; at the same time, it appears to be one of those bald statements which are almost beneath the notice of anyone, and the correct way for the Government to answer these statements is to send along the statistics showing the applications approved during the last six months and the applications that have not been granted up to the present time.

The Colonial Secretary : All that information is in the Melbourne Agency now.

Hon. E. M. CLARKE : These statistics require to be read out as near to

Senator Needham's seat as possible. I think a statement is one thing, but facts and figures are the proper things to go on. I do not feel like making any remark in reference to the statement, because it is self-evident to anyone inquiring into the matter. It is said that a falsehood travels quicker than the truth, and, therefore, it is up to the Government to send along the statistics and have them read out as near to the hon. gentleman's seat as possible.

*Hon. W. Kingsmill* : That Parliament has prorogued.

*Hon. E. M. CLARKE* : Let it be received a little later on. We are straining every effort to construct railways into all parts of this continent. One thing, Western Australia has the land and wants people to settle on it, and how a person from Western Australia can make such a statement as Mr. Needham did puzzles me. The thing is self-evident, but it is just as well to contradict it right away. There are thousands of acres being applied for every month of the year: this is going on and likely to go on. The policy of the Government is to construct new railways into new areas, and that is self-evident to anyone who goes into the question at all.

*Hon. J. M. DREW* (Central) : I wish simply to state that I desire to add my voice to the chorus of protest against the action of Senator Needham in the Senate decrying the land of this State. The remarks of members, and the statistics of the Lands Department showing the enormous and continuous increase of land settlement in Western Australia are a complete refutation of the statement. The experience of the settlers from the Eastern States who have sold up their homes there to come to Western Australia, and have settled here and become prosperous, is sufficient disproof of what Senator Needham has stated. I regret, in introducing this matter, Mr. Sommers should have seen fit to indulge in personalities. I fail to see it is any reflection on his character or position as a man or a politician that Senator Needham should have been a boilermaker, or a boilermaker's assistant at 7s. 6d. a day.

I do not think the Labour party should have been imported into this discussion at all. The Labour party are not opposed to immigration, they support it, especially agricultural immigration; I do not say they support wholesale immigration, but immigration for the settlement of the land. This is supposed to be a non-party House, but from my experience lately, direct attacks have been made upon the Labour party. It is possible to carry on a controversy without introducing party into a debate. I strongly protest against the statement made by Senator Needham, and I regret very sincerely that a representative of Western Australia in the House should have made such a statement.

*Hon. J. W. Hackett* : There were five Labour members in the Senate and they said not a word.

*Hon. C. SOMMERS* (in reply) : I have to thank hon. members for the remarks which they have made. I may say that my justification for implicating other members in the Senate in this matter was that there were five other Labour members present, and they remained silent when the statement was made. That is my justification for referring to them at all. If that is the sort of representation we are to get, God help us. I express the hope that the Government will take some steps to refute this statement which has been made, and I also express the hope that when Senator Needham returns to this State he will make better use of his railway pass, and perhaps under the guidance of some members of this House—I will do so—he will be shown what he does not know, some of the agricultural resources of this State. I beg leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

#### BILL—BUNBURY HARBOUR BOARD.

Read a third time, and *passed*.

#### BILL—EMPLOYMENT BROKERS.

On motion by the *Colonial Secretary* report of Committee adopted.

## BILL—VERMIN BOARDS.

*Second reading.*

Debate resumed from 10th December.

Hon. E. M. CLARKE (South-West): Realising that some such measure as this is necessary, I can only say I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill, but there is one exception I take to it, and that is the maximum of 2s. per hundred acres. It seems to me that is rather a high fee to pay. We realise that it is necessary to destroy the vermin, and I think the Government should add to the schedule of what constitutes vermin the words "kangaroos in the North-West districts." The settlers up to a certain point pay, I think, 4d. per scalp, and they appear to me to hail with delight the Bill, but the question for debate is whether 2s. per hundred acres is not rather high, bearing in mind that settlers are paying from 5s. to 10s. per thousand acres, and when we take into consideration that they have to take an immense area of land, the amount is rather high. I only moved the adjournment of the debate to get an expression of opinion from my electors as to the measure in general, and they think it is first-class and are in sympathy with it, because up to the present time they have contributed so much out of their pockets in destroying vermin, but they realise that certain persons get every benefit from the destruction of those vermin and do not contribute anything. In Committee I shall attempt to reduce the amount of 2s. to something lower.

Hon. F. CONNOR (North): I was one of the several persons interested in the northern portion of the State, who urged the Government to bring in a Bill with the object that this measure has in view. I am still of opinion that necessity exists for a Bill of this nature, but I suggest for the consideration of the Colonial Secretary that the Bill has been drafted somewhat to suit the closer settlement areas, and will not be suitable for certain districts of the country. Take the Kimberley district. East and West Kimberley, the areas held there run into large figures; in one instance

there is a holder there of four million acres of land. Well now, those four million acres will probably represent not more than a million acres of land that would be of any use to holders, or I should say certainly not that much. Certainly a small proportion of land held is of any use to the people who hold it, but all must be taken up so as to prevent what is known as "dummying," whereby people start breeding a small number of cattle. I intend to support the Bill, but I will ask that the Government should agree that until the necessity arises, certain districts one of which I represent, the East Kimberley—I will leave Mr. McLarty to deal with West Kimberley himself—should be exempted from the provisions of this Bill. This Bill does not suit the Kimberleys. It is a most excellent measure for a country where there are comparatively small holdings and closer settlement, but it does not apply, or it should not be intended to apply to the country in the very far north, where we deal with millions of acres. It was never intended that Mr. McLarty or other very large holders of land should be liable to be rated to the extent of £3,000 per annum, which he certainly would be liable to, and it does not follow either that a man like Mr. Copley—and I think it is a good thing for the State that a man like Mr. Copley is here to develop these far northern lands and raise stock on them—I say it is not fair that such people should be placed in the position whereby they would have to pay a heavy rate at the order of a board in connection with the election of which they would have only a small say. The voting in connection with the election of these boards will show that the large holders will not have much say, and these boards will have the right to rate up to £4,000 per annum on one holding, and the holder will have no say whatever in the disbursement of that money. I am one of the most ardent advocates of the Vermin Bill, but I will move when the measure is in Committee, that at least the district which I represent more directly, should be exempted, and as I have said, I will

leave Mr. McLarty, who represents the West Kimberley, to handle his own district. It would be an impossibility for the holders of very large areas to meet the levy they would have to pay. Under this Bill I have no hesitation in saying that the large holders will have no say whatever in connection with the disbursements of the funds.

*The Colonial Secretary:* The boards will have to spend the money as provided by the Bill.

Hon. F. CONNOR: We know that, but it is a question of handling perhaps thousands of pounds of other people's money, and where you have boards composed almost exclusively—and I say this at the risk of offending my friend, Mr. Drew—of what we might call the working men, by this I mean comparatively speaking, the holders of small areas; I say the boards would be composed of such people, and where they have the right to levy up to as much as £30,000, it is not human nature to expect that they would spend that money in the manner that the holders of the large areas would desire. Although I will vote for the second reading, I now say that it will be necessary to materially alter the Bill in respect to certain districts, and especially to the districts in the far north of the country, where very large holdings are held. One of the principal supporters of the Bill in another place told me, if he had realised what these provisions would be as applied to the Kimberleys, he would have drawn attention to the fact.

Hon. W. Patrick: I thought the Bill was discussed clause by clause at a meeting of the Pastoralists' Association.

Hon. F. CONNOR: I do not know about that; although I am a member of the association, I was not at the meeting where this Bill was discussed clause by clause. If I had been there I should have drawn attention to the rate. This rate should appeal to the common sense of members.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Would you suggest any alternative scheme for East Kimberley?

Hon. F. CONNOR: I would suggest that East Kimberley be left out of the province of the Bill for the time being.

I would suggest a tax on stock. As the Bill is drafted it is only wasting the time of the House in my opinion discussing it. I say this rating while very high for the larger areas, is too low for the southern part of the State where you have closer settlement, and where you can cope with these pests, but when you come to an area like the Kimberleys, and where you cannot fence the country in, it is an entirely different matter. You would under these circumstances put yourself completely in the hands of the board, and that board would be able to rate you, and spend your money against your own interests. I do feel it is an unsatisfactory position as regards the far northern districts, and I will ask in Committee if no better scheme can be suggested, that at least the Kimberleys should be exempted.

Hon. J. M. DREW (Central): I am much surprised at the tone of the remarks of Mr. Connor after my experience with a large number of pastoralists from the North-West. When I was Minister for Agriculture, I was approached by a great many pastoralists, who beseeched me to bring in a Bill of the character of that introduced this session. I had one in course of preparation when I left office, and in that Bill the tax was based on the number of stock.

*Hon. F. Connor:* That is fair.

Hon. J. M. DREW: After giving careful consideration to this Bill, and viewing the matter from every point, I think it is an improvement for the reason that there may be a large extent of land held purely for speculative purposes, which would be simply a breeding ground for vermin. Why should not these people therefore, be taxed as well as the stock owners? Right through our district, the Central province, there has been a persistent agitation for a Bill of this character. Thousands of head of sheep, and hundreds of calves are every year destroyed by dingoes, and since I left the office of Minister for Agriculture I have received letters from roads boards in the different districts in my Province asking me to use my influence with the Government to see that this Vermin Bill was brought forward, and almost every



six months the present Minister for Agriculture has been approached by the pastoralists, and requested to introduce a measure of this description. It may be said that a tax of 2s. per hundred acres is too high, but it must be understood that that amount is the maximum. They may make it a 1d. per one hundred acres, and the boards to be elected will be composed of the very men who will contribute this tax. This Bill need not apply to any district, unless there is an application for that to be done. As far as I can see there is only one defect in the Bill, and that is there is no provision for exemption for the man who makes his holdings vermin proof. There is a squatter in the Shark Bay district who has fenced in his runs with vermin proof netting, and it seems to me in fairness to that man, he should be exempt as far as those holdings of his are concerned. He started a couple of years ago, and has gone to enormous expense in fencing his runs with rabbit-proof netting. In order to encourage others to do likewise, anyone who fences his runs in such a manner should be exempt in regard to the particular blocks so enclosed, but not otherwise. The true object of introducing a Bill of this character is to prevent pests spreading. If a man has fenced his runs with rabbit-proof netting, although he may fence them in in his own holdings, they cannot be a menace to any of the pastoralists outside, consequently he should not be called upon to pay a tax in regard to those particular blocks. That is the only defect I can see in the Bill. It seems to me to have been carefully drafted and simple, and covers all the ground that is necessary. The tax of 2s. per hundred acres may seem too high, but as I have stated, that is the maximum. A tax of only 1d. can be imposed, if the necessity demands it. I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill.

Hon. W. MALEY (South-East): This Bill is to deal with the conditions obtaining all over the State, and it appears to me a most difficult proposition. So difficult are the conditions in the agricultural districts where there is closer settlement,

and in the pastoral districts, that it is almost impossible to effectively deal on these lines with the trouble in respect to vermin. In my opinion it would be more equitable to base the rate on the stock held by the individual. It is, after all, affording a protection to the stock a man holds at so much per head. It is similar to water supply; though there may be a general rate of a moderate amount, there may be a special rate for the use the individual gets; in the one instance it is gauged by meter; in the other it is perhaps a mathematical proposition. I think a select committee would be able to give this Bill the consideration it needs, and to devote the time necessary to improve it so as to make it a satisfactory measure to be passed by this House. I trust that the Bill will be referred to a select committee composed of representative men interested in both the pastoral and the agricultural industries, so that both sides may be represented. I think a select committee could frame a report and suggest alterations so as to make the Bill acceptable to this House and to the country.

Hon. R. W. PENNEFATHER (North): This Bill attempts too much I think. If it were based upon the division of the State into three or more parts and the conditions were made applicable to each portion of the State it would be a fairly workable measure. As has just been pointed out, the South is essentially distinct in soil and climate from the Central portion, and the Central is distinct in climate from the North-West; while the North-West, as we all know, is much different in climate and conditions to the North. I think the conditions applicable to each portion of the State should be singled out. The Bill has excellent provisions in it applicable to closer settlement where there is a large population, but it is totally unsuited to the large areas of comparatively speaking unpopulated countries in the far North. I trust that members in Committee will do their best to make the Bill workable in the direction I have pointed out, by dividing the State into districts and each district having a principle of rating entirely distinct and its own.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (in reply): I am quite willing to listen to any amendments that may be proposed in Committee, but I think the amendment proposed by Mr. Connor is somewhat unreasonable. When introducing the measure I said it was regrettable that the Bill had not been introduced some 10 or 12 years ago. If we do not make it apply to the Kimberley district, then there will not be in existence such a provision as we should have had in existence in the Southern portion of the State years ago to give protection from the rabbit invasion. Now is just the time that they have need in the Kimberley district for such a provision as this. This is a Bill that has been asked for by the pastoralists for a number of years, as Mr. Drew has pointed out. Mr. Drew mentioned that when he was Minister the pastoralists asked him to introduce a Bill on these lines. We are merely passing a machinery measure to enable people to deal with these pests themselves. The Bill takes nothing from the people, it simply provides machinery to allow them to form boards and tax themselves. I cannot agree with Mr. Connor that the boards would be in the hands of small holders, because Clause 13 provides that a man having under 10,000 acres will have only one vote, and that the man holding from 10,000 acres to 100,000 acres shall have two votes. The amendment mentioned by Mr. Drew should, I think, have every consideration: that is, whenever a landholder encloses his holding with vermin-proof fencing it should be worthy of consideration as to whether he should be exempt from the rating proposed in the Bill. But let me say again that 2s. is only the maximum rate, and it is entirely in the hands of the landholders themselves through their representatives on the boards to say whether the rate be 1d., 2d., or 2s. If the need arises the machinery is there to raise a sum of money to cope with it; and I venture to say that in such a case squatters and selectors would be only too glad to put their hands in their pockets once and for all to endeavour to stop the vermin, when it might cost them ten times the amount if they neglected to do it at the

proper moment. However, these amendments can be further discussed in Committee, but I am pleased to notice the good reception given to the Bill and the complimentary remarks made by such members as Mr. Drew, who has considerable experience in administering the department under which this Bill comes.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

## BILL—BRIDGETOWN - WILGARRUP RAILWAY.

### *Second Reading.*

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. D. Connolly) in moving the second reading said: This, and another Bill I shall have the pleasure of introducing in a day or two, namely the Upper Chapman Railway Bill, are the last remaining railways in the programme of railway construction mentioned in the policy speech of May, 1906, when the present Government assumed the reins of office. This Bill is a proposal to extend the Bridgetown railway to Wilgarrup in a South-Westerly direction for a distance of 22¼ miles. Members will probably notice on the wall of the House a map showing the route of the railway and the settlement in the district, and the classification of the land. This railway starts from Bridgetown, which is 186 miles from Perth. Most members of this Chamber have some acquaintance with the fine district, and the nice little town of Bridgetown. As I said before, the length of the line is to be 22¼ miles; the rails will be 45lbs., the usual weight of rails used on light railways; the sleepers will be 8in. by 4in.; the gauge will be our standard gauge of 3ft. 6in., while the steepest gradient will be not more than one in 40, and the sharpest curve will have a 10-chain radius. The estimated cost of construction, that is excluding rails and fastenings, is £20,000, or a little over £900 per mile; the estimated cost of rails and fastenings is £14,900, or £670 per mile, and the total cost excluding rolling stock is estimated at approximately £35,000, or an approximate cost per mile of £1,573. The cost will be higher than the cost of ordinary

agricultural railways, because the country to be passed through is more hilly than in the case with lines such as the Katanning-Kojonup, or the Wagin-Dumbleyung, which practically go through flat country from start to finish. Reckoning 4 per cent. on the cost of construction it will mean something like £14,000 per annum to pay interest and sinking fund on the cost I have mentioned, namely £35,000. Last year we passed a Bill to construct another line in this part of the country—I speak of the Donnybrook-Preston line—and the great success that has attended the construction of that railway we anticipate will attend the building of this line. For instance, it will be seen from the Commissioner of Railway's report for the last financial year that the Donnybrook-Preston line made a profit of £913, after providing for the cost of running and interest on cost of construction.

*Hon. R. D. McKenzie:* Is this another timber line?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No, but, as in the case of the Donnybrook-Preston line, we anticipate there will be a considerable timber traffic over this line. The Donnybrook-Preston line touched jarrah country; in this case we will just touch the beginning of the karri country.

*Hon. W. Kingsmill:* Is the land open for selection?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Most of it. The line when built will open up a very big extent of country, and exceptionally good country. I rather suspect Mr. Kingsmill's meaning. Most of the land, which the railway passes through, may have been taken up some time ago.

*Hon. W. Kingsmill:* I do not mean that; I refer to timber companies, or things like that. Some of these companies are a bit in the way of selection.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: There are no timber companies in the way.

*Hon. W. Maley:* Because there is no good timber to cut, only blackbutt.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The hon. member has not been there. I have gone over it during the last six months;

there is exceptionally good karri, and in some places there is jarrah within easy reach of the line. The timber country has not been taken up. It will be let under the new system of sawmill permits and it can be worked in that way. In this district the rainfall is very good, being from 35 to 45 inches. I may point out that the country in which karri grows is always exceptionally good. Jarrah usually grows on ironstone ridges, but karri is invariably found growing on exceptionally good soil. This is the first section of a railway to open up that vast and magnificent country between Denmark on the South and Bridgetown on the North. There has been a trial survey, a horseback survey, made between the two points. It is hoped that eventually these two points will be joined and the railway run right through. The line will open up that magnificent karri country now lying idle.

*Hon. J. W. Hackett:* Does not this line go to the west of Denmark?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is not in a direct line, but it follows a route which gives the most land. More particularly in the Bridgetown and the Warren country it is a vastly different proposition to open up the lands than to open lands in the Eastern districts. It will take very much longer to open up such lands and it will be more costly to clear them, but when cleared they will carry a much larger population, three or four times the number as compared with a similar area in the Eastern districts. The land lends itself to cultivation, which is not possible in the districts I have mentioned. I have already stated that a good deal of this land is heavily timbered, and that it is not proposed to allow that timber to be destroyed and burnt. The timber areas will be reserved until they have been taken up under sawmill permits and the marketable timber has been cut out. The land will then be available for settlement. Mr. Johnston, the Surveyor General, in reporting upon this country, says:—

"This line will afford transport facilities to a number of settlers who are engaged in mixed farming and stock raising, in conjunction with apple

growing. 2, It will, undoubtedly, render the present settlers' task of transporting produce to a profitable market much easier, as they now have to contend against great difficulties, carting produce long distances. 3, A large extent of the country that will be served by this railway is eminently adapted for the cultivation of root crops, the growth of introduced grasses and, in view of the abundant rainfall and mild climate with which it is endowed, is well adapted for dairying purposes, and must in the not distant future be largely utilised for that purpose. 4, The capabilities of the soil and climate for the profitable cultivation of apples, pears, peaches, and smaller fruits have been proved without any doubt. In addition it has proved itself well adapted for profitable sheep farming. Portions of it, especially the valleys and some of the hillsides, when improved and put under grass, will be capable of carrying up to four sheep to the acre, if grazed in small paddocks."

Land that will carry four sheep to the acre, when improved like that, would in any country be described as first-class. A number of members have seen this particular district and they will undoubtedly agree with the Surveyor General's report. With regard to the railway itself, it will serve a population of, at the present time, something like 350. The resident occupiers of the various lands number 110, while the area held by them is 41,000 acres. The non-resident holders hold 16,000 acres. The land under cultivation this year was 950 acres of orchards, 113 acres of root crops, and 1,600 acres of cereals. The area of land cleared and ringbarked totals 72,000 acres. A number of gangs of men have been there for the past two years, and until May of this year, ringbarking and partially clearing the land. This land has been reserved in the past, but it is now available for settlement, and settlers who go on the land can begin to clear almost immediately.

*Hon. G. Randell:* How many bridges are there?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: There is one costly bridge, with costly

approaches, formation, and construction, after the line leaves Bridgetown, but the rest of the route is not particularly expensive. The whole cost, however, is considerably added to by the necessity for the bridge I have mentioned and other expenses in connection with the line getting away from Bridgetown. As members know, that district is very hilly. The average yield of grain and cereals in the district is 18 bushels of wheat, 23 hundredweights of hay, and eight tons of potatoes, according to last season's figures. I would draw particular attention to the possibilities of potato growing. This is not a cereal district but it will develop into a district for the growing of potatoes and root crops and for dairying. If there is one thing more particularly than another which we want to obtain here, it is a district with good possibilities for dairying and also for the growth of root crops. The land open for selection within a 15-mile radius of the line totals 180,000 acres. The land selected within that radius is 57,000 acres while the total land within the influence of the railway is 375,000 acres. During the last 12 months 28,000 acres have been selected, under the various sections of the Land Act, within 12 miles of the line. In 1906 an area of some 5,000 acres was subdivided near the terminus of the line into blocks of 200 acres each, and ringbarking was carried out in this particular area. To members accustomed to wheat areas in the Eastern and other districts this may seem a very small area, but it will provide in that district ample opportunities for a man to make a good living. An area of 3,400 acres was ringbarked and cleared at a cost of £1,300. Mr. Surveyor Terry, who has had a deal of experience in surveying and classifying land, was responsible for the present division and he says that of the 5,000 acres surveyed one half is worth 30s. and the balance 10s. and 20s. per acre. Mr. Surveyor Burnett in his report says—

"The present survey stops on the edge of the karri country, and to my mind the centre line of the future extension should be definitely fixed as soon as possible so that the railway can be made the boundary of the sur-

vey of selections. The first eight miles of the present survey passes along a valley which is gradually being put down in orchards which, with the exception of one, I have not seriously interfered with, but which will necessitate compensation being paid for the land resumed, and the same thing will occur on the extension beyond Manjimup if the centre line is not fixed within a reasonable time. This district is eminently suited for fruit growing amongst other things, and in future years will be largely planted. Something should be also done to conserve these magnificent karri trees from being wasted. I have run and blazed a contour line along the extension from Manjimup for about three miles so as to show the 'get-away.'"

I have already mentioned that provision will be made so that the available marketable timber will not be destroyed and burnt up. The timber karri areas will be reserved until the holders of sawmill permits have had an opportunity to cut the timber and send it away to market.

*Hon. W. Maley:* There is precious little karri there.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : The line does not go through karri country up to the terminus but it touches the edge of a large karri area, and any karri land up to within 15 miles of the railway will be immediately taken up, as the timber can be carted for that distance. As I have mentioned before I think it is a foregone conclusion that the line will be a remarkably good paying one, and we can tell that owing to the experience of the Donnybrook-Preston line. The latter line has opened up very good land and has gone through good timber country, and I feel sure the proposed new line, being very similar in that respect, will pay handsomely. I have not been along the Donnybrook-Preston line, but I have been over the route for the proposed one, and 20 miles beyond it, and I have no hesitation in saying this line will open up some of the nicest and best country I have seen in Western Australia. I have much pleasure in moving—

*That the Bill be now read a second time.*

*Hon. W. MALEY (South-East):* I am surprised that some member representing the district through which the line is to pass has not risen in his place to support the Bill. I think this is the first occasion in the history of legislation of this State that members have been so backward, and I can only put it down to their diffidence. I certainly believe they want the line and long very earnestly for it, and it must be that those gentlemen are diffident in supporting a railway which will pledge the State to such an expenditure in these very distressing times. There is before this House at the present time a motion to dispose of the proposal to construct a dock for Fremantle, and with such urgent need for economies as exist we should at any rate hesitate before we embark on the construction of fresh railways. When we consider that no member representing the Province through which this railway is proposed to be constructed is prepared to rise and support the Bill, this House should hesitate before accepting the measure. Not that I have any thing against railway construction, or the opening up of the lands of this State, but I think the proposal should be supported, criticised and approved and its necessity thoroughly established, before a measure is passed. I have been through the country, and I say unhesitatingly that on the Minister's own showing they are better proposals for railway construction in the State at present. The Government have pledged themselves and have embarked on certain enterprises which they are bound to follow up. The Minister, in introducing the Bill, had much to say for the karri country. The potentialities of the karri country although they have been ridiculed have not been understood, they are not understood to-day by many people of the State. The Minister truly said that root crops will be grown in the district. I look forward to the time when the karri country will become the great producing country of Western Australia. It is true this railway will just tap that country. On the other hand the Government have purchased a line which goes into the karri country. It touches the country at Denmark, and if the Gov-

ernment had determined to put before the country the best financial policy they would have constructed the whole length through the karri country instead of just touching it at one end. I contend that they are taking the wrong end for the construction of this line. I protested at Bridgetown against the proposal; not the proposal to construct a railway to Albany, but to construct it rather from Bridgetown for such a distance through very indifferent country as compared with that in the vicinity of Denmark; though a district composed, on the Colonial Secretary's admission, of jarrah country. We all know that jarrah does not grow on the richest soil in the State. I contend too, that the existence of the blackboy is not an indication of the best soil. Moreover, I think if the district warrants a railway the hon. members representing that province should be able to tell us something about it. Most of us who have been through the country know of the existence of the *Zamia* palm in that locality. It interferes very much with agricultural development. Going through that district recently we saw quite a big percentage of cattle paralysed as the result of having eaten this *Zamia* palm. Why construct railways through any but the very best land available in the State, seeing that we have so little money available and that the Government at the present time are dipping their hands into both pockets of the people, and that on all sorts of pretexts and excuses. I am by no means opposed to the building of agricultural railways, to a policy of agricultural development, to a policy of settlement of the people on the soil, or to a policy of immigration; but I must say that it is the bounden duty not only of the Government to prove their case, but of the members representing the district also to prove their case up to the hilt.

Hon. C. SOMMERS (Metropolitan): I regret that I do not think this railway is justified at the present time. Some day of course it must run through the country, but just at the present moment I think it might better be laid

down in some other part of the State. According to the Colonial Secretary's figures 350 people are to be served by the construction of this line. It seems to me to be rather a large expenditure to serve so small a number of people. If hon. members will examine the map they will find a large area of pastoral leases held in this district; and they will scarcely need reminding that those pastoral leases would not exist very long if the soil was particularly good. One must be considerably disappointed in that notwithstanding the railway to Bridgetown has been running for so many years so little development has gone on in that district. There is a great deal of land served by the Bridgetown railway which should be settled before other railways are built in that district. It has been pointed out by Mr. Maley that lines could be constructed in other parts of the State with less difficulty, and for much less cost. Very little land has been alienated in this district. The valleys are very narrow indeed, although it must be admitted that they are suitable for fruit-growing. Still, there is a great deal of land on both sides of the Bridgetown railway in respect of which little or nothing has been done; and I say advisedly that this railway might well wait for some years, while similar railways are being constructed in other parts of the country where they are more urgently needed. I regret having to oppose any railway, but I do think that this one supplies a case in which we might stay our hands while we spend the money to a better purpose elsewhere.

Hon. E. McLARTY (South-West): Mr. Maley has expressed some surprise that members representing the province should not have spoken on this matter. For my part I hardly thought it would be necessary to say anything with regard to this line. I took it that it was going to pass the second reading without opposition of any sort. However, I shall have a few words to say. I have been through the country myself, and I am satisfied that it is capable of very great development. I know a con-

siderable number of very old residents who have been isolated there for a great many years, with no facilities for extending their operations and opening up their holdings which the construction of this line will serve. Mr. Maley thinks lines could be built to better advantage in other parts of the State. For my part I cannot help suggesting that his province has had a very good show indeed; and I am bound to say that the developments up to date in that province as the result of railways built have not been as good as we anticipated.

*Hon. W. Maley:* I was the first to condemn it.

*Hon. E. McLARTY:* Perhaps so. Certainly the results have not been so satisfactory as hon. members anticipated when supporting the line in that hon. member's province. I took occasion the other day when speaking in this House to refer to the only railway built in the South-West by the present Government; and I was proud to be able to say that that particular line has been the best paying of all during the last twelve months. It has exceeded all expectations. We have another railway under construction in that province, a railway to which I need scarcely refer; that is the Nannup Railway. I think it is very unfair to form any opinions as to the capabilities of that line until it has been completed. We know that the Government have taken over the timber line; but the extension of that line to settlement and to the magnificent timber forests which it will pass through will make a very great difference to the earnings and the traffic of that line. I am prepared to say that one of the largest timber mills erected in Western Australia will be built as soon as ever the line is put through to Nannup. The company, with any amount of capital behind them, are unable to go on with the construction of the mill because they have as yet no means of getting their heavy machinery through. I will be very much surprised if in the course of another three years the Busselton-Nannup railway will not have become a very profitable line. Many men will be employed through its agency,

and it will accommodate a very great number of people. Speaking of the Bridgetown-Wilgarrup Railway, I may say I was in the district a few days ago when I had a conversation with a settler whose holding is only 14 miles beyond Bridgetown. He informed me that he had recently got a truck of fertiliser through from Fremantle. The freight on this fertiliser from Fremantle to Bridgetown was only £1, but to get it delivered to his home 14 miles away cost him £4. He assured me that as soon as the railway was built he would put under crop at least 150 acres of land each year; whereas now it does not pay him to put any land at all under crop, the cost of carting being so great. The district is admirably adapted to potato growing and to the growing of root crops generally; it is also the best part of the State for the dairying industry. I have made the statement before that if dairying is to become a success in Western Australia that is the part of the State we must look to to produce our butter, our onions, and our potatoes. We have an abundance of corn-growing land in the Eastern districts, and in the Northern parts, but we require to open up this country in the South-West to produce butter, potatoes, onions, and other such crops. I think the cost of construction of this line is very small indeed; £1,400 a year is going to cover the interest and sinking fund, and I am sure that the indirect benefits that will accrue to the State by the opening up of this country and by the additional settlement will far more than equal that amount. In the Bridgetown-Blackwood district at the present time settlement is going at a very satisfactory rate indeed. I was down there last month and was very pleased with the class of people settling on the land. They are good practical farmers from the Eastern States who are perfectly satisfied with their prospects in Western Australia. I had a conversation with one settler who had been farming in South Australia for 23 years. He told me that if he had stayed for another year he would have had to throw up his holding and tramp away. However, he came here

and took up land five years ago. At first he had a struggle and had to work his teams on the road by way of supplementing what little he was getting from his holding. But now, after five years, he tells me he is comfortably settled. He does not have to work at all, for he gets sufficient income from his sheep and his orchard and his own land to enable him to live comfortably at home. He has several acres of orchard and he has spoken in the highest terms of his prospects and of those of other settlers who have come over from the Eastern States and taken up land in the district. I have the greatest pleasure in supporting this line. Of course it is only the beginning of the railway that will be extended right through the karri country to meet with the Denmark line. That is a foregone conclusion. It has been under consideration for many years past. This I take it is the first section of the extension from Bridgetown to Denmark which will open up a good deal of country and give facilities to a great number of old settlers well deserving of consideration, who at the present time are very much handicapped by heavy cost of transit. I think the cost of the construction of the bridges which has been referred to by some hon. members is rather an argument in favour of the line. I like these railways which cross brooks and rivers. I would not give a button for the line that does not cross any streams. What the settlers in such districts want from the Government after a railway has been built is a water supply scheme to enable them to live in the district. Down here however there is no such fear; consequently I think these bridges are a very good argument in favour of the line. Mr. Maley referred to the *Zamia* palm; I think that, too, is a good argument in favour of the construction of the line; for we find that all along the Great Southern and in other parts of the State the country was infested with poison until the energy of the settlers removed it. And the land that a few years ago was unproductive by reason of the presence of this poison is now carrying thousands of sheep. Is it then not reasonable to as-

sume that all that is required to cope with this *Zamia* palm is closer settlement. We want more people on the land and the surest way to get them there is by building this railway. Then, when we get the people on the land, the *Zamia* palm will very soon disappear. The argument of wait a while, and leave it for a season, is to be heard in all parts of the House and on every class of project. It is a waiting policy. I commend the Moore Government for having carried out all the works forecasted in the Premier's speech at Bunbury. I think there are now only two railways to be constructed.

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

Hon. E. McLARTY: I had about concluded my remarks. Members have expressed surprise that there is so little settlement in the country; that can be easily accounted for by want of facilities. I am satisfied, when the railway is constructed, a great many more people will settle in the neighbourhood, and I am sure the good sense of hon. members will carry the second reading.

Hon. E. M. CLARKE (South-West): It is not my intention to labour the question, but it is up to me to say something in regard to the railway. First and foremost, I am not going to proclaim that this railway is going to pay from the jump. I say emphatically if we had in every instance to prove that a branch railway, such as this, is to pay from the jump we should have a difficult problem to solve. But each and every one of these railways open up country and add to the volume of trade on the railways. It has been said, and rightly, that the start of the railway is not in good country. I say the land is not of very good quality, but the very first of it taps a considerable quantity of jarrah forest, and so far from the forests not being utilised, I say timber has already come from these forests. Beyond Bridgetown there have been piles, any amount of them, brought some miles from beyond Bridgetown and taken to the Northern portion of the State, but where they went to ultimately I do not know. If anyone has any doubt as to my word, all I can say is that let



that person take a trip along the route and he will see piles there now where teams have got bogged in years gone by. There is a large extent of country between the railway and the sea-coast. As to the rainfall, a person only requires to be in the district to be convinced as to the quantity of it. In the winter the vegetation grows very luxuriantly, therefore the question of rainfall does not come into consideration. There is an abundant rainfall, and an immense extent of country that after you pass out some few miles you get fairly into what is known as the ferny country, and anyone who knows anything about agriculture knows that the ferny country is good, light, loamy soil, and such soil is calculated to carry any amount of stock, and will grow any amount of fruit, and things of that kind. In short, I take it this district is going to be the butter-producing portion of Western Australia, that is to say the major portion of the butter will be produced in that part of the country. I am not going to claim for this railway that the whole of this land will be taken up, because we have to bear in mind that while in the Eastern districts large areas of land are taken up and cleared for practically a nominal sum, if you go into the South-West it is quite a different proposition. To clear the land in this district straight away, grub it, and get it into cultivation within 12 months it will cost from between £10 to £12 an acre. When that land is once cleared its carrying capabilities, and producing capabilities are something considerable. I was through some portion of the district a good many years ago when it was literally teeming with kangaroos, and I may say I did not look on it with much favour then. I have since been through the same portion of the district, since ring-barking, and I find there natural grasses springing up very quickly; in short, within 12 months the country presents a very different aspect. The kangaroos are being killed off by thousands, and the place, instead of being overrun by kangaroos, is capable now of producing an enormous quantity of produce. We find it is one of the best fruit-growing districts anywhere about. There are all kinds of fruits

growing there—apples and stone fruits. We have down there also tremendous forests of karri. There is karri, jarrah, and blackbutt, any amount of it. A great deal has been said about the ferny blackbutt country, and I say, after mature deliberation, some of that country is the very best fruit-growing land about. I have some little experience in inspecting orchards in the Blackwood district, and I find that the very best land for fruit growing is that containing a mixture of blackbutt, jarrah, and red gum; that being the case it is not for anyone to say that where the blackbutt grows the country is not worth touching. In the near future that country is going to carry a large population, exceeding per acre almost every other part of the country; that is outside the goldfields, because in this place, unlike a good many other districts, the Eastern districts in particular, where they have their stock and one crop of hay or wheat, but down in this district they can do something all the year round. We are asked how it is this land has not been settled sooner. The answer is that you grow a ton of potatoes down there, and they have to be carted over the hills into the Blackwood, and we find that the cost of cartage is more than the potatoes are really worth when they are got to market. The cost of transit is cruel; that is the reason the place has not been taken up more, and why it is not more settled to-day. When I was out there the last time, some years ago, some of the country looked to me to be absolutely poor soil, now you find some of the finest apples growing there, and a few years ago I thought the land was fit for nothing. The question comes in, do we expect a lot of settlers to go into country like that, miles away from railway communication, with the object of carving out a livelihood, when there is no possibility of getting their produce to market. It may be said, and rightly too, why cannot these people grow something that they can drive away. We must admit that persons are advised to go into mixed farming, that is what is generally talked about and people talk round that question, but when people talk about mixed farming, what does it mean? It means

that a person must have money to buy stock to commence with in order to produce that which you can drive away. It is obvious to all of us that a great many of those who come here have but little capital, and the great thing they have to look to is root crops and dairying. A great deal has been said about the palm bushes, that they cause rickets and wobbles. I am not prepared to say such is the case, but I say that, if people are deterred from going to this country because of a few palms that destroy the stock we should not have one-twentieth of the land settled in the Eastern districts that we have at the present time, because there the settlers have worse than the palms, they have many kinds of poison. The palms can be destroyed far easier than the poison can, therefore that should not be thrown out as a reason why no railway should be constructed in this part of the country. I do not intend to labour the question, but I say I hope the House will pass this Bill, not that I expect that the Government will build the railway straight away. Anyone who has been through that country—Mr. McLarty was somewhat appalled when he saw the size of the trees—will be bound to admit that land, where trees such as those grow, can be turned to good purpose. The House may take my word for it, that a great portion of this land in the near future will be turned to account and this district will be one of the best in Western Australia.

On motion by *Hon. T. J. Glowrey* debate adjourned.

#### BILL—WINES, BEER, AND SPIRIT SALE ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Legislative Assembly, and read a first time.

#### BILL—CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT.

##### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 9th December.

*Hon. J. M. DREW* (Central): There is no doubt, it seems to me, if Mr. Moss's

interpretation of Sections 32 to 36 of the Constitution Act of 1889 be correct, and from my reading of the sections there is no reason whatever to question his interpretation. I think the sooner some amendment of the Constitution Act is made the better for members of both Houses. I do not urge that unrestricted freedom should be extended to members who engage in contracts with the Government; but in connection with the Constitution Act of 1889 there are many pitfalls into which members of Parliament may innocently walk that it seems to me a matter that should engage the attention of members of Parliament of both Houses without further delay. I do not go so far as Mr. Moss; I do not think such a sweeping amendment of the Constitution Act as he indicates is necessary. I certainly am of opinion that the section to which Mr. Moss has alluded should be carefully examined with a view to suitable alteration in order to safeguard the possibilities of abuse, and at the same time prevent members being harassed to an unreasonable, and at the same time, purposeless extent. Section 32 of the Constitution Act Amendment Bill of 1889 seems to me to be altogether too drastic. With regard to the purchase of railway tickets, I cannot see even by the wildest stretch of imagination that can be regarded as a contract. I do not think many members of Parliament purchase railway tickets; they are not sufficiently patriotic to do so, but as Mr. Moss says, the consignment of goods by train is a contract. Any member who consigns goods by train must fill in a consignment form and sign it. When he signs it he enters into a contract with the Government for the delivery of goods, and in proof of that we have only to consider that from time to time in the local court and in the Supreme Court the Commissioner is sued for a breach of contract. If no contract has been entered into by the consignors in connection with goods forwarded there would be no possibility of suing the Commissioner, but from time to time the Commissioner is sued, hence it is that any person who sends goods by the railways

and signs a consignment note is a contractor with the Government. There are many members of Parliament, I suppose nine-tenths of the members of both Houses, who have occasion to send goods by train, consequently they sign consignment notes, and they are I presume contractors within the meaning of the Constitution Act and their seats are imperilled; that is, if anybody should decide to take action against them. Then with regard to the reference to the purchase by members of land, under the Lands Purchase Act, I was not aware until Mr. Moss drew attention to it that any member would be liable to be penalised under the Constitution Act for doing so. Section 35 of the Constitution Act states that the foregoing provision, which is the disqualification provision, shall not extend to any contract or agreement in respect of any lease, license, or agreement in respect to the sale or occupation of Crown Lands. A member might borrow from the Agricultural Bank and if the bank authorities decide to lend him money the member must enter into a contract. If he enters into a contract he is liable to disqualification. At the same time if a member of Parliament is allowed to select land, and under the Constitution Act a special provision has been made to allow him to do so, it appears to me there should be no restrictive provision to prevent him borrowing money even from the Government to improve that land. There may have been some reason before the passing of the Act of 1906 for restrictions to this effect, but it must have been very little reason. Even previous to that, under the original Agricultural Bank Act there was a meagre possibility of political influence being exercised. The Minister for Lands might have vetoed a proposal but he could not grant a loan to any person unless the loan was recommended by the manager of the bank. He could always say this loan shall not be granted, but he could not say this loan shall be granted, hence to a certain extent even under the original Act the Bank was outside political control. But in 1906 the bank was vested in trustees altogether apart from political influence.

Seeing that that has taken place and the bank is under three trustees who are outside the influence even of Ministers, I see no reason why members of Parliament should be prohibited borrowing from that bank if those trustees consider the security is good. With regard to Royal Commissions, it often happens that the Government sees in members of Parliament the very best men to appoint to sit on Royal Commissions. Their experience, their ability, and the fact that they are in touch with matters connected with the administration of the Government induces the Government to appoint them, but if the reading of the Constitution Act by many legal gentlemen be correct, members of Parliament have no right to accept fees for their positions on Royal Commissions. I am sure if the Government considers that certain members of Parliament are best fitted to occupy positions on Royal Commissions, the country would not object to fair and reasonable payment. I have never heard it suggested, not even by any Opposition, that anything like corruption has ever taken place in connection with the appointment of Royal Commissioners. When a member of Parliament is appointed to sit on a Royal Commission his appointment has to be gazetted and everyone knows about it, and if the Government has done anything wrong, if there is any suggestion whatever of corruption, the matter having been made public, it can be brought before Parliament and consequently the Ministry of the day will be compelled to suffer for their sins. In connection with land boards, from my experience I have found it desirable that members of Parliament should be appointed to these boards, but members of the Legislature cannot accept fees even though at times they have to travel a distance of a hundred miles to attend a meeting of the board. The same thing exists in connection with the Central Board of Health. Members of Parliament in this House have devoted a good deal of their time and energies to these matters and have refused to seek compensation for their labours. It seems to me altogether contrary to justice and reason that fair re-

muneration should not be given to those members of Parliament. For many years past no action has been taken against members of Parliament for the technical breaches of the Act. Why are these actions not taken? There is one reason I can name, and it is because any one taking action must lodge security of £100. We know there are many speculative solicitors who would be prepared to take action against many members of Parliament to-day were it not for this fact. I know it myself, and I speak from experience, that there are certain solicitors in Perth who are simply looking for technical breaches of Acts. They are only too ready to take actions against newspapers, bogus actions, to get hush money, and this is a most useful provision, rendering it necessary for anyone taking action against members of Parliament to put up £100. But for the existence of that provision I can assure hon. members there would be frequent actions at law against members of Parliament for merely technical breaches of the Act. It seems to me that Mr. Moss's amendments are too sweeping. I do not think any member of Parliament should be permitted to enter into a contract for any work specifically authorised by Parliament. I do not think any member of Parliament should be allowed to tender for any work called for through the *Government Gazette*, but I do not think any member of Parliament should be prohibited from buying or selling through the Government in the ordinary course of business in a small way. As a rule when there are large public works to be tendered for, such as railways, tenders are called, and as a rule the lowest tenderer gets the job. So far so good. Supposing a member of Parliament were the successful tenderer, he might be in a position to use political influence, scamp the work, or do it in an unsatisfactory manner. Hence I say in connection with large public works no member of Parliament should be permitted to contract. It is difficult to amend the Constitution Act in a manner which will suit the circumstances of the position, but no doubt with the aid

of the legal skill we have I think it might be quite possible. I certainly do not object to the existing methods of recovering penalties. I do not think that it should be left to the Attorney General of the day. It seems to me that every Attorney General might not be unbiased, and every elector should have a perfect right to take action against a member of Parliament who infringes the Constitution. I would not restrict any person from taking action, but I would clearly define the cases which would be properly regarded as an infringement of the Constitution, and I would certainly preserve the present safeguard, security for costs. The retrospective portions of the Bill I strongly object to. I do not know whether any action has been started against a member of Parliament. If it has been started it should be permitted to go on. If it has not, there is no necessity to make provision against it. There should be provision made that no action should be started after the passing of this Bill, but any action already started I say should go on to a termination. I certainly think some steps should long since have been taken in this direction, and I congratulate Mr. Moss on his step. He has placed the Bill before the House quite willing that any reasonable amendments should be made, and I hope if time permits some determined efforts will be put forth to render the legislation in this direction reasonable and of a common-sense character.

Hon. W. MALEY (South-East): In the words of Shakespeare, "Hath not old custom made this life more sweet than that of painted pomp." We might say that only for custom and but for the fact that these avenues have been open so long and that it has not become the practice to commence actions against legislators, we do not know what would have happened. According to the hon. member who has just sat down there has been no dearth of opportunity for bringing forward actions against legislators. We must bear in mind that even the Courts recognise what has been the custom in England, and we find our litigation ends

just at the point, not on what has been the custom in Australia, but what has been the custom in England. I must say in cases in which I have had a little interest I have received a shock when I have learned that our legislation has been set aside for the customs which obtain in the old country. I think it would be dangerous to interfere with the Constitution Act. In that Act it is illegal for members of Parliament to enter into contracts with the Government, and I think that should be the case. I do not think any of our Courts, however foolishly they may be constituted—and I have respect for the Courts as they are constituted to-day—would encourage or award damages in the case of any vexatious law suit. I almost entirely agree with the remarks of Mr. Kingsmill, who went to considerable trouble, not being a man of legal training, to place the House in possession of the facts and arguments in opposition to the hon. member introducing the Bill.

*Hon. M. L. Moss:* I do not think you understood his speech.

*Hon. W. MALEY:* If I misunderstood the hon. member's speech I must confess that I failed grievously to understand the speech of the hon. member who interjected. His attitude is not the same on two occasions following. I do appreciate the remarks made by Mr. Kingsmill, and on some other occasion I may have opportunity of paying equal tribute to my friend who seems somewhat jealous of the encomiums I bestow on Mr. Kingsmill. At any rate the Bill does not commend itself to me. I shall not refer to it in any harsher terms. I will not say that my time would be better taken up than by speaking on it now, but I say there is no fear of any litigation against any member in the instances mentioned by Mr. Moss. That is my opinion, and as such I leave it to the intelligence of the Chamber.

On motion by *Hon. R. F. Sholl*, debate adjourned.

#### MOTION—FREMANTLE DOCK.

*To postpone construction.*

Debate resumed from the 10th December on the motion by *Hon. J. W. Kirwan*

that further work in connection with the construction of the Fremantle dock be postponed until fresh instructions be received from Parliament.

*Hon. F. CONNOR (North):* In speaking to this question I am rather in the position of the sailor who was between a certain place and another place. I have always advocated the necessity for a dock at Fremantle, particularly since we have established the harbour known as one of the greatest engineering successes and as one of the most successful works constructed in Australia. When speaking on the Address-in-Reply I said that I thought it was time the Government should to some extent curtail the expenditure of loan moneys in connection with the public works of this country, but there is no work I know of, except perhaps the building of a railway inland to the North-West for the purpose of developing the mineral resources of that part of the State that is of more importance or deserves more consideration than the building of a dock at Fremantle. Let us go back a little in the history of this work. In 1896 a sum of £140,000 was placed on the Loan Estimates and passed for the carrying out of the Fremantle dock. At that time we had as Engineer-in-Chief I suppose the most able man in his profession in Australia. He favoured the dock, and said it was necessary, and even went so far as to fix a site. However, that money was not spent. It was reappropriated for other works, which perhaps may have been of urgent necessity, though I hold they were not of greater necessity than this work. However, in the wisdom of the Parliament and the Government of this country the money was spent for other purposes, and the dock was not built. Some 13 or 14 years ago Fremantle was of as much importance as Perth is to-day relatively to the State. Fremantle was the centre of the business population, the centre of commerce; it was where all the houses connected with commerce in this State had their headquarters. Fremantle also at that time possessed the railway workshops. These have since been removed by the

influence of people who were said to represent the people of the country in the Parliament of the State. They were removed to a place called Midland Junction; but when they were being removed I think it was an understood thing that on account of the removal—whether justified or not, I opposed it then as I oppose it to-day—some other consideration should be given to Fremantle; and I hold that one consideration was that Fremantle was practically promised a dock would be built to somewhat recompense it for the fact of all the money spent in the railway workshops being removed from Fremantle. Fremantle is not much favoured by the Government. If we take the railway service as it is now constituted we will find that there is a railway from Fremantle to Armadale, and I have made it my business within the last few days to find out that the traffic on that railway is so regulated that passengers from Armadale, Jandakot, or Coogee journeying to Fremantle have sometimes to wait 17 minutes at Owen's Anchorage. I do not think that helps the people of Fremantle to develop their city. There are other matters I could mention. There is also a suggestion for the removal of the abattoir system from South Fremantle to the again favoured Midland Junction. That is another proposition for which the people of Fremantle have not to thank the Government. I want to be clearly understood. I have no vested interests in Perth or Fremantle, and I am only arguing the question from a fair standard, that justice should be done to the people in both places. I hold it is not a fair thing to Fremantle that any work which could be carried out there, and which would benefit the country generally, should be stopped at this present stage. Although I said it was necessary that certain work should be, not stopped but retarded for a time, amongst which I mentioned the Fremantle harbour works, I would like to ask the hon. member who moved this motion and other members who represent the goldfields in this House how they would like it if a motion were brought forward that it was necessary

the goldfields should provide the money that is now being spent by the Government in supplying them with water; that they should provide the £90,000 which each year is being spent by the Government on the Goldfields Water Scheme over and above the receipts? In addition to this loss, we have the fact that in the very near future almost a duplication of the water scheme will have to eventuate, and I hold that it will be even more than a duplication, because in place of the steel pipes we will have to put down cast iron pipes if we want to make the scheme a permanent success. How would the goldfields members feel if a motion were brought down saying that we will abolish the Goldfields Water Scheme and let it wear itself out and have done with it? I do not think they would look so pleasant as they do when they come down with a motion to stop a work that is necessary for the development of the State, more particularly when we have already spent so much money on the Fremantle harbour works. I agree with Mr. Kirwan in his reference to the expenditure in Perth. I say we have had too much money spent on the Perth parks, Perth Museum, the Zoological Gardens, and even Parliament House, and I might go so far as to say even the Perth Mint. There are a few of the items the hon. member brought under the notice of the public. Although I cannot say I am in favour of carrying on all the public works that at present should be carried on if we had the funds, still, I say one we should not stop is the Fremantle dock. I will not labour the question any further than to say that the building of this dock means cheaper freights for the country. Of course this is a question that members, unless they are connected with shipping, will not realise so much. But it means cheaper freights, cheaper insurance and the further development of the trade and shipping interests of this country. If details were necessary why the building of this dock should be carried on I could go on for a long time showing members where the dock has been necessary. The ship "Liddesdale" met with an accident

on the North-West coast, came to Fremantle and had to be sent to Melbourne, and the cost of repairs at Melbourne was over £20,000. Of that sum £18,000 would have been spent in the State. I am speaking now from personal knowledge, as these ships were chartered by a company of which I was a director. The "Tangier" on two or three occasions had necessary repairs effected. One was in connection with the burning of Collie coal, and a case of spontaneous combustion. The vessel had to be repaired and was sent to Melbourne for this purpose. On each of the occasions two or three thousand pounds had to be spent for repairs. If a dock had been at Fremantle the money would have been spent there. Our great object should be to establish industries in the State, and in following out that idea we should have this Fremantle dock, as it is really a great industry, and it would be necessary to have skilled labour in connection with it. If there is skilled labour then men will have to live here and will bring to the State their families, while, in addition, their children will also grow up to be skilled labourers. I did not intend to speak at all on this question, and I moved the adjournment of the debate the other night for the purpose of giving an opportunity to Mr. Moss to speak, because he will, I know, give us more information on the question than I possess, and he will be able to put it in a better manner before the House. Although it is necessary that we should curtail expenditure, particularly from loan moneys, still the worst advertisement we could possibly give to the country at present—except the one given the other day by Senator Needham in the Federal Parliament—is for us to say that we are not in a position financially to build the dock. Therefore, although I caution the Government not to overdo the carrying out of public works nor to spend more money than we can very well afford, I cannot vote in favour of the motion. I hope that, although it may be necessary for the Government to curtail or delay for some time some of their public works, one of the last to come under the category will be the Fremantle dock.

On motion by *Hon. C. Sommers*, debate adjourned.

#### BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.

1. Land and Income tax; 2, Upper Chapman Railway; 3, Nannine-Meekatharra Railway; received from the Legislative Assembly.

#### BILL.—FREMANTLE DISUSED CEMETERY.

##### *Second reading.*

*Hon. M. L. MOSS* (West) in moving the second reading said: I desire to say at the outset that before this measure passes its final stage I propose placing on the Table a signed consent by the representatives of the various denominations in whom portion of this cemetery is vested, as set forth in the second column of the first part of the Schedule of the Bill. The object of the Bill can be explained in one sentence. What is known as the Skinner-street cemetery is now no longer used for interments. Members will see by the Schedule that various subdivisions of the land have been vested in various religious denominations. A certain portion of it has been set apart for Mohammedans. That has not been vested in anyone and it remained with the Crown. The Fremantle Cemetery Board have been asked by the religious denominations to take charge of the cemetery, to keep the fences in repair, and in fact to keep the cemetery in the order it should be. The board, however declined to do so until the title was vested in them. All the denominations are prepared to surrender the rights they hold and agree that an application should be made to Parliament to vest the land in trustees. In order that Parliament shall be satisfied that all these denominations consent to the passage of the Bill I will undertake before this measure is brought to the third reading, to lay the signed consent of the representatives of these denominations on the Table. I beg to move—

*That the Bill be now read a second time.*

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*House adjourned at 8.22 p.m.*