

Hon. Frank Wilson : I have had advice on it, and I say it is so.

Mr. SPEAKER : The hon. member for Perth is making a statement and not a personal explanation.

Mr. Dwyer : Well my statement is true.

Hon. Frank Wilson : So is mine.

Hon. J. Mitchell : The hon. member for Perth is absolutely wrong.

Hon. Frank Wilson : His law is bad ; that is the only thing.

Mr. Dwyer : Your law and facts are both wrong.

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

Ayes	12
Noes	25

Majority against .. 13

AYES.

Mr. Broun	Mr. Monger
Mr. Elliott	Mr. Moore
Mr. George	Mr. A. N. Plesse
Mr. Harper	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. Wisdom
Mr. Mitchell	Mr. Layman

(Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. McLeod
Mr. Bath	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Bolton	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Chesson	Mr. O'Loughlen
Mr. Collier	Mr. Price
Mr. Dwyer	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Hudson	Mr. B. J. Stubbs
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Swan
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Lander	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Lewis	Mr. Turvey
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Underwood
Mr. McDowall	

(Teller).

Question thus negatived.

House adjourned at 11:17 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 30th July, 1914.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Minister for Works: Plans showing the routes of the proposed railways from Nyabing to Pingrup, Kukerin to Lake Grace, and Busselton to Margaret River.

By the Minister for Lands: 1, Additional Uniform By-laws under the Roads Act, 1911. 2, Building By-laws of the Municipality of Perth under the Municipal Corporations Act, 1906.

QUESTION — SPECIAL SCHOLARSHIPS FOR COUNTRY SCHOOLS.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON asked the Minister for Agriculture: Is it the intention of the Government to give children attending country schools an opportunity of winning special scholarships, to cover a complete educational course at the Narrogin Agricultural School and the Perth University?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: The Department of Agriculture has been in communication with the Education Department on the matter of granting scholarships tenable at the Narrogin Agricultural School.

QUESTION—AGRICULTURAL BANK, PROPERTIES FOR SALE.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Is he aware that in advertisements of properties for sale by the Agricultural Bank only the num-

bers of the blocks are quoted, and that consequently prospective buyers are often unable to identify the farms. 2, With a view to giving proper publicity to the sale of the said properties, will he have the name of the mortgagor quoted in such advertisements in future? 3, If not, why not?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, Yes. The name has not appeared out of consideration for the lessee, whose failure it has not been considered necessary or advisable to advertise. 2, No. The location and lease numbers, which correspond to the plans, afford the best means of identification of the land. 3, Answered by No. 1.

BILL—REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS, DEATHS, AND MARRIAGES ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Legislative Council and read a first time.

BILLS—THIRD READING.

1, Rights in Water and Irrigation.

2, Bills of Sale Act Amendment.

Transmitted to the Legislative Council.

BILL.—SUPPLY (TEMPORARY ADVANCES), £230,830.

Standing Orders Suspension.

The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan—Brownhill-Ivanhoe) [4.40] moved—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable resolutions from the Committees of Supply and Ways and Means to be reported and adopted on the same day on which they shall have passed those Committees, and also to admit of the passing of a Supply Bill through all its stages in one day.

Question passed.

In Committee of Supply.

The House having resolved into Committee of Supply, Mr. Male in the Chair, The PREMIER (Hon. J. Scaddan) moved—

That there be granted to His Majesty for the temporary advances to be made by the Colonial Treasurer a sum not exceeding £230,830.

I may explain that the schedule of the Bill, which has already been distributed, shows the direction in which the money is to be advanced in the various departments. It is the usual custom, before drawing amounts from the public account, to get the appropriation of Parliament for the purpose. These advances are recouped at the end of the financial year, which no doubt the leader of the Opposition will appreciate. It is merely a matter of authorising the drawing out of the money from the public accounts, for advances for the particular purposes set out in the schedule.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I am not rising to offer any opposition to the granting of the supply. I did not quite catch what the Premier said in regard to the expenditure of the money, or perhaps I did not grasp his meaning. This money has, of course, to be expended but charged up against—

The Premier: It is not expended in the true sense of the word.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It has to be expended but charged up against the Supply Bill, which the Premier may ultimately receive. The amount set down for the Fremantle harbour works, the expenditure advanced, these must all be money expended but charged up against the Estimates.

The PREMIER: It is in a sense, but actually the object is to allow the Treasurer to draw from the public account this amount of money and place it to the credit of the various departments or the various separate accounts which are operated on by the departments. As the money is withdrawn from that account the Treasurer recoups it, and then charges up the amounts under the various items in the annual Estimates, or, as in this case, under the Supply. It is not expenditure, but merely amounts which are charged up to various departments and which are recouped from time to time under appropriations granted under a Supply Bill.

Question put and passed; Resolution reported and the report adopted.

Supply Bill introduced, etc.

Resolution in Committee of Ways and Means having been passed, a Supply Bill was brought in providing for the expenditure of £230,830 out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

Bill passed through its remaining stages and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

BILL—NYABING-PINGRUP RAILWAY.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. D. Johnson—Guildford) [4.53] in moving the second reading said: The first railway Bill I have to deal with to-day is that for the proposed extension from Nyabing to Pingrup. This extension represents a further 21½ miles from Nyabing, the Nyabing line itself being an extension from the Great Southern line, with which it junctions at Katanning. It is only a matter of some months since the Nyabing line was opened to traffic, and there has been a great deal of development in the vicinity of Nyabing as a result of the opening of that extension. Further, a good deal of settlement has taken place even beyond the extension which the House is now being asked to pass. The distance, as I have said, is only 21½ miles, and the section is one that lends itself to economical construction. Moreover, the extension will serve an area now being cultivated, and of course will in its turn encourage other settlers to go still further out. Ultimately, therefore, yet another extension of the railway will be necessitated. It is calculated that the area to be served by the extension now proposed, taking of course the 12½ miles limit, is 300,000 acres, 70 per cent. of which is first class land, 10 per cent. second class, and 20 per cent. third class. The area under crop at the present time in the district is something over 4,100 acres, and it is estimated that with the land fallowed, which runs into an acreage of 4,520, and with other land cleared which will be cropped next year,

there will be a total acreage under crop of 6,945 next season. The rainfall in the district is good, both from a wheat growing and from a stock raising point of view, since it averages 14 inches. I may say that I had the pleasure of visiting the locality some few months ago, when I was met somewhere near the terminus of this proposed line by a large number of settlers. I calculate that there was a gathering of fully 150 people, and it will be interesting to the House to know that out of these 150 souls only two were Australian born. All the others were immigrants who had been in this State only a limited time. And the same position obtains not only in connection with the area to be served by this extension, but also further out. I had the pleasure of journeying 20 miles further on to a place called Needilup, which is out from the present terminus of the Tambellup-Ongerup line. There I was again met by a large gathering of settlers, among whom there was only one Australian. All the others in that assemblage, numbering over 100, were newcomers. I mention this to the House with a view of showing that after all we are getting the right class of immigrants in this State. There we have in that part of our State, the furthestmost outpost from an agricultural point of view, two settlements consisting of practically 100 per cent. of newcomers—clear evidence that the immigrants are not afraid to go out into the new country and take up the task of development side by side with those born in Australia, who, of course, are more used to the work.

Mr. F. B. Johnston: How about the extension to Needilup?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That will come in due course. There is no doubt that the railway must be extended from Ongerup to Needilup, and that within a reasonable time; but the Bills that we now have before Parliament are quite sufficient to keep us, or any Government which may come into power after the next general election, fully occupied for some little time at all events. Therefore, there is no need for us to look out for other propositions at the present juncture. Still, it is as well to

get it on record that the Government recognise the development which has taken place in and around Needilup, and appreciate the fact that railway extension from Ongerup will be required in due course.

Hon. Frank Wilson: How far is this from Katanning, and what is the total distance with the extension?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I suppose the distance, roughly speaking, would be from 45 to 50 miles. That is, the total distance from Katanning. Nyabing, I think, is some 30 miles from Katanning, and this proposed extension represents another 21 miles. The distance from Perth—if the hon. gentleman can calculate it to the commencement, that is to say to Nyabing—is 263 miles. If he knows the distance from Katanning he will be able to get the correct figure. I may say, however, that I travelled the distance, and that, so far as my memory serves me, the mileages I have quoted are about right. It is calculated that this extension will cost about £1,898 per mile, a total of £41,000, made up of £28,000 for construction, and £13,000 for rails and fastenings. I do not think I can give the House any further information: as a matter of fact it is largely a repetition of the data which was given when the Survey Bill was approved of, but I want again to say that this is a good area, it is settled by a good class of people, that they are all enthusiastic, and it is now essential that there should be railway communication to enable it to be properly developed. There is some lake country between Nyabing and Pingrup which makes it extremely difficult to permit of carting by road. While this lake land is difficult to negotiate with teams, it is not of sufficient area to depreciate the value of the country. The area is very limited, that is, the low-lying lake land, and all around the lakes the soil is good indeed, and it has all been selected by people who are residing on their holdings. The prospects of the early construction of the railway line will, without doubt, be the means of the whole of the surrounding country being taken up. I commend the measure to the House

for its favourable consideration, and I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. FRANK WILSON (Sussex) [5.4]: I am glad to see that the Government are getting a move on once more, and that after three years of office they are appreciating the fact that they have not, on their own initiative, done much in the way of railway construction.

Mr. Lander: You have a bad memory.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Unfortunately this line is only to be 21½ miles long. Still, it is a step in the right direction, and I congratulate the Government on having the energy at the eleventh hour to submit this amongst other measures to the House for its consideration. I hope the railway will be constructed quickly in order that the settlers, whom the Minister has been enlogising, may have the benefit of railway transit. It is refreshing to hear the words of commendation from the Minister with regard to the newcomers to our State, and we on this side of the House may be pardoned if we take some little credit for having introduced those settlers, who have so often been referred to contemptuously by some members as "pommies."

The Premier: That term originated in St. George's-terrace.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Oh, no. "Speculative farmer," I daresay did, but I think the term "pommy" originated in the Trades Hall, and it has been referred to ever since by the Trades Hall people. I was pointing out that it was refreshing to know from the Minister for Works that these people meet with his approbation. The credit for their introduction to the State belongs to the previous Administration.

The Minister for Works: Oh, ring off.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Minister does not like to have these points driven home, but it is necessary that someone should point out that the Government have been on the wrong track. I repeat that we have introduced to the State a very good class of settlers, people who will be able to hold their own with the older settlers of Western Australia

after they have had some experience, and after they have paid for that experience as all have to do. These are the people to whom we want to give railway facilities, and to treat well in order that they may be successful. I am glad on that account that this small Bill has been introduced. I hope that the result of extending this line 20 odd miles will prove a benefit and that a great increase in cultivation will result. The Minister has promised us that this will be so, and the only question then is as to whether the route which has been decided upon by the surveyors is the correct one. I am prepared to admit that I have heard no complaints from the people, and I presume, therefore, that there is no opposition to the route chosen.

Mr. Lander: We cannot put a railway on wheels and run it to every man's block.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The Minister for Works is an adept at that sort of thing. A year or two ago there were several railways wheeled about the country in order to serve members' blocks.

The Premier: When you were in office.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: It was after we left office. We proved that the Government were wrong in wheeling routes, as the member for East Perth terms it, from the right place so as to serve someone else. In this case there have been no complaints, and I am ready to admit, that as there has been no outcry, the route which has been decided upon will suit the majority of the settlers.

The Premier: We never hear an outcry against our surveys.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: What about the weary hours taken up by deputations and debates; ask the member for York.

The Premier: The unspeakable Scot.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: The only further remark I have to make in connection with the Bill is that I hope the Minister will, in his wisdom, decide to have the work done by contract—

The Minister for Works: I am not going to rob the State.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: Instead of squandering public money and turning out a bad work.

Mr. LANDER (East Perth) [5.9]: I am going to support the construction of this railway. The only thing I regret is that the Minister has not deemed it advisable to carry the construction a further 20 miles. He has told us that there is good land all round there, and he might just as well have decided on building the line some distance further. In any case, a survey might be made so that intending settlers may know where to take up land, and there is not the least doubt that it would all be taken up quickly. While the Agricultural Bank is advancing money we are not helping the people who have settled on the agricultural areas to a sufficient extent, and the only way in which we can do that is to run railways out to them as quickly as possible. I would like to see the Government take this matter in hand, and leave some commitments for the next Government. Western Australia has not done enough in the way of railway construction, and the lack of these facilities is keeping the country back. Go out amongst the farmers and see what a hard struggle they are having. It is practically impossible for a man to live on a wheat area unless he is given railway facilities. Many districts in the State have been neglected. The district represented by the member for Sussex (Hon. Frank Wilson) has been neglected for years, and if it had been looked after as it should have been, there would be there to-day a big population. We have a beautiful harbour at Albany, and the country around it has been neglected. I would like to see this Government before they go out—

Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. LANDER: It is said that the Government will go out, but I know they will not. I would like to see them take these matters in hand. What we want to do is to connect up the spur lines, to link up with the Ravensthorpe railway, and connect Big Brook with Denmark. We would then attract the right sort of people whom we want very badly in the State at the present time. There is a land hunger just now.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order. The hon. member must discuss the Bill.

Mr. LANDER: There are people who are 20 miles away from a railway, and it is impossible for them to exist. I would like to hear the Minister say before the Bill goes through that he will authorise a survey to be carried out a distance of 20 miles beyond the present proposed terminus.

Mr. GEORGE (Murray-Wellington) [5.12]: I merely desire to emphasise my usual remarks in regard to railway construction, namely, that in connection with all these railway Bills the Government will submit a measure which will give them the power to properly equip all the proposed lines with rolling stock. The great mistake which has been made ever since the inception of railway construction has been the neglect to provide additional rolling stock.

The Premier: That is a fair charge against every Government except the present one.

Mr. GEORGE: The result has been that a duty has been thrown on the railway authorities which has been unfair to them, and has added to the cost of running the railways, and caused inconvenience to the community. I wish to impress upon the practical member of the Government, the Minister for Works, that, while he is carrying out these railway proposals, it will not be out of place, and it will certainly be to the benefit of the country and the railway service, to adequately equip all the new lines. Every additional 50 miles constructed means that more time is taken in working the rolling stock from the central depot. For instance, take the line from Kalgoorlie to Laverton. To work a truck from Fremantle to Laverton and back again will take anything from 8 to 10 or 12 days, and unless additional stock is provided when these new railways are opened delays and inconveniences are bound to follow while the cost to the department will be increased. The Minister has told us that desirable settlers have flocked to this district. There will, therefore, be a large amount of traffic to be carried,

and we should take care to have sufficient rolling stock to deal with it. It is not necessary to say more beyond the fact that I am a great believer in railway extensions, provided they are carried out with prudence and on a proper standard. I do not like these 8 x 4 sleepers. They will not hold the dogs, and they mean an extra amount for maintenance. Moreover, we cannot run the speed on them. I would like to see 9 x 4½ sleepers put down, for even if the initial cost be a little higher, we would then save a tremendous lot in maintenance.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin) [5.16]: I am glad the Government are, by this extension, doing some justice to the district east of Katanning. It is a good district with good land, good rainfall and good settlers. The Government are showing their wisdom in undertaking so much railway construction in the Great Southern districts. On the Notice Paper we find six railways projected by the Government, four of them being in the Great Southern district. The Government are doing right in developing the Great Southern, where, I am convinced we will have a much larger population in a few years time than the whole State carries to-day. I feel that the Labour Government are showing that they understand the requirements of the country when they decide to do this justice to the Great Southern district. The only chance the settlers there have is in the early building of railways. I hope the Government will build this railway very quickly, and I hope, too, they will build it departmentally, and not by contract as suggested by the leader of the Opposition. From the opinions I have had from Government engineers and professional men who are entitled to speak on the subject, I am convinced that the railways being built to-day by day labour are the very best ever built in the State for the money. I look to the Government not to take any notice of the suggestion that they should build railways by contract. The Minister for Works referred to the people at Needilup, situated 25 miles beyond Ongerup. I was pleased to hear the Minister say he intended to ex-

tend the Tambellup-Ongerup railway to Needilup.

The Minister for Works: I said the Government recognise that it must be extended some day.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The sooner they give effect to that recognition by the introduction of the necessary Bill, and the construction of the railway, the better. There are several other necessary railways which I might suggest if it were not out of order to do so on this measure.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam) [5.18]: I am pleased to see these railway Bills introduced by the Minister. It is cheering to know that no objections have been raised to the routes determined upon.

The Minister for Works: Not a word of protest. The only objection raised was that we were stopping about a mile and a half from a main road. We have now rectified that.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Notwithstanding that the people know where the railways are to go, they have not raised any objection, and this relieves the House of considerable responsibility. I hope the Minister will see to it that these lines are not kept too far apart. Some years ago we had a Royal Commission which dealt with the question of immigration. That Commission recommended that the agricultural railways should be not more than 30 miles apart. It has since been found that 30 miles is too great a distance. I believe that 20 miles is quite sufficient. Apart altogether from the recommendation of that commission, there has been a development during the last two or three years which alters the system of railway designing altogether. In the old days the railways used to be deviated with a view to serving stretches of good land, but now the whole country is being cleared and improved, and land that was regarded as useless when the first agricultural railways were laid down is now proving to be very useful indeed. The lightest land is being brought under cultivation and hundreds of thousands of acres of sandplain is under crop. This new development alters the conditions of railway designing entirely, for the rail-

ways can be run as nearly direct as possible between point and point, and there is no need to deviate to the good land, as was done in the earlier days. It is a point the Minister should not lose sight of. Quite recently I met a man who has some of the best land in his district, and he told me that his neighbour, situated on very light land, was getting crops as good as his own. Another settler informed me that whereas his land cost him from 14s. to 16s. an acre to clear, his brother, who had selected land so light that it could be cleared for 1s. an acre, was getting crops equal to his own. In view of instances like these there is no longer any need to deviate the railways, and they can be taken straight ahead. The Minister is absolutely wrong in sticking to the day labour system, which is far more costly than the contract system, as the figures prove.

The Minister for Works: They do not prove anything of the sort.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I am not going to discuss the matter at any great length, because I have previously shown from the figures published by the Minister's department that the day labour work is more costly than that done under contract.

The Minister for Works: No, you are wrong.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Just to take the actual cost of laying down a line. On the Quairading line the Minister spent £2,000 a mile, as against £1,426 previously spent. We should endeavour to get the lines laid down at a reasonable cost. I know the Minister will tell us that his lines are very much better than the lines laid down before he came into office.

The Minister for Works: The Commissioner of Railways says they are.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Commissioner of Railways, in his report for 1913, says, "I have still to complain of the way in which railways are constructed." The same weight of rails is being laid by the Minister as was laid before, namely, 45lbs., and the sleepers are of the same size. The grades are no

better than they were before, and the ballasting is of sand.

The Minister for Works: But the lines are ballasted now; they were not before. There is a certain class of sand ballast which is just as good as metal.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Oh, no. At any rate, we have the same materials as we had before.

The Minister for Works: But, go on. there are the increased sidings, increased equipment, ramps, stations and so on.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I do not know about the stations.

The Minister for Works: Ask the member for Geraldton.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Oh, the Ajana line cost £3,000 a mile. We cannot afford to spend £3,000 a mile on these lines. At any rate, what we require is a big mileage of railways reasonably well laid. I know the Commissioner of Railways, whoever he may be, keeps on complaining until he gets what he wants. The Minister's engineers put down the line, and the Minister says to the Commissioner, "There you are, we have constructed the line, and it is fit for traffic." He hands it over to the Commissioner, who writes back and says, "I am not satisfied, I want a sum of money to put the line in proper order." If these lines were laid down by the engineers of the Railway Department it would get over that difficulty. It would be wise to let the Railway Department build the lines, for we would thus be saved the criticism of that department. The Minister should build some lines by day labour and some by contract. We did that in our time, and the Minister will admit that the introduction of day labour mixed with contract had a wonderful result on the prices paid.

The Minister for Works: It did not. As a matter of fact, we had to finish by day labour some of the lines which you let by contract.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Railways were put down by the late Government more cheaply than ever before or since.

Mr. B. J. Stubbs: Cheap and nasty.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It is so easy for nasty people to say that.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! This discussion has got entirely beyond the scope of the Bill. Not only now, but for some time past I have allowed latitude because I permitted it in the first instance, and consequently did not want to prevent one member from having the same latitude as enjoyed by another. But the discussion now is directed to the general administration of railways, and the equipment of railways, and is even enlarged to embrace the subject of day labour versus contract. None of these subjects are subjects for discussion in a debate of this nature. I do not wish to embarrass the hon. member, but I hope he will confine himself to the Bill.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: May not I discuss the method of construction?

Mr. SPEAKER: This Bill provides for the construction of a railway from one point to another, and the question is whether it shall be constructed or not.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The cost of construction is all important.

Mr. SPEAKER: Certainly, as an argument against the building of the railway.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I should assuredly disapprove of the Bill if the cost of the line were unreasonable. I do not wish to transgress the rules of debate, but this is the only opportunity we shall have to discuss the method under which this line will be constructed. My concern is not in regard to the route of the railway, because it has been settled; my desire is that as many miles of railway as possible shall be laid. It is important that these lines should be cheaply laid, and the Minister knows that when the work can be done more cheaply under the contract system than by day labour—

The Minister for Works: The figures prove that you are robbing the taxpayer by the contract system.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Did I?

The Minister for Works: Past Governments have.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: No, the present Minister has. At any rate I am entitled to express my opinion.

The Minister for Works: You should have some respect for accuracy, you know.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Minister has never proved my figures to be anything but right.

The Minister for Works: But the engineers have proved them to be absolutely incorrect. It is in *Hansard*.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Nothing of the sort.

The Minister for Works: Only last session we gave you the figures.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: In connection with the construction of this line, we should be guided by past experience of railway building. It would be futile to endeavour to convince the Minister, but I merely wish to suggest the best means of laying down the several lines now before us. I regret that the hon. member for Katanning (Mr. A. E. Piesse) is too ill to be present, as he would have been delighted to congratulate the Minister on the introduction of this Bill. The settlers in this district, as well as those in various other districts, are deserving of railway communication as soon as the Minister can provide it. It is a great pity that we cannot build lines ahead of settlement. At any time during the last 20 years it would have been too late to attempt this. However, I hope that this line will be speedily constructed. I do not think there is any need to repeat this discussion on each of the railway Bills to be considered, but I hope that every district justifying a railway will receive consideration. The Minister has not produced the usual figures, or a report by any Government official bearing on this proposal.

The Minister for Works: I gave the figures.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Yes, figures relating to the land; but I would have liked a report by Mr. Sutton or some expert in wheat growing. The Minister's custom is to visit a district, and after spending a few hours, determine whether a railway is justified or not. I am so pleased at the introduction of these Bills to serve this Eastern wheat belt, that I do not feel inclined to criticise the Minis-

ter. I would rather congratulate him on the work he proposes to do.

Mr. ELLIOTT (Geraldton) [5.35]: I should like to join with the hon. member for Northam in congratulating the Government on having introduced this Bill. There is no way in which we can invest borrowed funds better than by extending our railways in the eastern and northern districts. The hon. member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. E. B. Johnston) expressed his elation that four out of six railways proposed are to be built in the Great Southern district which he represents. This is a matter for regret from the point of view of members who represent districts more to the north, and I would like to see a better distribution of expenditure. The time is almost imminent when a line should be constructed from Yuna to Mullewa, but as we have the promise of the Minister for Works to expend a large sum on our harbour works, we shall have to regard that as our share of the current Estimates. I, too, would like fuller information in regard to this railway. The Minister stated rather baldly that the district has a 14-inch rainfall. This is excellent, but he has not told us how these figures were arrived at, or what period of years the average represents. This is an important point, and one which should receive consideration in the absence of any report from Mr. Sutton, the wheat expert. The hon. member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) has been greatly criticised for having, while Minister for Lands, extended settlement too far into the dry areas. This criticism was not justified, and I would like to point out that the present Government are pushing settlement out even further.

The Minister for Works: No.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: They are building railways to the settlers already there.

Mr. ELLIOTT: I have consulted the plan, and have found that the Government are pushing out 20 miles almost due east beyond the previous Government, and as is well known, the further east one goes the lighter becomes the rainfall.

The Minister for Works: We are a long way south.

Mr. ELLIOTT: I hope the Minister when replying will give us his authority for stating that this district has a rainfall of 14 inches. He should tell us what period of years it represents, and in what months it falls. New-comers to the State are going to the outposts of settlement and are taking their places in the development of this great land. This forms a complete answer to any supporters of the Government who deplore and oppose the immigration policy. I do not care whether immigrants are introduced by a Liberal or a Labour Government; it is a matter for satisfaction that we have the right men who are taking their places with the old West Australians. When the Ajana railway was constructed, it was stated that the whole of that area was taken up by immigrants—"pommies" as they were called; and this was used as an argument that the land was of no value. It was said that the Government induced these men, without knowledge or experience, to settle in this country; but since the construction of the line, the district has been developed splendidly. The hon. member for Murray-Wellington mentioned the matter of equipment. I am not a railway expert, but I wish to add my testimony to the excellence of some of the lines which the Labour Government have lately equipped. I travelled with the Minister from Goomalling over the Wongan Hills-Mullewa line, a distance of about 200 miles, which railway was constructed by day labour. In cost it is not to be compared with some of the lines to which the hon. member for Northam alluded, but this railway has been well built, and I have not travelled over a railway in this State equipped so thoroughly as this. The Government have kept in view the fact that the line will carry an immense quantity of wheat, and every station is provided with a long ramp and every necessary facility. A wheat buyer referring to the equipment of this line, said it was everything that could be desired.

Mr. George: I referred to the trucks and locomotives.

Mr. ELLIOTT: As I am not an expert I would not venture an opinion with regard to them. I do not think I need add

anything except my congratulations to the Government. When they came into power a number of lines initiated by the previous Administration, had to be constructed and equipped before any new works could be undertaken; but now the time for new works has come. I am pleased that the Government realise the wisdom of constructing more railways in this State, and I hope that shortly the Minister will introduce a Bill for the Yuna-Mullewa connection.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. D. Johnson—Guildford—in reply) [5.43]: The discussion on this railway proposal has been very wide indeed. Evidently hon. members have taken the opportunity to speak on the first of these railway Bills and will avoid any discussion on the others.

Mr. George: You are sanguine.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member for East Perth (Mr. Lander) questioned whether it was wise to limit the length of this railway to 21½ miles, and asked why we did not propose to push it on to serve the settlers further out. For the information of the hon. member, we are taking it out as far as is necessary to serve the existing settlement, and the Government are reserving the areas beyond from settlement until we can give a guarantee that within a reasonable time we shall be able to provide water supplies and other facilities to those who may take up this land. The hon. gentleman knows very well that we have had a considerable amount of suffering and hardship in Western Australia, as a result of putting people out on the land long before it was at all possible to give them railway facilities. Consequently, we are in this position, that we are building lines to-day to areas upon which a considerable amount of money has been spent out of the pockets of the individuals, subsidised by money from the Agricultural Bank, and because it has been impossible for these people in the past to market their produce they have lost their own money, there is a big risk of their losing the money of the Agricultural Bank, and just at the time that the railway is going out to them, they have to leave their holdings and take up some work in the city or elsewhere.

The error which has been made is that we have sent these people out too far ahead of railway communication. The result has been that some of these people have been there five and seven years waiting for a railway, but have not been able to last out long enough. This is a sad state of affairs and one which, I trust, will not be repeated in this State. I remember in connection with the areas a little further east, where there is a good rainfall like there is in the Pingrup district, that the Minister for Lands wrote to me as Minister for Works some 12 months ago stating that he had got a report from the district surveyor, who knows the belt of country that lies some little distance from the lakes, asking whether I could express an opinion as to when we could get railway communication out there, and if, as a Works Department, we would recommend that it should be thrown open for settlement. I had no hesitation in writing back to the Minister for Lands stating that it was altogether too soon to throw this country open for selection, and that we had, first of all, to serve those people who had been settled around Lake Pingrup for some two years, and that when we had got that far it would be time enough to throw open the other land and give people an opportunity of developing it to a certain extent before it was ready for railway communication. Consequently, there are no settlers in that particular area, so far as I know, though, of course, there may be isolated instances. I found on going out to this terminus that the line that we propose to build will serve all the settlement now existing there. We have also other areas reserved so that we can throw them open when the time comes for the future extension of the line. The hon. member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) also spoke about the distance between the lines. I agree with the hon. gentleman that the distance laid down some years ago, when we first went into this question of the construction of agricultural railways, namely, one of 30 miles, was altogether too far. I am just beginning to wonder whether it is not too great a distance when we cut it down to 25 miles. The position in this

particular district, however, is that we cannot do other than put these lines down at a distance of 30 miles from one another. In regard to the lines that I shall introduce directly, the 30-mile distance of necessity still prevails. This distance has been fixed by the fact that we started at the home end of the Yilliminning-Kondinin line and that when we began to plan out these new spur lines we had to apportion the spaces between them so as to provide that each should be 30 miles from the other, because the country had all to be served equally. I admit that it is too far, but it is a difficulty we cannot overcome, and the only way that I can see to improve matters is to give the people a better class of road in this district than in other districts, so as to give them an opportunity of carting their produce at less cost than would otherwise have to be incurred. It may be that in isolated cases the settlers have to cart as far as 20 miles, which is altogether too great a distance from the wheat point of view. The hon. member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. George) has expressed the hope, and I agree with him, that the standard of construction would be increased, so that the operating costs would be less. That hon. gentleman will be pleased to hear that that is already being done. As a matter of fact, the standard of construction to-day is a long way higher than it was previously. For instance, the line which was referred to by the hon. member for Northam, namely the Quairading-Bruce Rock line, has been admitted by the officers of the Commissioner of Railways to be the best agricultural line which has been constructed. They have said that it is of a very high standard. The hon. member for Northam says that the line has cost more to construct than any other line. That is true. It has cost more because the standard of construction is so much better. It is true that the same rails are used, and the same sleepers, and that the same grades are in existence as previously existed, and when he gives all that expenditure, he knows that it is the same. But where we start to improve on it is in regard to the formation, which

is better. For instance, the ballasting is considerably more, the sidings are longer, and all the sidings are equipped with ramps and other facilities which, in the old days, had to be supplied by the Commissioner of Railways after he had taken over the line. We have also erected shelter sheds, which were not erected in the old days, and we have improved the water supply. This last point is one to which we are giving very serious consideration. I may say here that we are putting down dams wherever we can obtain a decent catchment, in order that we may overcome some of the excessive costs we have had to incur during the dry years, in respect to the cartage of water. This is what we have done. Side by side with this, however, we have, it is true, increased the construction cost. The hon. member knows that this could not be avoided. It is clear that if you increase the standard of construction you must increase the cost. But while it is true that we have increased our cost, owing to the higher standard adopted from the public works point of view, we have at the same time decreased the operating costs from the point of view of the working railways. What we have to get at is the point raised by the hon. member for Murray-Wellington. Does the reduction on your operating costs more than pay the interest on the increased standard of your construction? As long as your operating costs are reduced in proportion to your increased standard you are on very safe ground. The Commissioner of Railways has always assured us that he would rather increase the standard of construction, and has pointed out over and over again, just as the hon. member did when he held the position of Commissioner of Railways, that it would pay better if a higher standard were adopted, so as to avoid the necessity of the Working Railways having to expend capital to bring them up to the higher standard before operating. Illustrations could be given where, after the lines have been handed over to the Working Railways, that department has had to increase the standard before they could operate them. This sort of thing, of course, is not eco-

nomical. While from the point of view of the Public Works Department it may be a cheap method of constructing railways, from the point of view of the Working Railways it is an expensive method, and what is the use of one department being able to keep the costs down, if this is done at the expense of another department which afterwards finds that it has to incur additional expense out of all proportion to that incurred by the other department? So it is that we have profited by the advice given by the working railways. We now make a practice of consulting them to a far greater extent than was previously the case. They are the people who have to operate the lines, and they are the people who should know and understand in what way it is necessary that they should be constructed.

Mr. Wisdom: Why do not you allow them to build them all?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am opposed to that, but as the subject has been debated before I do not intend to go into it. I have my reasons for my opposition, and I could give them if I were in order in doing so, but I do not intend to go into a question of that sort in dealing with this Bill. There is a far better understanding between the Working Railways and the Public Works Department than previously existed, and we are getting very much better results, and there is far more satisfaction so far as the Working Railways are concerned. The hon. member for Northam has also raised the question of day labour versus the contract system, and made the statement over and over again that contract work is very much cheaper than day labour. That is absolutely incorrect, so far as railway construction is concerned. I have admitted in this House before to-day that there are certain works which, of course, we could never carry out under the day labour system. But when you speak of railway construction, this is essentially a work which should be carried out under the day labour system if it is to be done at all economically. The point is this: whilst in the old days we had a number of big railway

contract firms, made up of men who devoted all their attention to railway matters, and who had good plant and good men, and any amount of experience in railway construction, at the present day we have to remember that these contractors no longer exist in this State.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You have driven them out.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: All that happened in the time of the hon. member.

Hon. Frank Wilson: They have been hunted out of the country.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Who were the men to whom these contracts were given during the term of office of the hon. member? There were Messrs. Atkins & Law, both of them men whose experience was purely limited to building establishments in and around Perth.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Oh, no.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Well, can the hon. gentleman point to one railway that Atkins & Law built before they took on railway construction in Western Australia?

Mr. George: They had extensive experience in Tasmania. They were some of the best bridge builders in Australia.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. gentleman says that Mr. Law was an experienced bridge builder. That may or may not have been the case. The hon. the leader of the Opposition makes the assertion that these people have built other railways in Australia. I want to know where these railways were built. I am prepared to admit that Mr. Law has built bridges in Western Australia and in other parts of this Continent, but I do not know where the railways are that he has built, and I challenge the leader of the Opposition, who knows all about these things, to give me just one of the railways which he built in Western Australia. Take also Vincent Brothers. Are they railway contractors in the sense that we would apply the term to Messrs. Millar Brothers, for instance? Vincent Brothers gained their experience in Western Australia. These men are not experienced railway builders. When contractors are building our railways we are

obliged to have the same expert engineer looking after their construction as we would be obliged to have if we were carrying out the construction ourselves. Let me instance the case of the Wongan Hills-Mullewa line. An officer of the department would have to be in charge of the line looking after the contractor. Why then, should we have a highly qualified departmental officer supervising some other man who is doing the work, and who is receiving the middle man's profit? The whole thing is ridiculous. Take our engineers on railway construction, Mr. Ripper for instance. This gentleman is one of our leading construction engineers and a man who has done very long and loyal service to the State in the matter of railway construction, and who has had experience in Western Australia, to my knowledge, extending over a period of 20 years. Is anyone going to say that Mr. Ripper, with his 20 years' close attention to the construction of lines in Western Australia, is not more qualified to build a line, and to do it economically as well, than Messrs. Vincent Brothers, or Messrs. Atkins & Law, who have never had any experience except in Western Australia?

Mr. George interjected.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: So far as I know Vincent did not have Baxter with him. The last line that he built, the only one, in fact, that I know of—was the Dumbleyung extension, and the engineer he had with him on that occasion was Mr. Hargraves.

Hon. Frank Wilson: He had both Mr. Hargraves and Mr. Baxter, I think it was, on the Dumbleyung line, two men who have been connected with railways all their lives.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am inclined to think that if he had had Mr. Baxter with him on the Dumbleyung line he would have achieved far better results than he did. I do not believe he had Mr. Baxter there with him. I believe that he had endless difficulties with that line right through, and I think Mr. Baxter would have avoided these, just as our own engineers would have been able to

avoid them under the day labour system. Although the leader of the Opposition makes this assertion, so far as I know these people were limited, in respect to engineering assistance, to Mr. Hargraves. Anyhow, the point is that the contractors of to-day are not the railway contractors of old, whilst the engineers of to-day in the Public Works Department are the engineers of old, who looked after the contractors that carried out the large works in railway construction in this State. Those engineers have had the experience, and have had practical knowledge of railway construction all through a long period, and consequently they are the men best qualified to do the work. Moreover, there is no question that they are doing it.

Mr. George: You will get the contractors if you let the contracts.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We have not got the contractors. The leader of the Opposition had to give them bonuses of thousands of pounds just to get them to tender.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Order! I want to warn the hon. Minister that this discussion is entirely out of order. I warned the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell), and now the hon. Minister is proceeding on the same lines. It is true that he may justly claim some latitude, but the debate is becoming a general one on the policy of railway construction, instead of being confined to the Bill for the construction of the Nyabing-Pingrup railway.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am just replying to the debate that has taken place since the Bill has been under discussion; and I would like to point out that, after all, if hon. members do not get an opportunity when the Bill is introduced, of discussing how the line should be constructed, I do not know what other opportunity they would have of discussing that aspect of the matter. I thought that possibly they wished to urge that this line should be built by contract, and were taking this opportunity of urging it because they would not have another opportunity.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member knows perfectly well that a Bill gives opportunity for certain discussion, discussion within the limits of the measure. The discussion now being carried on is a discussion more appropriate for railway estimates, or the Address-in-reply, or the subject of a motion moved for the purpose of expressing opinion on the general principles of railway construction. I do not wish the hon. member further to pursue this irregularity of debate.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I shall not pursue it further than to say that if the member for Northam will just look up the debate on the question last year, he will see that I got a report from the Engineer-in-Chief, a full report, in regard to the policy of railway construction. I read that report exactly as I received it. I wanted to get from an engineer who was free from the political bias to which I, as Minister, might be subject, a report on the question; and the Engineer-in-Chief, putting up various returns as to the cost of certain railways and the manner of their construction, proved conclusively that day labour had proved the more beneficial to the State. I know that the leader of the Opposition indulged in some criticism on that report, stating, with a wave of his hand, that it was a departmental engineer's report. I said on that occasion that the departmental engineers are just as honest as the average man, and that when they are called upon to give a report they give an honest and a correct report. I think if the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) will look up that report from Mr. Thompson he will see that the best interests of the State have not been served by constructing railways under the contract system; that tenders have been higher than the estimated cost put up by the engineers; and that the Engineer-in-Chief informed the leader of the Opposition, when that gentleman was Minister for Works, that in this State it was better to build railways by day work than by contract.

Hon. Frank Wilson: He did nothing of the sort. He advised the contrary.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: He did not.

Hon. Frank Wilson: He advised the very contrary.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is in *Hansard*.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You are saying something that is incorrect, and you know it is incorrect.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I say distinctly that I can bring a minute to show—

Hon. Frank Wilson: Bring it, then. Bring it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have brought it here before to-day, and I have proved this in the House on more than one occasion, whether the hon. member denies it or not. The leader of the Opposition, when Minister for Works, was told definitely and distinctly by the Engineer-in-Chief that railways could be constructed in this State better and more advantageously by day work than by contract.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. Frank Wilson: As a matter of privilege, I wish to say that the Engineer-in-Chief did nothing of the sort.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I say he did.

Hon. Frank Wilson: The Minister is misleading the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. Frank Wilson: The Engineer-in-Chief certainly said that some works could be done cheaper by day labour, and he gave his reasons for saying it. But, as a matter of fact, he always advised construction of railways by contract in preference to day labour.

Mr. SPEAKER: I ask the hon. Minister to get back to the subject. I do not think it wise to allow any further discussion on this matter.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Very well; I will get on to the report. I simply want to repeat once again that the Engineer-in-Chief did definitely and distinctly give that recommendation.

Hon. J. Mitchell: He did not.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! order!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I may be asked why I did not do in regard to this proposed railway what has been done in regard to other proposed railways, namely, bring in a report from the agricultural experts on the capabilities of the soil and generally as to the wisdom, from an agricultural point of view, of constructing the line. I have not done that on this occasion because the district to be served by the line was thrown open for selection on the advice of those expert officers, and because I think that the best course to pursue in regard to these railway projects is to visit the districts concerned and see whether the settlers are there, see the work they are doing, and learn from their own lips what results they get from their cultivation. I have pursued that course in this particular case, and the very fact that the settlers are there and have been encouraged to go there by the Government, and the further fact that the Government plans have shown that the rainfall of the district is 14 inches, are sufficient authority for this House to pass the Bill. The House may assume that no settler would be put in that district unless the expert officers of the Government were satisfied that he could be put there with profit to himself and with profit to the State. The fact of the land there being all selected, and the fact of the settlers being there, are sufficient justification for me to ask this House to pass the Bill. The member for Geraldton (Mr. Elliott) wanted to know whether the records of the rainfall were taken over a number of years. There is no doubt that is so in the case of this district; the records extend over several years, and when we place the rainfall at 14 inches we are well within the mark. After all, while it is true that we are going out some distance east of Katanning, it must be borne in mind that we are going a good deal south of what are known as the eastern districts; and as one gets southward the rainfall increases in the same way as it decreases when one gets eastward. Going south and east one gets into a better rainfall than if one were further north and went out in the same direction. I do not know that I

need say any more, except that hon. members may rest assured that this line will be up to the standard which has recently been adopted by the Public Works Department and which has met with the approval of the Commissioner of Railways. So far as additional rolling stock is concerned, the member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. George) knows that some hundreds of thousands of pounds have been spent during the last few years in increasing the stock of locomotives, trucks, etcetera.

Mr. George: You will want them for these new lines.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is true that we shall want more rolling stock, but I can assure the hon. member that the Commissioner of Railways is not pressing in any marked degree for trucks or locomotives. The difficulty we have to-day is in connection with railway carriages, and the order has been given to proceed with the construction of carriages so as to cope with the requirements on the agricultural lines. Speaking generally, however, so far as rolling stock is concerned, outside railway carriages we have it pretty well up to date, thanks to the fact of such large expenditure having been incurred during the last two years. With these few remarks by way of reply, I commend the Bill to the consideration of the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Male in the Chair; the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1, 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Deviation:

Mr. MONGER: It would seem to have been the custom to allow the Minister the right to deviate by a five-mile or ten-mile margin. I am very pleased, however, to see that in this instance the Minister has only power to deviate for half-a-mile. My experience of the hon. gentleman's construction of previous railways leads me to conclude that a half-mile deviation is quite enough for him, and I congratulate the Minister on hav-

ing placed this restriction upon his own probable action.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The alteration is due to the changed policy introduced by the present Government. When hon. gentlemen now sitting opposite occupied the Treasury bench, they were accustomed to introduce Bills for the construction of railways before the lines had been surveyed. We say that practice is wrong. We say that the House should first authorise the survey, and that, after the survey has been completed and public opinion has been expressed on it, but not until then, the Bill for the construction of the line should be introduced. We have pursued that course in this instance. It is on the survey we ask power to construct; and we say that while it may be necessary to alter the route a little, it should not be necessary to vary by more than half-a-mile. As regards this railway, the settlers are perfectly satisfied with the route proposed, though they require a little more extension than we have provided by the survey. That has been approved by the Government, and provision is made accordingly in this particular Bill. In the circumstances, therefore, the half-mile deviation is quite sufficient for our purposes.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 4 to 7—agreed to.

Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Sitting suspended from 6.13 to 7.30 p.m.

BILL — KUKERIN-LAKE GRACE RAILWAY.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. D. Johnson—Guildford) [7.30] in moving the second reading said: This proposed railway will travel through that country running east of Wagin, the greater portion of which is served by the line known as the Wagin-Dumbleyung railway, and the extension on to Kukerin. The proposal before the Chamber is to extend the line a further distance of 25

miles to serve the Lake Grace area. The extension will bring the line out about the same distance from Wagin as the proposal which we have just agreed to, which will carry the Katanning extension out to Lake Pingrup. The distance from Pingrup to Lake Grace is, roughly, 30 miles, and in these two lines we are asking for permission to extend them to serve the area running east of the Great Southern from Wagin to Katanning. The land alienated, which will be served by this proposed railway, totals 378,000 acres. Of that quantity there are 50,000 acres of first-class land, 120,000 acres of second class and, and 208,000 acres of third class land. The member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) referred to the fact that the land we speak of as second and third class, is being recognised as more valuable as time goes on, with the result that while we perpetuate the terms second and third class, in a number of instances the second class land is producing more in proportion to the capital outlay than some of the first class land. In regard to this particular district I have been there myself, and I know there is a fairly large area, as the figures will indicate, of second class land. It is, however, very good second class land, and I agree with the member for Northam that a lot of it will be taken up immediately the railway is constructed to it.

Mr. Moore: What is the price of it?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I cannot say; that is a matter which the Minister for Lands will deal with, because it is recognised that land has been over-valued in the past. The rainfall in this district is not as good as it is in the Pingrup area. I pointed out in reply to an interjection by the member for Geraldton (Mr. Elliott) that the further we go south, so the rainfall increases, and the Lake Grace country, being further north than Pingrup, does not enjoy the average rainfall experienced at Pingrup. Taking a given number of years into consideration, the rainfall in the Lake Grace area is set down as 12 inches. The resident occupiers in that locality to-day number 113, and it is estimated that the population is about 500. When I had the pleasure of visiting the district there was a big gathering of settlers and their wives and families,

and since I was there the Minister for Education has built a school, which has been availed of by a large number of children. The land under cultivation to-day totals 17,000 acres. When I introduced the Railway Surveys Bill I estimated that there would be an increase this year of land under cultivation of 12,000 acres over the total of last year. As a matter of fact the increase has been 11,000 acres or only 1,000 acres less than my estimate. The land has been selected, roughly speaking, for a period of five years. It is about that time since it was first thrown open for selection, and there have been one or two season's crops to guide us. We know, of course, what class of farming is carried on when a railway is some distance off, and that in such initial stages of development one cannot get a true indication of what the district is capable of producing. Even taking into consideration what has been done we find that the average yield has been 12 bushels. Land is still being cleared, and it is estimated that next year there will be another increase of fallowed and cleared land of 7,000 acres. This area is well watered. As a matter of fact there is a number of Government dams there, and when I was in the district there was an abundant supply of water, and on most of the holdings the occupiers had put down dams for themselves, and obtained a plentiful supply of water. I remember when we took office in 1911 this was one of the districts which caused us a great deal of concern, but now that has been overcome, and during the last year or so I have heard no complaints about Lake Grace, and we have had no requests for increased water supplies for the district. This proves that the water difficulty has been overcome. The cost of constructing the proposed railway over a distance of 25½ miles is £35,000 and rails and fastenings, it is estimated, will amount to another £20,000, a total of £55,000 or a little over £2,000 a mile. I am pleased again to be able to state that, generally speaking, the settlers in this area are immigrants. So far as my memory serves me there were not more than half a dozen at the gathering who claimed Australian birth; the others were all newcomers, and

had been in the State for two or three years. It was very pleasing to notice how quickly they applied themselves to Australian conditions, from a clearing and farming point of view. The newcomers were doing a large amount of clearing, and their methods showed that they were profiting by what they had learnt from Australian farmers in the district. Their homes were built in such a manner as to indicate that they were putting all their money into clearing and getting their farms into the producing stage rather than into extravagant buildings. Nevertheless, the homes were comfortable, and everything went to prove that they were a good class of settlers, and like those at Pingrup, they gave evidence of what can be done by newcomers in the direction of the pioneering of these new districts. In regard to immigration, if we desire to continue to get settlers of this class, and they are the people we want, we must go on with our policy of railway construction, and the best advertisement the State can get is to build railways to assist these settlers, and they in turn will write to their friends in the old country, and inform them that the Government of Western Australia are fulfilling their obligations, and giving them an opportunity to farm at a profit. It has been stated that we are not as enthusiastic about immigration as our predecessors were, but I would point, as I can with pride, to our policy of agricultural railway construction. This was introduced because we wanted to open up our agricultural lands with a view of encouraging immigration, and the two policies went side by side. The first big move to introduce immigrants on a large scale and on a systematic basis was made by the Daglish Government.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not discussing the Bill; his remarks are irrelevant.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Very well, Mr. Speaker. The immigrants settled in the Lake Grace country have done such work as to justify Parliament in authorising the construction of this line. We cannot expect settlers to go too far ahead of railway facilities. In this particular district they have been there for three

years, and they have proved what the land is capable of producing. In regard to the land itself it is somewhat similar to that around Lake Pingrup, but in my opinion it is a better area; in fact, I look upon the Lake Grace country as some of the finest I have seen, and it has been taken up by settlers who are using it to the best advantage. I commend the Bill to the favourable consideration of the House, and move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. FRANK WILSON (Sussex) [7.45]: I am glad that the Bill for the construction of this railway has been introduced by the Minister, because it goes to prove that the original policy of giving railway facilities from Wagin eastward was a good and sound one. I have travelled in this district, have in fact been down pretty well from the Eastern railway south to Katanning as far as Ongerup, but I have not been quite so far east as it is proposed to construct this line. However, I believe the country is excellent. I was very much struck with this portion of the State when first I visited it, eight or nine years ago, in connection with the proposal to carry the line as far as Dumbleyung. It does not matter very much how many settlers we have out there—although it is very gratifying to hear that there are so many resident occupiers—so long as the Government are convinced by their expert advisers that the country is good enough for settlement. I for one am always going to support the building of a railway, in fact, I would prefer even to see a railway constructed in advance of settlement and occupation, if it was possible, and if not, at least as soon as we can successfully finance the undertaking.

Mr. Foley: You had a good chance on the Esperance Railway Bill, but you missed it.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I am sorry I cannot discuss the Esperance railway on this Bill. The hon. member evidently did not hear me use the qualification "when the Government were convinced by their expert advisers that the country was good enough to settle."

I did not say "on the mere word of Ministers." The fact that the settlers have gone out there is abundant proof of the quality of the land, and that the Minister for Education is building a school there to meet the requirements of the children is also strong proof that the settlers see a good prospect of winning out and making a success of their undertakings. I agree that the second and third-class land of to-day is destined very shortly to be first-class for wheat growing. Science is coming to our aid more and more year by year, and it is marvellous to see the class of land being successfully cultivated to-day, land which a few years ago would have been turned down, because people had not then sufficient knowledge to warrant them in taking it up. I hope the result of the construction of these railways will be additional settlement. I am sure it will if encouragement is given. I hope it will mean an impetus to our immigration policy, and that we may attract more people to our shores. After all, that is the great consideration, and if this, in a small way, will enable us to induce more people to settle in that district, the money expended on the construction of the railway will have been well spent indeed. I am convinced hon. members will support the Bill, that they will indeed support any Bill of this description. Hon. members on this side are extremely gratified to think that all these measures simply represent a continuation of the policy which we successfully carried through when we occupied the Treasury benches, and which has done so much for Western Australia.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrogin) [7:50]: It seems only a few years ago that the line was built from Wagin to Dumbleyung. Since then it has been extended from Dumbleyung to Kukerin, and I am very pleased to support this proposed extension to Lake Grace. I particularly wish to record my support of this project, because the editor of the Wagin newspaper has thought it necessary to misrepresent me in regard to this proposal for the last eighteen months or two years. I have

been always in favour of the opening up of this Lake Grace district, where the land is good and the rainfall regular, and I have consistently held that the settlers there should be given railway communication. It is true that at one time the settlers in my own electorate, those to the north of Lake Grace, desired that a slightly different route should be taken for this line; and we fought hard to have the route carried only to the narrow neck of Lake Grace and thence northwards to Jilakin Lake. However, the Government went thoroughly into the matter and decided to adopt the route now before the House, in order that it should be not more than 30 miles north of Pingrup, and as part of a comprehensive scheme of railway construction, and in these circumstances I support the measure. I would like to point out, however, that the decision of the Government to build the line on the present route will necessitate further railway communication for the settlers to the north. The Minister for Works has visited the district and must realise that the Yilliminning-Kondinin railway takes a north-easterly, almost a northerly direction, whereas this line is running due east, thus leaving a great V-shaped section of country north of Lake Grace, which at present is not served by a railway, and which is more than 25 miles from any authorised line.

Mr. Harper: What is the rainfall like?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: The rainfall is good, and the settlers are there, and it is only a matter of time when another railway will have to be built from Dudinin to Walyurin and Jilikin Lake.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Many other railways may have to be built, but for the present the hon. member must discuss only the Bill.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: Am I at liberty to say that the settlers at Walyurin and Jilikin Lake desired that this particular line should be taken through their district? Unfortunately a different decision has been arrived at, and in the circumstances the only way

in which their necessities can be met, will be for them to cart to this line, until such time as the Government can meet their just requirements by building a line from Dudinin townsite, on the Yillimining-Kondinin line to Walyurin and Jilikin Lake. However, I have no desire to break the rules of the House. I merely wished to make this explanation in order to refute the misrepresentation of the Wagin paper and let the settlers of Lake Grace know that I am glad to see their district is to be served by a line.

Mr. HARPER (Pingelly) [7-54]: I have pleasure in supporting the Bill. I had the privilege of visiting the district about four years ago, when I was very much impressed with the soil and the timber growing upon it. I am pleased indeed that the people of that district are to be favoured with a railway. There is certainly good land down there, and we are assured by the Minister that the rainfall is everything that can be desired. The district is certainly well worth developing by a railway, and there is no doubt this railway will give a very good account of itself. I was glad to hear the Minister speak so highly of the newcomers from other parts of the world, and say they are developing the country in the right direction and showing good judgment in the work they are doing. We should encourage people of that description, and give them every consideration while at the same time endeavouring to educate them in the new methods of agriculture. People from the Old Country have very different methods from our own, and anyone coming out here, no matter what his previous experience, must be ready to learn afresh. I am pleased to support the Bill, as I know the district, and as all the factors seem so favourable to the project.

Mr. FOLEY (Leonora) [7-56]: I desire to support the Bill. I have seen the country the railway will traverse, and am of opinion that it is the best stretch of agricultural country in the State, that is, the country from Gnowangerup to Lake Grace and Kukerin. Judging by the wheat being grown down there at the present time, I think this

railway will have a chance of paying interest very soon after it starts running. I have heard many railway propositions put forward here, and almost invariably it has been said that the country to be served was fit to grow anything and that the line would pay from its very inception. Although having had an opportunity during the last two years of gauging the revenue producing powers of the various agricultural railways I have yet to learn that there are many of them paying interest to-day. The reason why I think this line will pay early, is that the district to be served has some chance of producing something, and that for a smaller outlay than is incurred in many other parts of the State. Let us compare the land from Wagin out to Kukerin with the land westward from Katanning, with the poison areas, and we find that this line will afford the Government an opportunity of doing some good for the men and women who have been brought to the State and placed on land which offered no possibility of making a living. There are at the present time, on the land around Coben Soak and the Dinninup area, men who are absolutely starving. The land which will be opened up by this railway offers a splendid opportunity for the Government to remove those poor individuals from land on which it is impossible for them to make a living, and place them on good soil. If this is done it will be kindly treatment for those who are here, and consideration which should be shown before we talk about bringing more immigrants into the State. The immigrants in this district are the best who are working land in Western Australia.

Hon. Frank Wilson: They are all good.

Mr. FOLEY: And a lot have been made bad because they have not been given a good opportunity.

Hon. Frank Wilson: By the Trades Hall; they have been turned into agitators.

Mr. FOLEY: That is the price of the hon. gentleman. The best class of immigrants I have seen in the State are working on the areas which this railway

will traverse. They are good men and have had a good opportunity because they have been placed on good land. Had every immigrant, whose cause our friends opposite are so eager to champion, especially just before an election, been placed on similar land, our immigration policy would have been a greater success.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You have stopped it.

The Minister for Mines: No fear.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You stopped it absolutely.

Mr. FOLEY: It is very well for the hon. member to make such bold assertions; but figures prove conclusively that the immigration policy—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must discuss the Bill, not the immigration policy.

Mr. FOLEY: In conclusion, I support the Bill, and I hope that, no matter what Government are in office, they will do their best to utilise this land, and make it revenue producing by taking settlers from such impossible districts as I have mentioned, and putting them on this good land.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—BUSSELTON-MARGARET RIVER RAILWAY.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. D. Johnson—Guildford) [8-4] in moving the second reading, said: This is a different proposition from the other two we have considered. The other two measures deal with propositions in the wheat belt, but this Bill deals with a district essentially for closer settlement where root crops grow to great advantage. Consequently it has to be considered in an altogether different light from our ordinary wheat lands. The proposed railway from Busselton to Margaret River will cover a distance of 37 miles. The area of land now alienated, which will be served, is 137,000 acres, and the area not alienated, 222,000 acres. Of this, 22,500 acres is first class,

80,000 acres second class, and 120,000 acres third class land.

Hon. Frank Wilson: It is all good.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In speaking of 222,000 acres in this district, we must realise that it will carry far more population than a similar area in our wheat belt. Being a district for closer settlement, it will be more thickly populated. It is worth putting on record that since the Railways Survey Bill was introduced, and the survey started, 10 per cent. of the first class land opened for selection at that time, has been selected. In other words, there is 10 per cent. less land now available for selection than there was last year. Various Governments have spent a good deal of money in drainage works to make the land more suitable for cultivation, and this expenditure has materially increased the production and population of the district. There has been some difficulty with regard to these drainage works, but the scheme is now on a good basis, and settlers are satisfied with it and realise that it is a distinct advantage to their holdings. Although there is a fair proportion of second and third class land, this is good pastoral country because the rainfall is anything from 34 to 44 inches. With such a rainfall, pastoral pursuits are possible, and those who know the land will agree that it is essentially the second and third class land which is suitable for pastoral purposes. The resident occupiers number 265, and it is estimated that the population of the district is from 900 to 1,000. There is 4,000 acres under crop, the big proportion of which, comprises root crops. I again wish to point out that 4,000 acres in this district would necessitate a great deal more capital expenditure on the part of the settlers than wheat land, and would produce perhaps double or treble the return. The settlers here, as in other districts, are waiting for railway facilities. While it is generally conceded that 12½ miles is far enough to cart wheat, it will be understood that potatoes cannot be carted anything like the same distance. Consequently, railways are needed in closer proximity than in the wheat belt. Al-

though the number of settlers to the quantity of land alienated and under crop does not bear a good proportion, we have to remember that the difficulties have been great and that they can be overcome only by supplying railway facilities. It is worthy of note that the line will reduce the distance to the Yallingup caves and bring this tourist resort into closer proximity to the railway system. Instead of tourists having to travel from Busselton 20 miles out to Yallingup as at present, the railway will take them within five or six miles of the caves. The construction of this line is estimated to cost £44,000, and the rails and fastenings £29,000, making a total of £73,000, and bringing the cost per mile to a little under £2,000. Hon. members will notice that the survey follows the coast line fairly closely from Busselton running out towards the Yallingup caves, and then taking a turn up at a given point. The reason for taking it to this point is to assist the settlers near Cape Naturaliste.

Mr. Bolton: There is a suspicious kink at the bottom.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is being made in the interests of the development of the district, and to assist the settlers in this locality. Although this land is so far removed from the metropolitan area, and although it is similar to land in closer proximity, such as at Jandakot and Rockingham, this part of the State has been settled for a very long time. There are some people who contend that it would be better to open up similar land nearer to the metropolitan area, but we feel that we have a duty to these people who have been settled there for so many years, struggling under such great disabilities. Last session a measure was passed authorising the leasing of the railway from Flinders Bay to Margaret River, with the right of purchase, from Millars Company. This was done because we recognised that a line must ultimately run from Busselton to Flinders Bay. Had we permitted the company to lift that line as they proposed to do, a grave injustice would have been done to the settlers, and in a few years it would have been necessary to lay

another line. We leased it for a term of three years with a right of purchase, recognising that in the meantime we could build a railway from Busselton to Margaret River, so that we would have a connection with the main line and a through line from Busselton to Flinders Bay. Therefore we are carrying out the general policy in view when we asked Parliament to authorise the leasing of that line; and now we desire to connect it in order to provide a through line from Busselton to Flinders Bay. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. FRANK WILSON (Sussex) [8-14]: Of course I have no intention of opposing the construction of this line.

Mr. Lander: You are with it this time all right.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I regard the Bill as a tardy recognition of the many promises made by my friends on the Government side to the district I represent.

Mr. Lander: Why did you not put it through when you were in office?

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I did not have the opportunity, but if I had been in power to-day this railway would have been constructed long since; the trains would have been running and the district would have been flourishing. Hon. members know that I had my hands full to get railway facilities in the Blackwood timber country including the port at Busselton and in other ways helping the district. But this line ought certainly to have been constructed in the first year of office of my hon. friends opposite. The Premier promised the line. When he assumed office he promised that a Bill would be introduced the following session, and every year since I have asked for a fulfilment of that promise. Last year we got a Survey Bill instead. Three years had gone by and the promise had not been fulfilled. Now I must congratulate my hon. friend, the Minister for Works, that at last he, too, has recognised the promise and introduced this Bill for the construction of the line. I have always pointed

out that the older settlers in Western Australia were entitled to every bit as much consideration as, and in some instances very much more than, the new settlers. Here, in this part of Western Australia, we have got some of the best settlers that we possess. Indeed, many of them are the early pioneers of our State, men—and their forefathers as well—to whom we owe very largely the development of Western Australia.

Mr. Lander: They blazed the track.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: They blazed the track and put up with all the hardships that cultured people in those days had to undergo when coming to Western Australia. They came out on a long voyage with their families, their goods and chattels, they were dumped down in the State and had to fashion a home for themselves, far removed from a market, and practically had to grow produce for their own consumption and the up-bringing of their family. We must all feel that the Government are only doing their duty when they propose to give the people down in this district railway facilities, people who have been struggling for far longer than those who have recently arrived in our State. The closer settlement which the Minister has referred to ought, of course, to be one of the first planks of the platform of the Government. I hope, when this line is constructed, with the leasing of the Flinders Bay line, with the object of ultimate purchase, that the Minister will give us railway communication right through the capital city to the Leeuwin, and that he will have a policy of closer settlement put in hand with more vigour and a greater determination to make it successful than has been evidenced during the last few years. The district is one that deserves every attention. I am satisfied that railway construction in that portion of the State cannot be a loss to Western Australia. It is not only a question of closer settlement, but we have also large timber areas yet to be cut out, which will be served by this line. I am satisfied, for instance, that all the sleepers about which there has been so much discussion in connec-

tion with the Trans-Australian railway could be procured within a reasonable distance of this very line, were it constructed. This is, again, carrying out the policy of my Administration, which was so deliberately put before the country three years ago, the policy of opening that magnificent area lying to the south of Russelton, around Bridgetown and away as far as Denmark. It is the recommendation of the Advisory Board which was appointed by us and which put forward a scheme for opening up and developing the whole of that great southern area, an area which, I am satisfied, ought in the very near future to carry a very large and prosperous population. Flinders Bay will be, of course, and is to-day, a port, and it will be brought then into direct communication with the whole of the railway system of the State. I was sorry, when the Government entered into negotiations for the timber line to the Margaret River from Flinders Bay, which is to be a continuation of the line which is now proposed to be constructed, that they did not secure the whole of Millars' freehold. There are something like 30,000 acres of land, if my memory serves me right, to be obtained there. It is held under freehold tenure, and ought now to be held by the Crown, seeing that they have taken over the railway which originally belonged to the company. I think they could get the land cheaply enough. At any rate, if I were in office I would make them a sporting offer for it.

Mr. Taylor: You must be a Sherlock Holmes, surely.

Hon. FRANK WILSON: I have not made any inquiry into the matter, but the Minister can easily find out. The land cannot be worth a very big price. It is cut-out timber country, but there are good patches in it which could be opened up and settled in small holdings for dairy farming, for cereal growing, fruit production, and many other productive and profitable purposes, and should provide the foundation of subsistence for numerous families. I want to see this district have a chance of going ahead. It has been held back long

enough by numerous Governments, in fact since Responsible Government. This district had practically been dead until it got hold of a live member who recognised its worth and value, and who set to work to give it facilities to tap the back country, someone who recognised that even Busselton might be turned into something better than a summer resort. To-day we see evidence of the progress made by Busselton, by the number of ships that are lying in port waiting for timber for the world's markets. I am pleased to be able to congratulate the Government that they have brought the Bill down. Let us hope that the construction of the line will not be delayed as long as the introduction of the Bill. I anticipate that this will probably be one of the first lines to be commenced. Although we know how hard up we are financially, I fancy I can see the money being provided to put plenty of labourers on to construct the Margaret River line. I would ask the Minister not to commence the line in mid-winter. It would only be throwing money away in that wet country to start before the summer months. Delay it until the summer begins, say in November, and then go ahead with all the means at your disposal and conclude the thing rapidly and smartly. Do not let it be commenced in the winter months, when the Government might become disheartened as the summer approaches and then find that it is too costly to construct, and so pay all the hands off. I commend that suggestion to hon. members opposite. I know it is quite beneath them to take advantage of one by rushing hundreds of their supporters into one's electorate, in order to influence the election. I am satisfied, whatever railways we construct, that this one, at any rate, will prove satisfactory, that it will be a useful adjunct to our railway system as a whole, and will result in a largely increased settlement and be a benefit to the tourists and others who can afford to spend a pleasurable holiday in the Caves district. It will bring them, as the Minister has pointed out, to within five miles of Yalingup. It may be detrimental, to some extent, to

the port of Busselton, by reason of the fact that instead of the traffic getting off at Busselton and proceeding by road, it will go by rail. I am satisfied that it will be a great blessing to a great number of those who hope to be able to enjoy the undoubted beauties of that district. I have very much pleasure, of course, in supporting the Bill, and I welcome it, as I said before, as a tardy recognition of a long deferred promise.

Mr. BOLTON (South Fremantle) [8.26]: While I have no intention of opposing the measure, I cannot agree that the matter is as urgent as the hon. member for the district (Hon. Frank Wilson) claims.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Put it off until December.

Mr. BOLTON: I followed the remarks of the Minister who introduced the measure, and I noticed that this was a railway essentially for intense culture and closer settlement, and for the growth of root crops. It may be true, as the leader of the Opposition said, that the district has been kept back, but that argument would, of course, apply to a great many other districts. There are older settled districts that are more in want of a railway than the district which the hon. member represents. If it be true, as the Minister has said, that this was essentially a railway for the carrying of root crops, where then is the necessity to go so far from the big consuming population in the metropolitan area to grow these root crops? Quite close to the door of the metropolitan area there is quite as good, if not better land, which has been surveyed for a railway for a good many years. That district is as much entitled to a railway as this one, namely the whole of the area from Fremantle to Rockingham, right down to Bunbury, containing land eminently superior to the land which is to be served by this other railway. It would have a market—

Hon. Frank Wilson: You have no caves there.

Mr. BOLTON: We have. There is a fine one at the dock, and another at the

naval base. Right round that district there are probably many caves. The district I refer to has already been reported on by Mr. Connor, the expert for the Government, and it is said that it contains some of the finest land in the State.

Mr. Elliott: On a point or order, is the hon. member in order in discussing another railway?

Mr. BOLTON: What railway?

Mr. Elliott: The Rockingham railway.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not in order. I do not think he is discussing any railways at all, but I am just waiting to hear the hon. member's argument applied.

Mr. BOLTON: I was not discussing a railway. I was discussing the want of a railway.

Mr. SPEAKER: If that be so, I must uphold the hon. member's point of order.

Mr. BOLTON: The hon. member's point of order was wrong.

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

Mr. BOLTON: If there is any justification for building a railway to assist the growing of root crops so far from the consuming population, there is just as much justification for constructing a railway for land which is very much closer at hand. There are 137,000 acres taken up in the district of this railway, and there were 222,000 acres not alienated, 22,000 of which is first class land. Whilst it may be true that you do not want a big area in order to make a living in this intense culture district, neither do you want a large area nearer the capital of the State. Moreover, the very fact of having to compare one district with another, which is necessary in this instance, where one area of land is pitted against another by hon. members, leads me to point out that there is a big lime area which has also been reported on—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is distinctly not in order. The House is not discussing rival railways or the rival claims of districts to a railway. The House is discussing the question of the construction of a rail-

way from Boyanup-Busselton to Margaret River.

Mr. Taylor: The hon. member desires to lime-wash it.

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

Mr. BOLTON: Perhaps, if I had been allowed time, I should have been able to work right round to the Bill. Still, surely it is not an argument to build a railway from Busselton to Margaret River to say that it will bring people nearer to the Busselton caves. Surely that is hardly a sufficient reason for the introduction of this measure. However, as I said in opening my remarks, I do not intend to oppose the Bill. I think the member for the district is to be congratulated on having secured this railway from a Labour Government. When that hon. gentleman sat on the Treasury bench it did not seem possible for him to build the railway or to introduce this measure. We have been told that this particular railway—not the Rockingham railway—would have been built long ago had the hon. member been in power to-day. He was in power a long time, and it was not possible for him to build that line. But, just at the death-knock, just to help the hon. member as he himself has put it, just to place a few workmen in his electorate, the railway is to be built. I hope that when the hon. member speaks on another railway he will be able to congratulate me, as I now congratulate him on having secured his line.

Mr. O'LOGHLEY (Forrest) [8.32]: In rising to offer a few observations on the Bill introduced by the Minister for Works, I may also announce that I have no intention of opposing the measure. However, I certainly desire to obtain some more information with regard to the proposal than has been volunteered by the Minister, who, I regret to see, is not in his place so that he might possibly give it. The figures quoted by the hon. member who has just resumed his seat as to the area of first-class land which will be served by the railway, are very striking; and if we were to proceed on those figures alone, this railway would never be authorised. The member for the district, who has of course supported

the proposition, yet, during his long six or seven years of office, never introduced it himself—for what reason I do not know. That hon. member now points out the magnificent possibilities of that particular area. It is a bit late in the day to start explaining that. In any case, the public would not take any heed of the hon. member's explanation. But I do want to point out that in regard to this particular district the statement of the Minister for Works that such an enormous area of third-class land is available really gives the show away. The Minister for Works pointed out that this third-class country could be deemed good pastoral country. The member for the district would not subscribe to that, I am sure.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I say it is all good land.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: On some of that country, in the Wonnerup area for instance, several new arrivals took up localities for the purpose of engaging in pastoral pursuits; and the bulk of those new settlers were starved off their holdings. It is ridiculous to class that country as good pastoral land, or even as moderate pastoral land.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What are you going to do with it, then?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: In my opinion, it is waste country. Next, I want to ask the Minister for Works what is the reason for running that railway as it is outlined on the map, parallel with the coast for 15 or 16 miles and then parallel with the best road in Western Australia, a road which has cost the State nearly £30,000? We may hear a great deal about the cry for facilities for settlers. We know that that cry is heard more largely in the wheat areas. I am going to object to the route which this railway is taking, and I want to ask again why these settlers are regarded by the Government as more entitled to facilities than are the settlers in many other districts who, I say, are just as deserving of facilities, seeing that the people to be served by this railway have the best road in Western Australia, and also the coast

within a stone's throw. That point has not been raised yet. As regards the road, it is going to be scrapped, if that term can be used, when this railway is built. The road will be practically out of use, once the railway is constructed.

Hon. Frank Wilson: The railway is a long way from the road.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: How far away from it?

Hon. Frank Wilson: Three or four miles.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: My friend is so given to exaggeration that he is compelled to go on with it all the time. I want to say again that it is a matter for regret for every member of this House, no matter what district he represents—assuming that this railway is going to be built now, and there is no doubt about the measure passing—that the legislators of a few years ago did not have the foresight to build the railway then, instead of spending such an enormous amount of money on that road, which expenditure will now be practically wasted. The member for the district has referred to the tourist traffic to the caves. We have to ask ourselves whether that tourist traffic is a paying proposition for the State. I admit one gets a pleasurable holiday by taking a coupon and going to the caves; but, after all, only a very limited section of the people is able to enjoy the pleasures which the caves naturally afford. I want to know, again, can we expect one penny more revenue by virtue of the fact that the caves are brought in closer proximity to the metropolitan district by railway than by road? Perhaps the people of Busselton, though they are unanimous in support of the proposal, are going to suffer to some extent.

Hon. Frank Wilson: They are taking the risk of that.

Mr. Bolton: They took a bigger risk when they took on the hon. member.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: They are taking another big risk, and the member for the district has not so much as mentioned that. I refer to the freehold held by Millars' on the Karridale area. The hon. member points out that the Flinders Bay railway will be brought into touch with

the network of the Government railway system. Quite true. But I want to ask if, as the natural corollary of the purchase of the Karridale area, the railway is linked up to the Government system, where will the great volume of produce go that will be grown if this proposed railway is built? That will go, on the natural gradient, to Flinders Bay, and the port of Busselton will not reap the advantage the hon. member thinks it will.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Busselton is taking the risk of that.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: If the hon. member is not very careful, the many risks he is taking will involve him in trouble in the near future.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I will invite you all down to cause trouble.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The hon. member will not be there much longer to cause trouble. He also referred to the possibilities of the district, and he said that he wants the port of Busselton to be something else than a summer resort.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I said I had made it something else.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The hon. member captured the representation of that district, and it is perfectly true that he secured the passage of the Nannup railway, which has made Busselton a much more important place than it was when he first went there. I will admit that.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I am glad you admit that. You are not given to making admissions.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: It is not on the agricultural possibilities of the district that the Nannup railway is the paying proposition that it is to-day.

Hon. Frank Wilson: No; timber.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Absolutely the timber produced by the "nomads" for whom the hon. member has so very little time. When speaking a few minutes ago he pointed out that there would be sufficient sleepers procured within a decent radius of this particular line to build our national railway. That may be quite so. I say it would be a poor old prospect for this railway ever to pay axle-grease, at any rate for many years to come, but for the

timber which will be hauled over the line. We can take the Nannup railway from the same port of Busselton mentioned by the hon. member, and through that district into the Wonerup district. In that district there is the most poverty-stricken soil that one could possibly see—at all events, some of it. It is quite true that there are good patches.

Mr. Elliott: The country is good in parts, like the curate's egg.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Yes. Not only is this soil practically useless for agricultural pursuits, but it is so poor that it can hardly keep the wild game running over it: even the animals have to get away to more hospitable regions. I wish the Minister for Works were in his place, so that he could give the House some idea of how far the negotiations have proceeded for the acquisition of Millars' timber and Trading Company's freehold property at Karridale.

Mr. Bolton: The Rockingham railway frightened the Minister out.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: We are told by the leader of the Opposition that there is approximately 30,000 acres of freehold property owned by Millars'. I regret to hear that there is so large an area of it.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I am not sure; I believe it.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Even if we take the area at 20,000 acres, it is going to be a very difficult matter for the State to purchase that land at anything like its reasonable value.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Oh, no! Make Millars' an offer.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The directors of Millars' Timber and Trading Company are fairly shrewd gentlemen. They have any amount of that business acumen which the leader of the Opposition loves to talk about as being necessary in our public men. They have any amount of shrewd commonsense. For instance, they hold to-day in that Karridale area about 20,000 acres of freehold land. The Government have obtained a lease of the railway with the right to purchase after three years' lease. I assume they will purchase. It is no use taking the line unless they take over the rolling stock and the

metals. If they take it over, I want to say again, the directors of Millars' Timber and Trading Company are on the best wicket that I know of any men being on in this country.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Why did the Government not buy at the time, as I advised?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: There must have been some obstacle in the way. I do not know; but I presume that the Government made an offer, and that the counter-proposal was beyond their reach. I presume that Millars' directors said to themselves, "Well, now, the Government have to purchase this railway." I am very much afraid that the Government have been forced into the position of having to purchase it.

Hon. Frank Wilson: There was no forcing about it at all. They could have made the purchase of the freehold a condition of buying the railway.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: The hon. gentleman who interjects was not able to do that in connection with another proposition.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I advised the Government to do it.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Why did not the hon. member do it in connection with the Denmark purchase? These timber companies can take up an area of country, cut it out to the last stick, and then come to the paternal Government, whatever side in politics happens to be in power, and use the few settlers who may be on that country as a conclusive argument why the timber railways should be purchased or additional railways should be built. That is the unfortunate feature of the proposition, and I say again I regret that Millars' Timber and Trading Company are placed to-day in the happy position of being able to demand almost any price for the 20,000 acres of freehold that they hold. With all our power, with all our might in this Chamber, we seem to be absolutely incapable—

Hon. Frank Wilson: We bought all Denmark, you know.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Yes; but what did the Liberal Government pay for the railway?

Hon. Frank Wilson: We bought Denmark and the railway together.

Mr. Bolton: You paid £50,000 for the railway and land.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Fifty thousand pounds for a streak of rust running over about 30 miles! What is the state of Denmark to-day? The hon. gentleman will not invest in Denmark any of the money he has been shrewd enough to secure, because he knows the time is too long to wait for a return.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You asked why we did not buy the freehold with the Denmark railway. We took over the freehold with the railway; and that is what we recommended the Government to do in this case.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Millars' were able to get their own price for Denmark.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Oh, no!

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: They will be able to get their own price for Karridale, I am afraid; and I also fear they will be able to get their own price for Jarrahdale in the near future. I regret that we are in this unfortunate position of having to yield to a powerful company who happen to be possessed of freehold property. I know a good deal of that freehold property is very good land—some of the very best in the State; but a good deal of it is worthless from an agricultural or intense-culture point of view. The question arises now whether the Government are not going to be called upon, after expending £73,000 on this line to link up with the Margaret River, again to expend another £30,000 in order to acquire the freehold land abutting on Millars' abandoned line, because, unless that land is acquired, the line running to Flinders Bay will never pay axle-grease. That is the position. If Millars are going to hold that country which is theirs by every legal right, and if they are not prepared to part with it except at an exorbitant figure, the position remains that settlement cannot go ahead, and the land cannot be acquired or occupied by enterprising people, and as a result there must be a loss. Should we encourage that loss, if it is possible to avoid it? I

feel that I will have to conclude my remarks without getting the necessary information from the Minister. I would like to refer to the statements made by the leader of the Opposition about Busselton having been kept back for so many years by past Governments. I admit that the outports of the State have not received that generous measure of recognition which they are entitled to, but with regard to Busselton, I think it is very much owing to the inhabitants of the town themselves. They are not as progressive as people in other places. Although the Minister for Works and the leader of the Opposition referred to the unlimited possibilities of this country, the number of people there and the increase in production, and all the good things that are going to follow on the construction of this line—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member has referred to the characteristics of the people of Busselton. They have nothing to do with the question before the House.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I am entitled, I think, to reply to the leader of the Opposition.

Mr. SPEAKER: In the further discussion some other hon. member may consider he, too, is entitled to reply. The hon. member must discuss the Bill.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I will conclude by saying that, while I have no desire to oppose this railway in the South-West, or railways in any other part of the State, members are entitled to an explanation by the Minister as to why this particular line takes the route which is shown on the map. I have only one Government railway through my district, although there are others there owned by private enterprise.

Hon. Frank Wilson: And which you condemn.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: I do not think I do. Any one looking at the map and seeing the contour of the proposed railway will be inclined to ask why an explanation of that route has not been given. We have a certain destination for the railway; it is 37 miles in length, and it could reach that destination in 10 miles

less by a different route. I venture to say that the country which would be tapped is nearly as good as that abutting on the coast. There is poor land amongst it. The railway, according to the map, appears to be going to Adelaide to get to Fremantle, so to speak. We find it hugging the coast for 15 or 16 miles when the line should be going inland.

Mr. Elliott: Do you know the country?

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: Yes.

Mr. Elliott: You know why it is going along this route; it is because the other is rough country.

Mr. O'LOGHLEN: An injustice, as it appears to me, is the fact that the road will be a mile or a mile and a half within the railway, and it is one of the best roads in Western Australia along which the settlers can carry their produce. I want to know why the engineers have recommended that the line should run parallel with the road. I do not suppose I am likely to bring about an alteration of the route, but I hope that the line, when constructed, will come up to expectations, and that the people who will be served will be able to show what the land they are settled on is capable of producing. I regret to say that there is a good deal of poor land there, as there is throughout the South-West. Some of it is fit for intense culture, but the figures quoted by the Minister for Works as to the large area of third class land, which is suitable for pastoral purposes, causes one misgivings, because we know that the bulk of the South-West will carry very little in that direction owing to the poverty of the soil and the poison weed which grows on it. It is impossible almost to run cattle on the native vegetation there, and consequently settlers are handicapped in that direction. I hope before the Minister allows the Bill to go through he will explain the peculiar kink which we see on the map, and that he will tell us how far he has proceeded with the negotiations without which this line is not going to be the favourable proposition some members think it is likely to prove.

[*The Deputy Speaker (Mr. McDowall) took the Chair.*]

Mr. LÁNDER (East Perth) [8.52]: I congratulate the Government on the introduction of this Bill, and the route which has been chosen. It will serve the country where there are some of the oldest pioneers of the State.

Mr. O'Loghlen: It is the newest ones I am thinking of.

Mr. LANDER: I am thinking of them too, but I am also thinking of those who blazed the track in the early days. They are to be considered more than the settlers of to-day who do not appear to be able to do anything unless they are spoon fed. At the present time we have practically a land hunger in Western Australia, and when the wheat areas are exhausted we shall find this district will be in great demand. Any one who has been there, and seen the products of the soil, must admit that the land is suitable for closer settlement. I hope this railway will be the forerunner of many others in the South-West. What we want to do is to drop centralisation. It is rotten in the other States, and it will be rotten in this State if we do not fight against it. I hope the leader of the Opposition will be broad-minded enough to support all these proposed railways, and the Esperance railway as well. Immediately the line, which is the subject of the Bill before us now, is constructed and the land in that part of the State thrown open for selection, it will prove the political funeral of the leader of the Opposition, because we shall have down there a lot of broad minded settlers who will vote for democrats, and support the construction of lines all over Western Australia. The Minister for Works gave us the reason for the kink in the route which has been referred to. He said it was made to serve the people who are settled near Cape Naturaliste. The contour of the railway is consistent with that of others. In regard to the road in that district I think that instead of spending £30,000 on its construction, it would have been very much better to have built a railway which would have

become a paying proposition. The returns from the cultivated areas in those parts are satisfactory, but the reason people have left there and gone to the wheat lands is well known. In these wheat lands they are able to get a quicker return. Now that the dry areas are being taken up we will be compelled to throw open the land in the South-West to give the people a chance there. I have much pleasure in supporting the line, and I hope it will not be the only one to be constructed in that portion of the State.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister) [8.56]: I visited this district for the first time some 10 or 11 years ago, and it struck me then that the Government had made a mistake in constructing the road which has been referred to to-night. A railway line. I consider, ought to have been built in order to give the people of the State an opportunity at a low cost to visit the caves which exist in the South-West. I agree with the member for Forrest (Mr. O'Loghlen) that very few of our people have had the opportunity of seeing those caves, and the reason to a great extent has been the cost which is involved. The time has arrived when better means of communication to this district ought to be provided to enable our own people to see the beauties which exist there, and there is no doubt that with the construction of the Trans-Australian railway, which will mean that Fremantle will be the first and last port of call for the mail steamers, people disembarking there will avail themselves of the opportunity to visit the caves, and that will prove a fine advertisement for Western Australia. It is surprising to me that more people do not visit the South-Western caves. Any person who can afford the time will be well rewarded by the beautiful sights to be seen there. In regard to the railway if any person follows the coast line on the map, no other conclusion can be come to but that the route as suggested is going in the right direction. Some of the residents around Cape Naturaliste will be a considerable distance from the railway, and it is necessary in building railways that they should be made to serve, as near as

possible, the people who are settled in the district. It is true that the Minister referred to the fact that there were only 22,500 acres of third class land. We know that of first-class land in the South-West 100 acres is sufficient for any man. The time is not far distant when we will be able to bring out thousands of farmers from the Old Country and settle them in the South-West. Indeed, we have sufficient land down there to settle the whole population of Great Britain and still have plenty of room for further settlement.

Mr. O'Loughlen : Whom would you fetch in after you had the whole population of Great Britain?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister) : I am happy to think that we are building up Western Australia with the best of the people from Great Britain and that we have plenty of room for them down there on a soil to which they are accustomed, and which they can farm in a proper manner. I hope all West Australians will realise that it is their duty to see that that part of the country becomes populous. I am confident there will be no objection to the railway, and therefore it is unnecessary that I should take up more time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—COTTESLOE MUNICIPAL RATES VALIDATION.

Second Reading.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister—North-East Fremantle) [9.2] in moving the second reading said: This is a small Bill of a character not uncommon in the House. It is to rectify a slight error which was made in regard to the signing of the rate-book.

Mr. Underwood : Who made the error?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister) : The mayor.

Mr. Bolton : Who was the mayor?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister) : I cannot say. The error was made in 1911, and I cannot say who was mayor in that year.

When the rate-book is completed, it is necessary that the mayor should initial every page and then sign a memorandum stating the rates levied in regard to property in the district. This the mayor failed to do. The necessity for performing this duty should have been brought under his notice by the municipal officers, and it was through their failure to do so the mayor omitted to carry out the provisions of the Municipalities Act. The mistake was discovered, and while some ratepayers, realising that it was only a technical error, willingly paid their rates, others refused to do so, and therefore it becomes necessary that a Bill should be put through validating the rate struck. Through this omission on the part of the mayor to sign the rate-book the municipality has had some difficulty in collecting its revenue. The Bill will relieve that situation. This was the only error made by the mayor, and I hope members will pass the Bill and validate the action of the local authority in striking the rate. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. McLEOD (Kalgoorlie) [9.5] : I have no reason for opposing the Bill, but it seems to me that what the Minister has been pleased to term a slight error is rather a serious neglect of duty on the part of the mayor, a neglect for which the Municipalities Act provides a substantial penalty. From information gathered I am pretty confident that the gentleman responsible for this omission, or some other omissions that have occurred, is one who for a number of years has occupied the post of permanent head of the department which has the administration of the Municipal Corporations Act. One would naturally expect a gentleman occupying that position to be aware of the provisions of the Act. The Act provides a penalty for those who neglect their duty in this connection, and on assuming office the mayor and the members of the municipal council are required to take an oath or make an affirmation that they will faithfully discharge the duties of their respective offices. In the

case in point the mayor did not discharge the duty which he undertook to perform, and the Act provides that for any such neglect in regard to which no specific penalty is prescribed a fine of not more than £20 shall be imposed. I understand this neglect in connection with the administration of the affairs of the Cottesloe municipality took place during Mr. F. D. North's term of office as mayor.

Mr. Wisdom: No, I was mayor part of the time.

Mr. McLEOD: If my information is not correct, it must have been during the time the member for Claremont was mayor.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Does it matter who was mayor at the time?

Mr. McLEOD: I was pointing out that what the Honorary Minister spoke of as a slight error is much more serious.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Are you opposing the Bill?

Mr. McLEOD: No, but I am pointing out the seriousness of the omission, which must necessarily be serious if it requires an Act of Parliament to rectify it. Errors of this sort in municipal administration are likely to have serious effects, and those responsible for them should be made to face the circumstances they themselves have created, and answer to the public for having failed to carry out their duties.

Mr. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret) [9·10]: The hon. member seems to look upon the Bill as something quite new. Since I have been in the House we have had I think at least one of this character every session, and not infrequently two, brought in to legalise something done by a local authority, generally something in the form of rates collected not strictly in accordance with the Act. I think that invariably these rates are collected in good faith and paid in good faith. Then, when this sort of thing has been going on for a year or two, and the money collected has been expended in providing facilities for the ratepayers, someone who would be looked upon as belonging to the clever division has realised that the rates were not being collected strictly in accordance with the

Act, and has objected to paying, and in consequence we have had measures of this character brought before Parliament and passed, in order that the collection of the rates might be legalised. I am always opposed to retrospective legislation of any character, because it is generally bad legislation; but under circumstances such as those before us there is no escape from it, because the rates have been collected and the money expended in good faith. Therefore it is incumbent upon the Legislature to pass Bills of this character. It is not the first of the sort by a dozen which we have had since I have been in the Chamber, and I expect it will not be the last. I support the second reading.

Mr. WISDOM (Claremont) [9·14]: It is not an uncommon thing for measures of this sort to be brought up to rectify some little omission made in connection with the Municipalities Act. That Act contains a great number of formalities which have to be observed, either by the mayor or by the council, who in turn have to rely on their officers to bring those matters before them in order that the duties may be discharged. It is not unusual for little things like this which lead to illegality to be omitted at times. In Cottesloe the rate book has not been initialled as required, with the result that the rates at present struck and owing cannot be legally collected. The Cottesloe Council are in a bad way financially principally on account of the large amount of rates outstanding, and they are not in a position to legally collect one penny of these rates on account of the omission. It is all very well for the hon. member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. McLeod) to insist that the letter of the law should be carried out, but he should remember that the mayor and councillors are not paid for the very responsible and onerous duties they have to perform.

Mr. Underwood: They get their whisky cheap.

Mr. WISDOM: If they make little omissions through no fault of their own and in perfect good faith, the least the Legislature can do is to put the matter right.

Mr. McLeod: Do not you think the matter is as serious as it could be?

Mr. WISDOM: Yes, for the council, because they are unable to legally collect the rates. If we are going to exact the pound of flesh from these honorary public servants, no responsible person will accept these positions. When the hon. member for Kalgoorlie is sniffing for the blood of mayors and municipalities, he might remember that he is only proposing to fine the municipality and not the mayor personally.

Mr. Taylor: He is making another blow at the ratepayers.

Mr. WISDOM: An omission has been made, and I personally was responsible for it in the first year it occurred.

Mr. Taylor: You set a bad example.

Mr. WISDOM: The large amount of rates outstanding cannot be legally collected until the omission is rectified by Parliament. I hope the precedent of validating little errors of this kind will be followed in this case; there is every reason why it should be.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister—East Fremantle—in reply) [9-19]: A number of the errors with regard to rate books might be attributed to the period of the year at which the local authorities have to do this work. The rate books have to be written up and the rates struck in December, and owing to the festive season and the approach of holidays, there is a possibility of some matters being overlooked. Many local authorities have been occupied until Christmas Eve in completing their rate books to comply with the Municipalities Act. I hope the time is not far distant when we will be able to provide that the financial year for local governing bodies shall accord with that of the State and close on the 30th June.

Mr. Wisdom: Do you infer that I was in a festive mood when I made the omission?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): No, but perhaps the hon. member was looking forward to the festive season. I would point out that the municipality is not liable for anything left undone, but the individual.

Hon. Frank Wilson: The Town Clerk.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): I am not sure that under the Municipalities Act the mayor would not be liable if he got into the chair on the wrong side.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Make him liable, anyhow.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (Honorary Minister): As regards municipalities, there was doubtless no intention of imposing a penalty for such an omission. On many occasions the omission has been made. If it had been detected it could have been rectified in a very little time, as the mayor could have used his stamp instead of signing his name, and if he had passed the stamp on to someone else, the ratepayers would have been none the wiser. The Cottesloe Council recognise the position, and I hope the Bill will be passed.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

BILL—OSBORNE PARK TRAMWAYS PURCHASE.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [9-23] in moving the second reading, said: The purpose of this Bill is to secure the ratification by Parliament of an agreement made by the Government and the company known as the Town Properties Limited of Western Australia for the purchase of the Osborne Park trams. The Bill requires very little explanation, as there is really only one point involved, and that is as to whether the Government will be paying value for the purchase of this property. I say there is only one point, because Parliament has already approved of the nationalisation of our tramway system, in that it has authorised the purchase of the Perth City trams, the Victoria Park trams and also the Nedlands trams. The Osborne Park tramways represent the only portion

of the metropolitan tramway system not now owned by the Government, and it will be admitted that, provided the Government are able to obtain this section on reasonable terms, it is desirable that the whole of the system of the metropolitan area should be owned by the Government. There has been a persistent demand by the residents served by the Osborne Park trams for the purchase by the Government. They have been owned by a company who have been occupied more in trading in lands than in operating the tramway. The tramway has been only incidental to the land side of their business transactions. Some 12 or 18 months ago, the residents of the district requested the Government to extend the system on towards the North Beach, the company having already declined to make any extension. Of course the request could not be entertained, because it would be highly undesirable that the Government should have a system operating at this end, with a short section of about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles of the company's lines adjoining, and be controlling a section at the other end. The consequence is that a considerable portion of the district is and will be hampered in its development because of the need for tramway extension to provide the necessary facilities. The purchase of this short section will do away with the last item of private ownership so far as the metropolitan tramway system is concerned. It will open up an opportunity for extension to the North Beach, which has been demanded for a considerable time, and will make available to the large population of Perth a holiday resort within a few miles of the City. This can be done much more cheaply and to better advantage by the extension of the trams than by providing a railway service.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Have you the agreement with you?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I will explain it. There is really no agreement; there is an offer to purchase the trams at the price set down, subject to the approval of Parliament.

Hon. Frank Wilson: What are you getting with the line?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I will tell the hon. member directly. Before coming to that, I wish to point out the advantages of this purchase by the Government. There is no doubt that at the present time, but much more so in the future, it will be a profitable undertaking for the Government.

Mr. George: It is all right to have it if the price is right.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The lands owned by the company comprise some 7,600 acres and of that they have sold 4,600 acres, leaving a balance of 3,000 acres yet to sell. The district has been hampered in settlement largely because of the want of a water supply. This difficulty will shortly be overcome, because a Government reservoir on Mt. Hawthorne is nearing completion, for which the future requirements of the whole of the district will be served. There is under cultivation something like 600 or 700 acres, and last year the production of the district was equal to a value of £63,806. It is from this district that we draw practically the whole of our milk supply for the metropolitan area. There are 16 dairies with 700 head of cattle in the district. Fifty-five new buildings were erected last year, representing a capital value of £7,000, and the population is approximately 1,500, an increase of about 500 on that of the previous year. So that having in mind the fertile nature of the soil, and knowing what it is capable of producing, I would strongly recommend the hon. member, who has never seen it, to pay a visit to the district. I can say it was a surprise to me when I went through it some little time ago, to observe what that district was capable of producing. The tramway system was opened up by the company in 1903. They ran from the Government Road Terminus at the Leederville boundary, near the Osborne Park hotel, a length of 2 miles 28 chains, slightly over one mile through the North Perth municipality, and the balance through the Perth Roads Board district. The system was valued by the Engineer for

Existing Lines (Mr. Light) towards the close of last year, and this is the text of his report. I have already stated that the line was two miles and 28 chains in length, and the engineer says that it consists of 80lb. rails in fair order, and that the sleepers are in fair condition.

Hon. Frank Wilson : What life have the rails got ?

The MINISTER FOR MINES : The engineer estimated the life of the track at 15 years and he based his valuation on that. The value of the track, new, would be £7,258, and taking the life at 15 years the depreciation would be £2,420. The relaying and blue metalling would cost £80, making the present value £4,728. The cost of overhead equipment is not included in this valuation, but with the overhead equipment the total value is estimated at £5,447, or £1,247 more than the actual proposed purchase price. I may also remark that that is a very conservative estimate. I know that from the inquiries I have made of the officers who have valued it. So that, if we may rely upon the estimate made by the engineer, we are securing a property at practically one-fourth less than its actual value. I think hon. members will be prepared to admit, in view of that fact, that it is a very fair bargain so far as the Government are concerned. I may also state that all those concerned, so far as I have been able to ascertain, are quite willing for the purchase. No objection is raised either by the residents or by the local bodies concerned. In fact, I believe I am correct in saying the Perth Roads Board have carried a resolution in favour of the purchase. In any case the agreement to purchase was made as far back as March last and no protest or objection has been raised from any of those concerned.

Mr. George : Do any cars go with it ?

The MINISTER FOR MINES : There is only one car ; there is practically no rolling stock.

Mr. George : Are there any buildings ?

The MINISTER FOR MINES : There is only one shed, which is worth a very small sum. The system was

operated by the Perth Tramway Company and has been operated of late by the Government tramway service, since we have taken it over. There is no power house or equipment of any kind, and it has been operated by our own tramway system, following on the arrangements which formerly existed between the Perth Tramway Company and that system. The local bodies, apparently, are quite willing to give up any rights they may possess. Of course the agreement under which the companies obtained the sanction of Parliament to lay down the trams provided that after 30 years they might be purchased by the local body at a valuation, or that after 35 years the company might hand the track over to the local body. So that really they have 19 years yet to run before it would be possible for the local bodies to obtain possession of the system. These have no objection to the proposed purchase. Their rights are conserved in the Bill and we will continue to pay to the local bodies concerned the three per cent. that they have hitherto obtained from the company. This is provided in Clause 5 of the Bill. I do not know that there is very much more I can say in support of the purchase. The whole point merely hinges on the value of the property. In that respect we can only have regard to the opinions of the expert officers who have valued the system.

Mr. George : Who gave the report ?

The MINISTER FOR MINES : Mr. Light, the Chief Engineer for Existing Lines. As a matter of fact, it was his report that I have just read, showing that he values the system to-day at £1,250 more than the price that it is proposed to pay for it. Having regard to all the circumstances, the fact that we can obtain the property at less than its actual value, and further that it is very essential that it should be made a part of the Government tramway system, in order that extensions may be made in the future, and that the development of the district may not in any way be hampered, I think we are justified in making the purchase. At any rate, it has since March last

been held up pending the approval of Parliament, and the owners of the system are quite prepared to take the purchase money either in cash or in Government debentures, if so desired, at four per cent. Having regard to these facts I commend the Bill to the favourable consideration of the House. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. GEORGE (Murray-Wellington) [9-38]: I do not think there can be any objection raised to this particular purchase. I am glad to hear from the Minister that this is the last of the tramway systems around Perth to be made a part of the Government system. There is one thing that it will do, and that is it will extinguish a lot of the trouble that might arise in years to come owing to the manner in which some of the agreements were drawn up, very loosely I may say, as some of them were. But it is no use harping upon the past. I think the Government have taken a very wise step and they seem to be satisfied that the price is a reasonable one. From the report of Mr. Light I think we are justified in believing this to be the case.

Mr. GILL (Leederville) [9-40]: I would just like to say a word in confirmation of the statements made by the Minister. There is no doubt that it is desirable that the Government should take over this tramway, so that they would be in a position, when extensions are required, to make them where they are necessary. Undoubtedly the time has arisen in that district, the Osborne Park district, when extensions are necessary, and I feel confident that, in the opinion of the people of the State and of members of this House, any further extensions made should be carried out by the Government. That being the case, it is necessary to take over the tramway, such as it is. It has not been what we might term an up-to-date tramway by any means. When the Government take it over it will give them an opportunity of carrying out extensions into the Osborne Park district where necessary. The Minister has told the House that the population of the Osborne

Park district, I am not referring to the northern portion of the district, was a very large one. The tramway will serve 1,500 people alone. I dare say that hon. members had no idea that there was such a large population so close to Perth.

Mr. Underwood: One would judge that there must be at least 5,000 people there.

Mr. GILL: There are some very good democrats out there who appreciate those who are working for them in the cause of democracy, and I am glad at times to have evidence of their appreciation. It is a valuable portion of the estate and the swamp lands that we have there are undoubtedly producing a great amount of vegetables, not only for Perth, but also for the country districts. It is cut up into very small areas.

Hon. Frank Wilson: They are surely not going to carry vegetables on the trams.

Mr. GILL: No, but they will assist the population that is cultivating them. Of course there will be some settlement in addition to those who are gardening on the swamp land. There is plenty of available room for a large population there. Immediately they have the tramway facilities there is no doubt that the population will extend in that direction, because there will then be an opportunity of getting something larger than mere pocket-handkerchief blocks, such as we have in the city. The people will appreciate having a little space around their dwellings, and will avail themselves of the opportunity of securing this immediately they have tramway facilities given to them. There are over 700 assessments in that district now. The company held some 3,000 acres, which are undisposed of and which are available now at a reasonable price. There is ample opportunity, even in that area, for a large population to settle. As pointed out by the Minister, other extensions are required, and will be demanded before very long. One of these is the extension of the tramway system to the beach, which is one of the finest beaches on our coast.

Mr. George: What distance from Perth?

Mr. GILL: It is about five miles from the City to the beach.

Mr. Underwood: Could you not take the tramway out from the Maylands station?

Mr. GILL: We could get the tramway run from Curtis-street, connecting with the other. The line will be available not only for the people in the City but in the suburbs as well. An extension in that direction will be required, and when it is brought about the Government are the right people to carry it into effect. The purchase of this system will enable them to do this. I am confident that the price is a satisfactory one. I am only surprised at the figures. I thought the Government would have had to pay more.

Hon. Frank Wilson: It is quite sufficient. The rails are pretty well worn.

Mr. GILL: They are not so much worn as they are around the City. The traffic on that tramway is nothing like what it is in the City.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Are you not bound to have a certain number of cars?

The Minister for Mines: No.

Hon. Frank Wilson: I thought the land was sold under such a condition.

The Minister for Mines: They are making it available.

Mr. GILL: I was just pointing out that I hope that when the Government take this over, and I am confident that the House will approve, they will not do as they have been doing since they took over the tramway service in the City, that is continue the previous arrangement. For the last 12 months, at any rate, I have been hammering at the door of the agents for this company in connection with the service out there. The people of Osborne Park have also been hammering away at them to try and get some extension of the service, but the company would not move as they were negotiating with the Government. They said that for this reason they would not give any further facilities for the people to come from and go to Osborne Park, and that while these

negotiations were pending they felt they would not be justified in doing anything. But the system at the present time is undoubtedly inadequate in every respect. I hope that the Government will give some little consideration to the matter before the new power house is established, because if the people have to wait until that time it means that they will have to suffer for several months longer the great hardships with which they have had to contend during the last 12 months in particular. Previously to that time, there is no shadow of doubt, the service was sufficient; but during the last 18 months the population has increased so rapidly that further tramway facilities are undoubtedly needed. Therefore, I hope the Government will grant them at the earliest possible moment. I will not take up the time of the House any longer. I am confident members will give the Bill their support, and I also feel confident that in the near future the line will prove a paying proposition.

Mr. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret) [9.46]: Whilst I am indeed pleased that the Government brought down this measure, I wish to express the hope that they will link up the whole of the metropolitan area with the tramway service owned by the State. In introducing the Bill, the Minister did not point out exactly the conditions under which the company had been operating. I know full well that the land taken up—I have this from the settlers—was taken up under the condition that the settlers would get a certain tram service, certain tramway facilities, at a certain price. I know further that at the luncheon in connection with the last Agricultural Show held at Osborne Park, the representative of the town blocks company, in the person of Mr. Duffy, in replying to the toast of the company or the district, stated that the company had then decided that they would need to increase the fares. I know that that statement has been taken very badly by the people, and that since the Government have been negotiating and have taken over the running of this system in conjunction with the

metropolitan tramway system, or since the Government have been continuing that system in the same form as the tramway company operated it prior to the purchase by the Government of the Perth tramways, there has been a lot of dissension on the subject with the people of Osborne Park. The fares have been increased, increased so much that it pays young people going into business in the City to walk instead of riding on the Osborne Park section. This means that they walk until they reach the section owned by the Government, at Leederville. Some young people, I know, walk pretty well half the distance, one mile, because of the increased fares. Now, the settlers at Osborne Park took up their land under the condition that they would be furnished with a certain tram service at a certain price. The Government have now taken over that tramway, and the Minister for Works, not in his second reading speech, but by way of interjection, informed the House that the people were forfeiting all the rights which they had held so far as tramway facilities are concerned. In other words, if the Government purchase this line, the Government will have a free hand to charge what fares they like on that line. Of course, as a business proposition, the Government are going to charge such fares as will be in keeping with what the people can pay, to keep the tramway a going concern. But I am afraid, from what I can gather, that the existing charges press too heavily upon the people of Osborne Park. The fare may not be too high for those who ride the whole of the journey, but for those who would use the tram from say midway it is too expensive. Young people coming in cannot afford the increased fare. I know of numbers of them, girls and young fellows coming into the City to their business in the mornings, who cannot afford to pay the fare of the full journey there and back, to the nearest point to their home on the Osborne Park line. They have to walk. Anyone can imagine what trudging along in the winter months means

under those conditions. It is objectionable. It is not right that this should be necessary.

Hon. Frank Wilson: No; it is not right. We will buy the tram line, and then it will be right.

Mr. TAYLOR: To satisfy the Government, the people have said, "We will forego certain rights which we have under the existing conditions." The Minister has said, by way of interjection, that the people have decided upon that. From what the people themselves have said, I am not certain that they have decided upon that. I am not the representative of those people.

Hon. Frank Wilson: Oh, it does not matter. They will have recourse against the company just the same.

Mr. TAYLOR: I have been at Osborne Park many times, and I have found those people a fine community. No one can go to Osborne Park to a sports meeting or to an agricultural show without being struck by the wonderful progress that is being made in the district, or without observing what a fine community of people they are—a community always desirous of helping itself. Most of the public improvements at Osborne Park have been done by the people without very much aid from the Government. They have cleared their show ground and built their stands and stalls themselves, and worked hard to accomplish it. They carried it out as a co-operative concern. I hope, therefore, that the Government will see their way clear, when they do purchase this line, to regulate the fares so that they will be suitable to the requirements of the district and of the people.

Hon. Frank Wilson: You will see to that, as their new member.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

House adjourned at 9.52 p.m.